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5TH GRADER ALISSA FUELLING – QUALIFIES FOR NATIONAL GYMNASTICS PROGRAM

(Rapid City, SD – November 13, 2013) – Allissa Fuelling has been identified by USA Gymnastics as one of the top 100 competitive eight year old gymnasts in the nation.

Fuelling joined an elite group of athletes when she tested with over 3,700 of the country's best gymnasts at USA Gymnastics' TOP (Talent Opportunity Program) in Omaha, Nebraska in July. Fuelling advanced from the testing and was invited to attend an evaluation week at the National Training Center at the Karoli Ranch in Texas in October.

During the months of June and July gymnasts were tested on physical abilities at the state or regional level. From there, athletes were invited to participate in the National TOPs test conducted in the month of October where they were further evaluated on physical abilities, which include strength and conditioning elements, along with flexibility testing and gymnastics skills. Skill testing is done on all four Olympic events based on age group. The TOPs program has a very successful track record identifying future Olympic and World champions. All five 2012 Olympic Team members, (the Fierce Five) were TOPs gymnasts.

TOPs is a talent search and educational program for female gymnasts ages 7-10 that comes with some very challenging and specific requirements. Coach Amy Ellis commented that the training is quite rigorous. "Typically the athletes who participate in the program are already high level competitive gymnasts who work out between 15 and 20 hours per week. TOPs adds another 5-10 hours of particularly strenuous training per week to their schedule."

Fuelling was the youngest of Just Jymnastics' competitive team to qualify as a member of the Level 8 Super Team for the USA Gymnastics Region IV competition in April. "Allissa is a talented young lady with an incredible drive, but being able to perform when the pressure is on is what sets her apart from thousands of other high level gymnasts. She's an inspiration to our entire team and we are thrilled to get



to share her unique experience. It pushes all of the girls to work that much harder and encourage one another to reach for their goals,” commented Head Coach Alan Ponto.

Alissa says that the hard work and being in the gym so much is worth it. “I love gymnastics. It was a little scary to be with so many really good gymnasts, but everyone was so nice and supportive... cheering me on. It makes you feel like you can do anything.” When asked if she sees herself as an Olympic champion someday, Fuelling replied, “I would love to represent the USA in the 2020 Olympics.”

Fuelling is looking forward to another exciting season of competition, which begins with her first meet in Minneapolis in January, and will continue through April. “Alissa is on track to be very competitive at Regionals in April. If she does well there, her next stop will be the Junior Olympic Western Nationals in Boise, Idaho in May.” noted coach Amy Ellis.

In the meantime, local gymnastics fans can get a glimpse of Just Jymnastic’s future Olympic hopeful as she will perform exhibition routines at the Black Hills Invite on Saturday, November 23rd at Just Jymnastics.

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Interviews available upon request.

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