



# Civitan International **NEWS RELEASE**

BUILDING VOLUNTEER LEADERS IN CLUBS AROUND THE WORLD

WWW.CIVITAN.ORG 1-800-CIVITAN

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 11, 2009**

Photos and Interviews available by request

**For more information contact:**

David Bledsoe, Director of Comm. & PR  
(205) 591-8910, ext. 134

[david@civitan.org](mailto:david@civitan.org) - [www.civitan.org](http://www.civitan.org)

## **BIRMINGHAM-BASED NON-PROFIT CELEBRATES LIFE OF EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER**

Birmingham, AL . . . One Birmingham area non-profit is celebrating the life of developmental disabilities advocate Eunice Kennedy Shriver, and their immeasurable work together to improve the lives of these special people. Civitan International, whose mission is to meet community needs with an emphasis on helping people with developmental disabilities, was one of the first premier sponsors of local and international Special Olympics Games – and found a great supporter in Shriver, who was Chairman at the time. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, Shriver spoke to tens of thousands of Civitan members, helping raise millions of dollars for Civitan International’s support of Special Olympics.

Her regular contributions to Civitan Magazine, like “To Be An Olympian,” helped reveal the struggles of people with intellectual disabilities and motivate Civitan members, and in 1984, she worked with Civitan to introduce Special Olympics to the country of Norway. That same year Shriver became the 4<sup>th</sup> person in the organization’s 64-year history to be honored with Civitan International’s prestigious World Citizenship Award for her tremendous efforts to enhance the dignity of people and foster international understanding.

Today, that legacy of partnership continues as Civitan’s International Research Center at UAB has become one of only 12 research facilities in the United States to receive grants from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Institute of Child Health and Human Development in 2008.

The Center at UAB, which brings together top scientific minds and the latest technology to create innovative therapies and treatments for people with developmental disabilities, is the result of a \$20 million commitment by Civitan International. “The world has lost a remarkable champion of people with intellectual and physical disabilities, and a true friend to all Civitans,” said Civitan International Executive Vice President John Rynearson. “She will be dearly missed.”

Since its founding in Birmingham in 1917, Civitan has grown to approximately 40,000 member in 28 countries. Civitan clubs meet a wide variety of needs in their communities, with an emphasis on helping people with developmental disabilities. For more information about Civitan International, and our programs, please visit us on the web at [www.civitan.org](http://www.civitan.org), or call us at 1-800-CIVITAN.

**###**