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KEEN GREATER DC CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF PROVIDING FUN, FITNESS AND FRIENDSHIP TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, ALL FREE-OF-CHARGE

Organization announces expansion in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Northern Virginia

(Bethesda, MD, January 24, 2017) – KEEN Greater DC (Kids Enjoy Exercise Now Greater DC) (www.KEENGreaterDC.org), a volunteer-run non-profit organization that provides free-of-charge exercise and recreational activities in the Greater Washington-Baltimore region for children, teens and young adults with physical and developmental disabilities, is commemorating its 25th anniversary. In conjunction with its anniversary celebration, KEEN is pleased to announce a major expansion of its programs in 2017, offering new activities to youth with special needs in Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia and Baltimore, Maryland.

KEEN is modeled on an innovative program established in Oxford, England by Elliott Portnoy, who brought KEEN to the Washington, DC area in 1992. With help from parents and volunteers, KEEN has grown to now serve hundreds of young people with disabilities such as autism, cerebral palsy and Down syndrome, offering a wide range of supervised programs and noncompetitive, inclusive activities such as tennis, swimming, basketball, music, zumba, soccer, fitness and weight training, and social activities and outings, all free-of-charge.

“For 25 years KEEN has remained true to its mission to provide recreational and social opportunities for all children,” said Burt Braverman, KEEN Greater DC’s President. “*Lean on Me.... KEEN on Me*” is our motto, as we rely on each other for support in many ways. Our athletes lean on volunteer coaches for guidance and compassionate companionship, our parents lean on the organization for ongoing no-cost programs that provide them with respite and their children with healthful physical activities and social interaction, and KEEN leans on all of our contributors for their extraordinary financial support, which allows us to provide our programs entirely free-of-charge, and on the thousands of volunteers who have helped KEEN achieve so much in its 25 years. It’s a win-win for all.”

KEEN athletes develop:

- Friendships with other athletes and volunteers
- Self-esteem and confidence
- Social and teamwork skills
- Athletic skills and talents
- Physical and emotional well-being
- A sense of belonging

“KEEN is a place where young people with special needs are accepted for who they are, are celebrated for what they can achieve, and can have fun in a safe, supportive setting,” said Braverman. “We are looking forward to marking our 25th anniversary with dynamic expansion of our programs, and to bringing our activities to many more children and families throughout the Washington DC/Baltimore metropolitan area.”

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KEEN GREATER DC: Bethesda-based KEEN Greater DC is a volunteer-run, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to provide opportunities for children with any type of disability – including significant disabilities such as autism, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome – to participate fully in exercise and recreational activities in the community at no charge to their families. From five children in a local gym in 1992, KEEN has grown to now serve more than 400 young people with disabilities in the DC area through 27 programs and 49 monthly sessions including swimming, gym-based sports, fitness, bowling, tennis, and music. Each month, KEEN Greater DC matches a trained volunteer coach one-to-one with an athlete, enabling every child – especially those with significant disabilities – to play, exercise, socialize, and to be part of a team in their community. www.KEENGreaterDC.org