

# Euro Leaders Support Native American Olympic Inclusion

VEYSONNAZ, Switzerland and ASPEN, CO – Feb. 25, 2005 /Send2Press Newswire/ – At French Princess Caroline Murat's recent "1st Ski and Music Festival in Veysonnaz" (part of 4 valleys, including Verbier), a team of Europe's Who's Who stepped up to champion Native American inclusion in future Olympic Games as Sovereign Nations, announced Native Voices Foundation (NVF).



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*Caption: Celebrating Veysonnaz Switzerland as the Training Center for the Native American Olympic Ski Team – L to R: Tulalip speed ski champ Stew Young, Veysonnaz owner Jean Marie Fournier, Ski and Music Festival host Princess Caroline Murat, and Olympic/Freestyle ski champ Suzy Chaffee.*

Stew Young, a member of the newly-formed Native American Ski Team and World Cup speed skier from the Tulalip "Killer Whale" Tribe, and Olympic skier Suzy Chaffee, co-chair of NVF, had come as special guests of the Credit Suisse-sponsored event. Chaffee and Young's intent was also to meet with IOC officials in nearby Lausanne to discuss how to create more opportunities for Indian youth in future Games. Running into an IOC roadblock, NVF Euro leader, Princess Murat (world-renowned pianist inspired by a Ute Chief in Aspen), rallied her friends to give the Americans a hand. Included were Jean Marie Fournier, owner of the Veysonnaz Swiss Ski Resort, Francoise Zweifel, former Secretary General of the IOC, and Princess Lea of Belgium, joined by NVF's other leaders, Olympian Prince Albert of Monaco (adopted by Lakota-Sioux

Tribe), and the Guinness's, the most ancient tribe of Ireland.

### Canada Leads Way

Following the brilliant IOC Eco recommendation to include Indigenous Peoples in the Olympics to enhance their sustainability, spearheaded by President Jacques Rogge, "the First Nations of Canada received a \$3 million Legacy Fund from the Vancouver Olympic Organizers, to train a team of Snowboarders, with the help of our Olympians, to compete our 2010 Games," said Aaron Marchant of the Squamish Nation near Whistler.

"Likewise our focus for the IOC meeting was the tribal-oriented Vancouver Games," said Billy Kidd (Abenaki), captain of the Native American Ski Team and 1964 Alpine Silver Medalist. Only one Native American, Naomi Lang (Cal Karuk Tribe), 5x US Ice Dancing Champion, has competed in the last two Games, and only a handful in history. Yet a group of world Olympians at the Athens Games honored the American Indians for inventing the roots of 10 Olympic sports.

Not used to defeat, Princess Murat, the closest descendent of Napoleon, rallied her friends, many guests of the festival that showcased some of the "awesome" progeny of Europe, like 15 yr old Russian violist Sasha Saume, elated to have Native American and Olympic/Freestyle stars teach them to ski. "We were amazed how Zweifel offered to graciously guide us with the IOC; Princess Lea offered to hand deliver a letter to her countryman, President Rogge; Fournier (and Princess Caroline) announced on Swiss TV that Veysonnaz, with its fun apres ski Tipi on top, will host a Native American Olympic Ski Team Training Center."

"Indian Country so appreciates how Princess Caroline and her friends are fighting to open the Olympic doors for our youth to be able to dream and realistically have a chance to compete in future Olympic Games. Especially after feeling unwelcome after IOC/USOC President Avery Brundage illegally took away Jim Thorpe's medals," said Young.

The question on everyone's minds there was: could the American Indians prove they are Sovereign Nations?

Back in America, Oren Lyons, Chief of the Onondaga Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy, supplied the legal ramifications: Considering: The existence of the treaty relationships between the United States and sovereign Indian Nations: "Indian Nations preexist the United States... Indian Nation Sovereignty is recognized and protected by the U.S. Constitution, legal precedent, and treaties, as well as applicable principles of Human Rights." – from joint occasional papers on Native Affairs no. 200403 (from book, "Myths and Realities of Tribal Sovereignty: The Law and Economics of Indian Self Rule" by Joseph Kalt [Harvard's JFK School of Government & Native American Economic Development], and William Singer [Native Nations Institute at Udall Center for Studies of Public Policy at U. Arizona.]

Further: "The Iroquois Nationals (traveling under Haudenosaunee Passport) compete in the International Lacrosse Federation's (ILF) World Championships (Iroquois-invented game), and currently rank 4th behind USA, Canada and Australia," said Chief Lyons, Grand Master Lacrosse player, CEO of Iroquois

Nationals Team, and history professor at U of Buffalo.

Native Americans are on the lowest economic ladder in America with a 20 year less life expectancy..., and are "still too depressed (from the abusive government boarding schools...) to want to get healthy," according to a Senate study. Sports, especially skiing in their ancestral lands, have been found to be the No. 1 motivator of Indian youth, and now over 100 ski areas want to welcome their tribes to ski and snowboard to "start a new beginning," inspired also by the economic-lifting snow ceremonies the tribes have shared.

"Through the IOC's opening their doors to welcome American Indian Nations into the Olympic Family, as Sovereign Nations, Native youth can finally get the health, appreciation, encouragement, healing, and sponsors to train teams in some of the sports they invented to be able to compete with honor in future Games. This is also the best chance to preserve our quality of life, and our 100 year old Modern Olympics to last as long as the Ancient Olympics, which lasted 1,000 years," said Chaffee.

NVF is a Colorado non-profit 501(c)3. It is a partnership of US Tribal leaders and Olympians whose mission is to create joyful unity through sports to help preserve Mother Earth for all our children.

See "Other reasons for Native Americans inclusion in future Olympics," along with welcomed donations and sponsorships on [www.nativevoices.org](http://www.nativevoices.org).

Editing and distribution services for this release donated by Send2Press.

News issued by: Native Voices Foundation (NVF)

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Original Story ID: (120) :: 2005-02-0225-002

Original Keywords: Native Voices Foundation (NVF), Suzy Chaffee, native american, olympics, non-profit, 501(c)3, Native American Olympic Ski Team, Sovereign Nations, French Princess Caroline Murat Native Voices Foundation (NVF)