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**USA Cheer Announces Traditional Special Ability Team Wins 2022 International Cheer Union World Championship**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*The Elite Stars Traditional Special Abilities Cheer team from Hanover Park, Illinois, out of Gymkhana represents the United States at the International Cheer Union World Championships and wins Gold!*

(Hanover Park, IL) USA Cheer had announced that it will be fielding a Traditional Cheer team in the Special Abilities team divisions at the 2022 International Cheer Union (ICU) World Cheerleading Championships, which took place April 20 – 22, 2022 at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at the Walt Disney World® Resort.

The Special Abilities divisions at the ICU are for athletes with and without an Intellectual Disability. “We were extremely excited about the representation we had in the Special Abilities division at the ICU Championships. These athletes, most with disabilities, worked tremendously hard and USA Cheer was happy to assist us in showcasing our passion, ability, and energy on the global stage!” says Jacqueline Sanchez, Head Coach and Patty Hermann, Director of US National Traditional Special Abilities Teams for USA.

This year’s Cheer team was coached by a former University of Louisville cheerleader and former USA Cheer National Team Member, Jacqueline Sanchez. Along with year-round assistance from Courtney Connolly, Elizabeth Holbrook and Alyssa Konkel.

**About USA Cheer**The USA Federation for Sport Cheering is a not-for-profit organization and is the national governing body for all disciplines of cheerleading. USA Cheer exists to serve the entire cheer community, including club cheering (All Star), traditional school-based cheer programs and the new sport of STUNT. USA Cheer has three primary objectives: help grow and develop interest and participation in Cheer throughout the United States; promote safety and safety education for cheer in the United States; and represent the United States of America in international cheer competitions.

For more information about USA Cheer, contact Sheila Noone, [media@usacheer.org](mailto:media@usacheer.org).

**About the Elite Stars**

The ELITE STARS are housed at Gymkhana Gymnastics School in Hanover Park, IL and are one of the world’s strongest competitive programs for individuals with special needs. A year-round training program that focuses on high level training for individuals with special needs that goes beyond the scope of traditional training by creating competitive training opportunities that are designed to parallel normalized training for high level competitive gymnasts, cheerleaders, dancers, figure skaters and strength and power team without special needs. Home to several Special Olympic World, National and State Champions, the STARS continues to grow in sport, spirit and splendor.

2022 International Cheer Union (ICU) World Cheerleading Championships is the highest level of achievement in the cheer world. The team consists of special athletes: Danny Baker (Hinsdale), Nicole and Audrey Brickwood (Palatine), Alyssa DiSanti (Elgin), Mia Foster (Glen Ellyn), Renee Grandstaff (Hanover Park), Natalia Janik (Chicago), Ashley Jones (Hoffman Estates), Emily Kwidzinski (Chicago), Chris Marques (Elk Grove), Lucas Miezal (Harwood Hts), Aneta Michniak (Elk Grove), Katie O’Neill (Elmhurst), Nicole Paradise (Bartlett), Robert Parat (Hoffman Estates) Mili Patel (Hoffman Estates), Tess Podraza (Huntley), Mary Roman (Schaumburg), Luke Shapira (Indiana), Alexis Winegard (Vernon Hills) and Suzanne Wollschlager (Elk Grove). Spotters include: Nick Criel (Bensenville), Michael Jones (Hoffman Estates, Jacob Wade (Bartlett) and Alyssa Konkel (Hanover Park).

The Elite Stars Foundation is a registered 501c3.

For more information about Elite Stars, contact Patty Hermann, [phermann@elitestars.org](mailto:phermann@elitestars.org).