

the tens of thousands of volunteers? They not only provide a host of unvaluable services and organizational support, volunteers also create a bond between the Olympic Family and the host community and thus help install the spirit of international solidarity that is so evident at the Olympic Games.

But equally, at the community level, volunteerism and sports bring people together in this same spirit of solidarity. My own childhood memories as a volunteer are closely associated with sports: as a referee, a coach, a host of visiting teams as well as a campaigner to raise funds to build a bigger swimming pool at the local YMCA in my hometown on the Canadian prairies.

The almost 5,000 United Nations vol-

unteers who serve annually around the world for development and peace also understand the galvanizing power of sports. Just recently, a UN volunteer from Brazil joined the group of 700-plus currently working in East Timor. He will be the coach of the national soccer team. How important sports are for this young nation was demonstrated when their athletes participated in last year's Summer Games. I think none of us will forget the uplifting moment when they were cheered by the Sydney audience.

It has been said that the economic value of the time volunteered at the Olympics could be compared to the overall budget of the Games.

It is true: volunteers are cost effective, but they don't come for free.

Volunteerism needs inspired leader-

ship, strong coordination, good training, rigorous evaluation and a supportive infrastructure, as David Brettell reminded us in the context of the Sydney Olympics.

But above all, volunteers need recognition.

The International Year of Volunteers 2001 aims to highlight the efforts of the millions of people around the world who act in the spirit of solidarity.

Join us in fostering and in celebrating this spirit.

It is not only the very foundation of the United Nations.

It also lies at the heart of the Olympic Movement.

*Executive Coordinator, United Nations Volunteers.

The importance of volunteers

In just 372 days – one year and one week from now – the people of Salt Lake City, the state of Utah and the United States of America, will be privileged to host the world's greatest athletes of winter sport.

We will also be pleased to warmly welcome many thousands of guests and several billion TV viewers.

The citizens of our city, state and country sense the increasing reality and prominence of these Games. Their excitement is palpable and contagious.

We are preparing diligently for your

by Ed Eynon*



arrival. Our venues are essentially complete. Every competition venue is being tested through 27 world class events – 11 of which have already

been held this winter season, with 16 more events scheduled for February and March of this year.

Other recent preparatory activities worth mentioning include:

- Olympic Village Open House – five days ago – media tour – 70 acre
- Unveiling of the volunteer uniforms three days ago.
- Announcement of two programmes – Adopt A Team and Olympic Village Mayor of the Day – both designed to continue SLOC's efforts to involve the entire state of Utah in staging the Games.

- Utah State Legislature – planning to be in recess in order to, as they say, “better host our world guests.”

Our preparation will continue in earnest so that we can achieve an excellent and memorable winter encore to the recently successful Sydney Games. Our goals of showcasing the world’s best winter athletes and creating warm and special memories for all who experience the Games can, as we believe, be achieved.

We thank the IOC, the NOCs the IFs and others who have and will greatly assist us in achieving this goal of hosting wonderful Games.

Of course, a key element to hosting successful Games are the Games volunteers. The first wave of service training to 11,000 volunteers will start in

two weeks. Every leader of previous Olympic Games has said the same regarding the one-to-one correlation between great volunteers and great Games.

In Los Angeles, Peter Uberroth, head of the Games of the XXIII Olympiad in Los Angeles in 1984, said to volunteers, “The success of the Games rests on your shoulders. You will never duplicate this once-in-a-lifetime experience. The Games cannot go on without you.”

From Lillehammer, President Gerhard Heiberg said that, “No other function is more critical to the success of the Games than the volunteer function. The Games cannot be great without an excellent corp of volunteers.”

Yet another leader, Jean-Claude Killy,

President of Albertville’s Winter Games accurately predicted that as SLOC got closer to hosting the Games, the importance of the volunteer would become more evident to the SLOC leadership. In fact, Mitt Romney, SLOC’s President and CEO, recently made Killy’s words seem prophetic. After he observed the Sydney Games, an NBC anchorwoman, Katie Couric, asked Mitt what one thing he learned most about the Sydney Games. Mitt’s answer was – “How important the volunteers are to the success of the Games.”

We are thrilled you are coming to Salt Lake City. See you in a year.

* SLOC vice-president responsible for human resources.

A wonderful human adventure

As a volunteer from the very beginning, I was lucky enough to participate in the organization of these Games, recruit team members, organize their training and light the Olympic flame in the heart of each one, the flame that generates passions and ensures success.

We witnessed the gathering of 8,000 volunteers from Savoie, the four corners of France and also neighbouring countries. An immense crowd, united by the same ideal, happy and overflowing with enthusiasm, ready to participate in an adventure in which each person became completely involved.

by Roger Loyet



So let the great Olympic celebration begin!

And what a celebration it was! A celebration of sport and of feats, a celebration of hosting and making friends, a

celebration of sharing the same passion and friendship.

A success?... How could it have been anything else!

Today, we are still carrying this flame which will never die. It will remain synonymous of strength, sharing and excelling oneself.

This adventure changed our view of the world and of our fellow human beings, these XV Olympic Winter Games in Albertville and the Savoie region will always remain in each and every one of us. It was an experience which had to be lived and will leave an indelible mark upon our lives.