

On the weekend of August 22 & 23, the US Luge Team conducted part of its annual nationwide recruitment program, the "Slider Search, in Utica adjacent to the City Hall on Cornelia Street. The program introduces the Winter Olympic sport of luge to local youngsters using actual luge sleds equipped with wheels. This was the first time we visited the Utica area for this event and I am happy to say the response we received was very enthusiastic. The City and County were instrumental in making our event a reality and were extremely helpful every step of the way. Despite threatening rains from hurricane Bill, the introductory clinics were well attended and we saw many talented and promising new athletes. Luge World Champion and Remsen's own Erin Hamlin was there to help out which gave the participants an extra boost of motivation. The most promising athletes from the Utica clinics as well all the cities we will be visiting this year, will be invited to a one week training camp at the US Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid this coming fall. There they will receive their first experience on ice at the real luge run. We saw several athletes in Utica that performed quite well and I am sure will receive an invitation to this next step in the program.

On behalf of USA Luge, I would like to thank everyone from the City of Utica and Oneida County who were directly responsible for helping to make our event a success. They proved to us that Utica is an event friendly city second to none. In particular I would like to thank Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Utica Mayor David R. Roefaro, Oneida County Youth Bureau Director Bob Roth, Assistant to the Mayor Maria Alberico, City of Utica Media Director Paul Buckley, City of Utica Events Coordinator Larry Desiato and City of Utica Commissioner of Parks Dave Short.

We are already discussing the possibility of returning next year and look forward to introducing more kids from the Utica area to the sport of luge.

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