FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Burke Rehabilitation Hospital to Host 36th Annual Wheelchair Games Sept. 26”

WHITE PLAINS, NY – September 16, 2015 – For more than three decades wheelchair athletes of all ages, from the tri-state area and beyond, have headed to Burke Rehabilitation Hospital to participate in its annual Wheelchair Games. This year the event takes place on September 26—and marks the 36th annual Games.

Every fall, Burke’s campus is transformed into a unique forum for sportsmanship, camaraderie, and determination. The sporting event allows disabled persons to show their ability in a variety of track, field and table tennis events. Sports are known for their therapeutic benefits and the Wheelchair Games help athletes build strength, coordination, endurance and self-confidence, allowing those with physical impairments the ability to stay active and to enjoy the competition.

“This year will mark the 36th annual Burke Wheelchair Games and although it is a competition, the Games are also about camaraderie and inclusion for all participants, regardless of ability level,” said Richard Sgaglio, Ph.D., director of marketing and external relations at Burke Rehabilitation Hospital.

Track events include 20, 40, 60, 80, 100, 400, 800, and 1,500 meter races, and the slalom, which is an obstacle course. Field events include club, softball, javelin, shot put, and discus. In addition, a new demonstration is scheduled to take place this year: a wheelchair basketball expo and clinic at 11:30 am.

“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. This year in particular, we’re excited to introduce the wheelchair basketball clinic and the handcycling exhibition to show the truly wide-range of activities athletes can participate in.”
The Wheelchair Games are broken down into three different competitive categories, with over 70 athletes expected to compete. The Future’s Division is for children ages six and under, the Junior’s Division is for athletes between the ages of seven and 21, and the Adults/Master Division is for athletes over the age of 21.

The regular fee is $25 and included with the registration fee is an event t-shirt, lunch, and a goody bag loaded with lots of wonderful donated gifts. Financial assistance is available for those who cannot afford the registration fee, and all athletes are encouraged to participate in the event, regardless of ability to pay.

Admission is free for spectators and the general public is encouraged to attend. In addition to the track and field events, the Wheelchair Games will feature carnival games, live entertainment, and raffles.

This annual event is produced entirely by volunteers, which includes Burke employees as well as people from the community. These volunteers come from civic groups, schools, religious organizations and other associations. All event volunteers will receive a free t-shirt and lunch. Volunteers must be at least 12 years of age to participate.

Please call the Wheelchair Games Hotline at (914) 597-2850 if you have any questions about the Games. For more information about classification and/or athletic events, please contact Ralph Armento, meet director, at ralph461@msn.com or (732) 422-9094. For those who would like to sponsor an athlete or donate, please call (914) 597-2849.

About Burke Rehabilitation Hospital
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.