FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Burke Rehabilitation Hospital to Host 34th Annual Wheelchair Games, Re-Vamped Heels & Wheels 5k Road Race and Walk, Sept. 28

WHITE PLAINS, NY – Sept. 13, 2013 – After more than three decades, Burke Rehabilitation Hospital continues its tradition of drawing wheelchair athletes of all ages from throughout the tri-state area and beyond to its annual Wheelchair Games. Every autumn, Burke’s campus transforms into hub of sportsmanship and camaraderie, where wheelchair athletes compete in table tennis, track and field events, and a slalom obstacle course.

“It’s like having the Paralympics in your backyard,” said Wheelchair Games co-chair Tracey Bogart. “It truly is an inspiring event and every year Burke is proud to host such an amazing group of athletes.”

On Sept. 28, Burke Rehabilitation Hospital will be hosting its 34th annual Wheelchair Games on its main campus, 785 Mamaroneck Ave. in White Plains. Field events start at 9 a.m. and track races start at 1:30 p.m. The competitive categories include a Futures Division (six and under), two Junior Divisions and an Adult/Master Division.

Along with the Games, Burke is also hosting its newly re-vamped Heels & Wheels 5K Road Race that will now include walkers, on the same date.
“We want to make sure everyone can participate,” said Heather Massimo, director of the Fitness Center at Burke and 5K co-organizer, on adding walkers. Brought back in 2012 after a seven year lapse, the Heels & Wheels event last year allowed for both wheelchair athletes and runners to compete together. This year’s event will be more inclusive, allowing even more participants a chance to enjoy the race. Registration opens at 9 a.m. and the race kicks off at 10 a.m.

The race path starts at the hospital entrance, on the corner of Mamaroneck Ave. and Heatherbloom Road. Racers will follow a route down Mamaroneck Ave. to Bryant Ave., and through the Gedney Farms area that surrounds the perimeter of the hospital. Participating athletes for Heels & Wheels will be condensed into groups according to their ability and age.

Be ready, bright and early on Sept. 28 to take part in a fun-filled day of sports and entertainment including live event broadcasts from WHUD and WFAS; face painting; a silent auction and chance raffles; and other carnival games. Both the Wheelchair Games and Heels and Wheels are free for spectators and Burke invites all community members to come out and support these remarkable athletes.

There is a $25 fee for Wheelchair Games participants, however, financial assistance is available for those who cannot afford the registration fee as Burke encourages all athletes to participate. There is a $30 fee for Heels & Wheels 5K participants 16 years and older; children ages 6 - 15 years old have a fee of $15; and children under 5 years old are free. The cost includes an event t-shirt, numbered bib and timing device.

-MORE-
For additional information, visit www.burke.org or call (914) 597-2850 for Wheelchair Games details and (914) 597-2578 for Heels & Wheels. For those who would like to sponsor an athlete or donate to the games, please call (914) 597-2849. If you would like to volunteer your time and assist the day of the games, please contact (914) 597-2581. All volunteers receive a free t-shirt and lunch. Children volunteers must be 12 years old or older.

Burke Rehabilitation Hospital is a private, not-for-profit, acute rehabilitation hospital. Founded in 1915, it is the only hospital in Westchester County dedicated solely to rehabilitation medicine. Burke offers both inpatient and outpatient programs for those who have experienced a disabling illness, traumatic injury or joint replacement surgery. Burke is both an acute rehabilitation hospital and medical research center. Burke's world renowned doctors and therapists provide state-of-the-art treatment, while its research scientists explore the frontiers of neurological medicine. All share the Burke mission to ensure that every patient makes the fullest possible recovery from illness or injury regardless of their ability to pay.

###