

## The Uihlein – Ironman Sports Fund of Lake Placid

Lake Placid, our small mountain community, is a special place to live, work and raise a family. Since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Lake Placid has been known for summer sports, but around 1910 the village became the pioneer winter resort in the United States. This breeding ground for Olympic champions is the only community in the United States to have hosted two Olympic Winter Games.



It is this history of nurturing sports and local athletes with national and international promise that inspired the establishment of the Uihlein-Ironman Sports Fund of Lake Placid.

## The History of Lake Placid Sports

In 1932, as the United States was in the midst of the Great Depression, Lake Placid hosted the III Olympic Winter Games. It was Godfrey Dewey, son of Dr. Melvil Dewey, founder of the Lake Placid Club and the Dewey Decimal System, who successfully presented the village's bid for the 1932 games to the International Olympic Committee. "Olympic is not a magic phrase for effortless prosperity," Godfrey wrote. "It is rather the key to a unique opportunity to achieve by our own united community efforts."

The village did indeed unite, building an arena, bobsled run and improving the ski jumps, cross-country-ski trails and speed-skating oval. The people of the community took a significant financial and volunteer role in the success of the games. Hometown hero Jack Shea was a double gold medallist in speed skating, one of many in a long line of Olympic-caliber athletes from this region.

It was 48 years later that the Olympic Games returned to Lake Placid. Within those years the passion for sports was maintained and local athletes thrived, with Bunny Sheffield, Herbert and Curtis Stephens, Gordon McKellen, Jr., Stanley Benham, Art Devlin, Jay Rand, Bud Colby, John Viscome, Joe Lamb, Joe Pete Wilson, James Shea and others.

Sports continue to be an economic engine and source of community pride in and around Lake Placid. The U.S. Olympic Training Center opened in the mid-1980's, assisting athletes and affiliated sports organizations including biathlon, bobsled and skeleton, figure skating, ice hockey, luge, skiing, speed skating, boxing, canoe and kayak, judo, rowing, synchronized swimming, team handball, water polo and wrestling.

Enthusiasm for other sports opportunities is evident across the community, with over 30 organizations and strong public and private school athletic programs. Ironman North America moved its headquarters to Lake Placid in 1999. Since that time, athletes from across the world have come to Lake Placid to train and participate in one of the most grueling – and also one of the most inspiring – events in the world of sport. Through Ironman North America efforts, youth sports programs were established in swimming, cross-country skiing and running.



The Lake Placid Youth Athletic Association offers opportunities for young people to participate in baseball/softball, soccer, basketball and ice hockey. The New York State Ski Education Foundation teaches young athletes sportsmanship, self-confidence, responsibility and respect while training them to compete in alpine and Nordic skiing as well as ski jumping. Other organizations include the Skating Club of Lake Placid, Lake Placid Ski Club, Outing Club, Adirondack Ski Touring Council, youth clubs, and the national federations of luge, bobsled and skelton. It is in the spirit of this history, these organizations and individuals that this fund has been created.

Based on information from [Lake Placid, The Olympic Years 1932-1980](#) by George Christian Ortloff and Stephen C. Ortloff

## The Uihlein – Ironman Sports Fund of Lake Placid

The Uihlein-Ironman Sports Fund of Lake Placid was created by the Henry Uihlein II and Mildred A. Uihlein Foundation, Ironman North America, and Adirondack Community Trust. These local organizations have teamed up to help Lake Placid athletes achieve their sports dreams, ensuring the legacy of the village as a sports capitol of the world.

The fund focuses on the greater Lake Placid region and has two main goals for supporting athletes:

- Provide financial support for competitive local young athletes with regional, national and international promise.
- Provide program support to nonprofit organizations that expose area youth to summer and winter sports.

In 2008, 18 local athletes and 6 nonprofit organizations received grants totaling \$20,000.

### Founding Sponsors

#### *Henry Uihlein II and Mildred A. Uihlein Foundation*

A successful businessman, internationally known cattle breeder, philanthropist, and sports organizer, Mr. Uihlein worked vigorously to promote the sport of speed skating, and in particular 1924 Olympic champion Charles Jewtraw. An officer in both local and national speed skating organizations, Mr. Uihlein brought the Eastern Championships and national and international events to Lake Placid in 1914 and 1920-23. He assisted in promoting the 1924 Olympic speed skating team to the first Olympic Winter Games in Chamonix, France. Later Mr. and Mrs. Uihlein assisted Godfrey Dewey in obtaining the 1932 Olympic Games for Lake Placid. One of the five founding members of the Sno Birds, Mr. Uihlein continued for many years in funding athletes and promoting competitions. He was instrumental in establishing the Uihlein Mercy Center in Lake Placid. For 50 years, Henry and his wife, Mildred, were strong supporters of many Lake Placid community organizations. With the support of the Henry Uihlein II and Mildred A. Uihlein Foundation, the hope is to continue that tradition.



#### *Ironman North America*

Ironman triathlon had the humblest of beginnings, as a group of Navy Seals who were stationed in Hawaii were discussing who the fittest athletes in the world are. Was it swimmers, cyclists or runners who were the fittest? So on Feb. 18, 1978, 15 competitors decided to put themselves to the test by swimming 2.4 miles, biking 112 miles and running 26.2 miles. Whoever finished first they decided, would be called the Ironman. And thus, Ironman triathlon was born. Since those humble beginnings, the sport of Ironman has developed into an international phenomenon, with 18 Ironman distance races sanctioned worldwide. Ironman touches all corners of the globe and has races on all the continents of the world except Antarctica. Ironman North America established its headquarters in Lake Placid in 1999 and called it home for the next four years. Attracted by its positive reputation for sports and volunteerism, Ironman North America continues to host one of its six Ironman events in continental North America in Lake Placid and contributes to many charitable organizations that strengthen the community.



#### *Adirondack Community Trust*

Adirondack Community Trust (ACT) is a community foundation established in 1997 to receive gifts and bequests from the public and to administer them for the broad charitable needs of the Adirondack region. ACT enables people with philanthropic interests to easily and effectively support the projects they care about now and in the future. ACT partners with individuals, families, businesses and foundations to manage and administer quality giving programs to communities and nonprofit organizations throughout the Adirondack region.