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For more information, call the School of Music: 346-3761.



Marketers' homework comes to life

PLAN: A student marketing team's tactics were used to promote the 1996 Special Olympics

By Kristin Bailey
Student Activities Reporter

Business stops for nothing, not even the deluge of rain and whipping winds at last weekend's Oregon Special Olympics. For 14 students of the James H. Warsaw Sports Marketing Center, the 1996 Summer Games were an opportunity to put their homework assignments to use.

Marketing team volunteers braved the elements at Hayward Field Saturday and Sunday to conduct market research of the Special Olympics.

"We were extremely successful," said Kristi Wise, University graduate student and the project's marketing director. "It was amazing to see everything come together. The looks on the faces

of the athletes as fans cheered them was worth it all."

Wise and other students in her class began the organization of their Special Olympics marketing plan as part of a class assignment in January. Their goal was to develop strategies to promote the games.

Although the group was not required to implement their plan, Wise was approached by Special Olympics' officials in February. She was asked to be marketing director, and their homework became a real-life plan.

Wise's group had three main goals: to increase attendance at the games, increase sponsorship and increase University involvement. Intense media promotion, including spots on TCI Cable and radio station KUGN, helped them to attain these goals, she said.

"We accrued more than \$50,000 in sponsorship monies," she said. "And all the media promotions really fulfilled our goal

of increasing awareness in the Eugene community."

Part of the marketing team's strategy was a 25-person survey team. The Spontaneous Thanks and Recognition (STAR) Team worked as a liaison between the crowd and the Special Olympics, helping in seating and providing information.

"We wanted to make the public feel they're important and needed," Wise said. "There are so many people that really don't have a background on the Special Olympics. The STAR Team really tried to provide that."

The STAR team also conducted 350 surveys in order to better understand the people who attended the games, STAR team director Manny Baniago said.

"We're focusing on volunteers and fans," he said. "It's very hectic, but we're hoping to be able to track how well the Olympics went this year."

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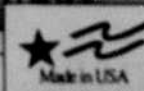
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