

Summer 2009

The Guardian

The Newsletter of the Law Enforcement Torch Run Executive Council



Eunice Kennedy Shriver's Legacy.....

the Flame of Hope burns brighter than ever!

The Guardian

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Chairman's CORNER

October 5, 2009

Torch Run Friends:

As you know, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the founder of Special Olympics, passed away on August 11, 2009. It was a very sad day for Special Olympics and the Law Enforcement Torch Run, but the tribute to her life and legacy that followed was most inspirational.

The legacy of the Special Olympics movement has had a positive impact on millions of people and will last forever. It was stated at her funeral that Eunice Kennedy Shriver did just as much, if not more, than any Kennedy or Shriver in changing the world and making it a better place to live in. She was an incredible lady who dedicated her life to helping others.

Looking back I can remember many instances where Eunice was very much a part of what was happening with the Torch Run. Chief LaMunyon respectfully credits her with accepting and adopting the concept of the Law Enforcement Torch Run after seeing the Torch Run take place in Kansas, thereby allowing the LETR to spread throughout the United States and ultimately the world. Eunice attended many World Games and was very supportive of the Final Leg; I distinctly remember her attending several ceremonies in Connecticut (1995) and also a reception for the Final Leg Team at the Irish Embassy in Washington D.C. (1999). She was always very gracious and posed for many pictures with Final Leg runners. Without Special Olympics there would be no Law Enforcement Torch Run, so our LETR roots originate directly from the firm foundation of Eunice Kennedy Shriver.

The Shriver family asked for the Law Enforcement Torch Run to have a prominent and highly visible role in the funeral plan. Responding on very short notice, over 70 officers from Massachusetts and several surrounding states made the trip to Hyannis to be a part of the walking funeral procession. We partnered with dozens of wonderful local Special Olympics athletes who marched in formation with us. A lit torch was carried by an officer and athlete directly in front of the casket to pay tribute to Eunice and symbolize the hope and courage that she made possible for millions of people. The officers and athletes then joined Shriver's family and friends at the private funeral and following service at the burial site. At the grave-side service, Tim Shriver addressed our group and invited us to draw close to the family and participate in the service, saying that Eunice would have wanted it that way. This was an inspirational moment that made all of us know that we are an important part of the Special Olympics family.

As law enforcement officers dedicated to the mission of Special Olympics by participating in the Law Enforcement Torch Run, we all should feel very honored to be called on by the Shriver family to be a part of paying tribute to such an amazing person. Please know that you were well represented by the officers who attended and conveyed the condolences of the entire LETR movement.

Stay Safe and God Bless,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael".

Major Michael Teem, Raleigh, NC PD
Chairman, LETR Executive Council



Eunice Kennedy Shriver 1921-2009

On Tuesday, August 11 at 2 in the morning, the Shriver Family together with the Special Olympics global family, said good bye to a most amazing woman; Eunice Kennedy Shriver passed away at the age of 88.

The younger sister of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Mrs. Shriver was the founder and honorary chairperson of Special Olympics. Special Olympics' roots go back to Camp Shriver which began in June 1962 as a summer day camp at Mrs. Shriver's home in Maryland for children and adults with intellectual disabilities as a way for them to explore their capabilities in a variety of sports and physical activities. Six years later, in July 1968, the first International Special Olympics Summer Games were held at Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois where 1,000 individuals with intellectual disabilities from 26 U.S. states and Canada competed in track and field and swimming. Today, more than three million Special Olympic athletes are training year-round in all 50 U.S. States and over 175 countries.

Her family describes Mrs. Shriver as "inspired by her love of God, her devotion to her family, and her relentless belief in the dignity and worth of every human life, she worked without ceasing - searching, pushing, demanding, hoping

for change. She was a living prayer, a living advocate, a living center of power. She set out to change the world and to change us, and she did that and more. She founded the movement that became Special Olympics, the largest movement for acceptance and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities in the history of the world. Her work transformed the lives of hundreds of millions of people across the globe, and they in turn are her living legacy."

For the past 28 years, the law enforcement community has played a major role in supporting and furthering Mrs. Shriver's mission. Chief Richard LaMunyon, founder of the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics, had the opportunity to meet with Mrs. Shriver on several occasions to start, build and grow the LETR movement and, most recently, participated, along with other LETR representatives and Special Olympics athletes, in the funeral services honoring her life and work.

A Letter from Richard E. LaMunyon, In Memoriam

Founder of the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics

I remember meeting Eunice Kennedy Shriver in the fall of 1982 at her office in Washington, D.C. It was to be the first of many meetings and events with her over the next 27 years. I was there to share with her my thoughts regarding Law Enforcement involvement with Special Olympics. As the meeting progressed, she was interested, inquisitive, in control and non-committal. She did agree, however, to visit the Kansas Special Olympics Summer Games in Wichita the following year and observe the law enforcement activities. She arrived, observed, signed on and became an empowering force that allowed the Law Enforcement Torch Run to move forward.

As the Torch Run grew she provided the commitment, partnership, helping hands and the "get it done" attitude. Over the years I had the privilege of watching her at a variety of events and her message was always to inspire confidence and the commitment of inclusion for all. It mattered not if it was a boardroom meeting, standing in the middle of Solder's Field, a gala event in California, a State Department dinner, at the White House or on the stage of the Grand Ole Opera, she motivated and generated the enthusiasm that moved all of us forward.

History will record her as the one who provided a light into the darkness. A light that touched not only those with intellectual disabilities but the millions of us that could not see the potential of those who were right in front of us. She broke down those walls that separated people, governments and nations and brought us all together in the spirit of helping each other to do what is right.

I was humbled recently as I stood in her home and looked into the faces of her children and grandchildren as they had gathered for prayer and reflection. I could see through them Eunice's faith, strength and inspiration radiating throughout the room. Later, as a Special Law Enforcement Torch led her to her final earthly event, I watched with joyfulness as her indomitable spirit was seen in her family and her athletes along the way.

On behalf of Law Enforcement Officers everywhere, it is with gratitude and appreciation, that I say thank you to Eunice Kennedy Shriver for allowing us the privilege and honor to be a part of her Special Olympic family.

Chief Richard E. LaMunyon

Founder of the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics

Tributes

I will always treasure the memory of meeting her in china at the world games. She also gave me the journey of a lifetime as an International Global Messenger and her memories will live on in athletes all over the world.

Martha Hill, Sheboygan



What you achieved for our challenged families is momentous. The smile of a Special Olympics player warms the coldest heart. There are no words that can adequately 'Thank you'.

Donald E. Hull, Saint. Joseph

As a board member of the Special Olympics, it is such a tremendous loss to say goodbye to beloved founder, Eunice Kennedy Shriver. Her dynamic vision, undeniable passion for the intellectually disabled and courage to change the world will be missed.

Vanessa Williams, New York

Mrs. Kennedy-Shriver, thank you for all you did for our athletes. We will carry your legacy on. As a proud member of the Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run, I will carry your legacy on.

Joanne Russell, Boston

What a great moment for me, my son, the world. What you have made possible for so many people defies all reason.

Lowell Weicker, Jr.
Former United States Senator



I am inspired by such determination & love. The world has lost a beacon of hope.

H., Cape Cod

To read more about the life and work of Eunice Kennedy Shriver or to post a tribute, please visit www.eunicekennedyshriver.org.

What's Happening in East Asia?

By: Patrick Chan, Region XII Coordinator

CHINA – The Flame returned



Having proudly hosted a very successful Special Olympics World Summer Games in 2007, Shanghai City, China offered a warm welcome to the Flame of Hope™ of the Special Olympics World Winter Games in January 2009 before it completed its 60,000 km journey around the globe.

In a ceremony officiated by the Vice Mayor of Shanghai City and attended by the Managing Director of Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia (SOEE), Chairman of SO China and other local dignitaries, the torch was passed to a Special Olympics athlete who together with some 40 uniformed police officers, volunteers and law enforcement officers from Hong Kong ran through the cheering crowd. Despite the chilling temperature, the flame warmed the heart of the many athletes, their parents and the community.

The flame then continued its journey to the USA, eventually arriving at Idaho where the cauldron was lit at the Opening Ceremonies of the Special Olympics World Winter Games.

HONG KONG – Two Decades of Excellence

It has been 20 long years since the first Law Enforcement Torch Run® was held in Hong Kong, the Pearl of the Orient. A cocktail party held to celebrate the achievement of Hong Kong athletes returning from the Special Olympics World Winter Games in which heads of local law enforcement departments attended, was a prelude to the series of celebrations to mark the special occasion.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® started in 1989 in Hong Kong involving only a few hundred police officers. Today, seven law enforcement agencies, namely, the Correctional Services Department, the Customs and Excise Department, Fire Services Department, Government Flying Services, Immigration Department, Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Police who all joined hands to boost the largest grass roots fund raising campaign for Special Olympics.

Although it was a hot and humid Sunday in May 2009, and although it was Mothers' Day, a record 1,200 officers turned up in smart LETR T-shirts to puzzle local residents and passers by. With the banging of a gong, already sweating runners dashed through the crowds along the Shing Mun River, a training venue for Special Olympics rowers. Senior officers cheered the runners along the route and a helicopter snaked across the sky to offer runners a temporary respite from the physical exertion.

Despite the prevailing financial downturn, the run achieved its donation target of HK\$1,500,000 (US \$200,000 approx.)



What's Happening in East Asia?

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CHINESE TAIPEI – From What? to When?

2009 is also a special year for Special Olympics Chinese Taipei (SOCT). Ten years ago, a senior police officer to whom SOCT volunteers solicited support asked “What?” What is Special Olympics? What is the Law Enforcement Torch Run? What? You want me to allow my officers to run in the streets?

It took a lot of knockings on the doors, a lot of explanation and negotiating skills for the Police Chiefs to be convinced that it was an international movement gaining support from law enforcement officers worldwide. The then Mayor of Taipei City now President of Chinese Taipei, a running enthusiast, joined the first ever LETR in 1999.

Police officers and volunteers attended LETR International Conferences every year to grasp an insight of what the movement was about and how best to get one organized at home. Ten years later, the run has spread from north to south and from east to west.

Efforts to spread the message continued. In a Law Enforcement Torch Run® Conference held in Taipei City in November 2008, parents and athletes introduced LETR to police recruits while overseas speakers and runners of previous Final Legs reinforce the meaning of LETR to other serving officers. LETR has also become a regular topic in basic police training resulting in more and more officers joining the run every year.

The run in 2009 was participated by about 1,000 athletes, police officers, volunteers and television artists, raising enough funds for SOCT to implement and to develop its programs for the athletes.

The question in the mind of Chinese Taipei police officers is now ‘When?’ When will this year’s Law Enforcement Torch Run be held?



Athlete

Profile

Joshua Frost

Special Olympics New South Wales, Australia



*Joshua Frost
carrying the Flame of Hope™*

When Joshua Frost was told that he had been selected to be part of the Final Leg of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® to be run around Sydney for the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Shanghai in 2007, he didn't know that it would lead to one of the highlights of his life.

His father, Michael, had nominated him as an athlete to represent New South Wales (NSW) in the run. Michael and Denise Frost, his parents, were also asked to be chaperones for the group of 12 athletes from all around Australia. The welcome dinner at the Menzies Hotel in Sydney gave the athlete's time to get to know each other and to be presented with their uniforms (sponsored by DHL). At this dinner athletes were selected to fill various roles during the run. To Joshua's surprise he was selected to be the first Australian Special Olympics athlete to hold the torch after it had been lit. A run across the Sydney Harbour Bridge started the Torch Run around Sydney, which then made its way to receptions at The Chinese Gardens, Sydney Town Hall and Parliament House to the final reception at Government House. The law enforcement officers and the athletes then mingled on a harbor cruise while the torch was run up and over the Sydney Harbor Bridge. The day finished with dinner and reception at the Chinese Consulate.

Joshua got to experience the atmosphere of the World Games when his family travelled to China to support athletes from his region, Sydney West, and from around Australia. To his great excitement, he saw himself in the Sydney Final Leg Run on the big screen at the opening ceremony of the Games at Shanghai Stadium. Joshua, who is 26, joined Special Olympics in 2003, when his mother, by chance heard about the Special Olympics organization. Until this time Joshua didn't have the opportunity to make friends because of his disability – Aspergers Syndrome.

Tenpin Bowling is his preferred sport which he has been playing for 14 years, and now he shares his knowledge and skills with his peers. Athletics and Bocce were added to his sports and he has won many medals, trophies and ribbons at regional, State and National levels in disability competitions as well as Special Olympics events. Going to competitions is eagerly anticipated, as the social aspect sometimes overshadows the sport itself. Joshua considers that he owns the Torch Runs that occur at the State Games, as he knows all the police who attend, and has formed friendships with them through the Law Enforcement Torch Run®. At the 2009 NSW Police Games, held in Sydney, Joshua competed in tenpin bowling and won three silver and one bronze medals. When he went to watch the swimming events he was asked to present the winning police participants with their medals, which he thought was a great role reversal as it is usually him that is being presented. Joshua continues to grow through Special Olympics participation. He has been elected as an athlete representative on the Sydney West regional Committee and is training to be an Ambassador for Special Olympics through the Athlete Leadership Program. Recently, he visited the NSW Police Academy with Senior Sergeant Don Stuart and Sergeant Ben MacFarlane (LETR NSW) to promote Special Olympics and the Torch Run by talking to some 310 graduating police recruits.

Outside Special Olympics Joshua is a mad Parramatta Eels Rugby League supporter, and has a particular skill of being able to recall scores and statistics. All types of sports are watched with keen interest on TV, that is, when he is not playing on the Play Station. McDonald's has employed Joshua for nine years. This job is particularly suited to his need for constant routine and the manager has said that if all his employees were as dedicated and diligent as Joshua, then he would have no problems at the workplace. Despite his disability, through Special Olympics, Joshua had developed his social skills, and has an increased ability to socialise and communicate with peers, as well as parents, police and friends.

A SWEET GEORGIA SUCCESS!!



**By: Allison H. Kaczinski, Director of Special Events
Special Olympics Georgia**

This year's "Cops on Doughnut Shops" was a **HUGE** success at Special Olympics Georgia!! Over 15 agencies participated in the exciting 7th annual fundraiser that sent ---hundreds of police officers to the roofs of Krispy Kreme stores around Georgia for 60 hours straight. Officers were seen eating, sleeping and playing on the rooftops as they collected "dough-nations" for the 22,769 inspiring athletes of Georgia. Two new stores were added this year, as well as an impressive mock shop set-up for the second year by the Kennesaw Police Department. They brought tents, an RV, and plenty of doughnuts, as they collected donations by selling them and collected donations out in the streets. The officers of the Kennesaw Police Department even lifted a car sky high with a NASCAR lift, attracting attention from those around for miles as motorists drove towards their intersection. Johns Creek Police Department also participated this weekend, with a local restaurant, as they sat on top to collect donations as well, in spite of not having a Krispy Kreme in their jurisdiction.

In spite of a slower economy, the officers were able to raise **\$119,169.75** for the Law Enforcement Torch Run® of Georgia; a significant jump from last year's \$89,708.50 total!

This year was especially touching as the Atlanta Police Department faced more challenges than one. Major Robert Browning of the Atlanta Police Department and an enthusiastic member of the Georgia LETR Executive Council was diagnosed with throat cancer at the beginning of the year. Because of his illness, he was unfortunately, but understandably unable to participate. Lieutenant Dan Wade, also of the Atlanta Police Department, was happy to step in and take responsibility for coordinating the agency on behalf of Major Browning.

Staking claim at Atlanta's Oldest Krispy Kreme located in Midtown, the Atlanta Police Department entered the weekend with an energetic, no-holds-barred attitude. Command Post bus, patrol cars and sirens dominated the scene drawing quite a crowd. Officers covered the roof, parking lot and surrounding street corners speaking to anyone within distance about the benefits of Special Olympics and asking them to help make a difference.

The Atlanta Police Department rallied together and proved to be a force not to be reckoned with. Upping the ante that much more, the agency decided to create a little friendly competition within their department by issuing a Zone Challenge to all those participating. Each Zone rotated roof-sitting among six-hour shifts where they challenged those in other zones to raise more money. They then began challenging each other within zones to see who could raise the most money individually. In total, the Atlanta Police Department was able to raise **\$15,675.81** alone; a \$10,800.90 increase from their 2008 total!!

On behalf of all of the athletes of Special Olympics Georgia, **THANK YOU** to the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for an amazingly successful event!!



Highlights from the 2009 Missouri Torch Run

By: Crystal Chalk, Special Olympics Missouri

The 2009 Law Enforcement Torch Run® in Missouri took place May 20-28 and consisted of more than 750 runners participating in 35 routes from all 9 regions of the state. Governor Jay Nixon welcomed the runners at a brief ceremony at the Capital. Governor Nixon has been a long time supporter of Special Olympics Missouri beginning when he was Missouri's Attorney General.

The torches were all brought together for the Final Leg in Springfield – the site of the State Summer Games - on Thursday, May 28. More than 50 runners and numerous uniformed officers gathered at Ozark Technical College for a Final Leg dinner and ceremony. The officers were addressed by Missouri's Attorney General, Chris Koster – who thanked them for their support of Special Olympics and talked of his personal attachment to the organization. Four years ago AG Koster was blessed with a precious nephew who was born with Down syndrome, and he can't wait for the day that he is able to sit in the stands and cheer this special little boy on as he participates in local Special Olympics events.

After dinner the runners, and their parade of support vehicles, prepared to run the 2.7 miles of the Final Leg to Plaster Stadium on the MO State University Campus. The Final Leg was led by AG Koster, who said "It was an honor to carry the torch and run with officers". Once arriving at campus, the support vehicles lined the street where the athletes were lined up and ready for the parade. The uniformed officers joined the athletes and the runners went "out of site" to wait for their turn to enter with the torches.

Opening Ceremonies was AMAZING – beginning with the National Anthem and a fly over from the Missouri State Highway Patrol helicopter. Once the sun went down and it began to get dark, the uniformed officers took position forming the gauntlet, and the color guards marched into their positions. From a distance the athletes, coaches, and fans heard the sound of sirens - then out of nowhere two Police motorcycles appeared



and behind them were the more than 50 runners carrying the nine torches. They were led around the track by motorcycles, bicycles, and Segways before taking their positions. The first eight torches were introduced as each represented sponsors, athletes, coaches, and volunteers. The final torch was carried by SOMO's athlete of the Year, Danny Duvall, and the 2008 Letz Unsung Hero Award (MO LETR's highest honor) winner, Captain Don Spears from the Belton PD. While walking through the gauntlet of officers, Danny saluted each of them as they saluted him and Captain Spears. Attorney General Koster declared the Games open and Danny and Captain Spears lit the cauldron. It was an amazing night - celebrating both the SOMO athletes and the officers that work tirelessly year-round as Guardians of the Flame®!



Special Olympics Oregon Athlete Runs the Distance and Makes Friends Along the Way



Aaron Aarseth (pictured above right) a Special Olympics Oregon athlete from Jackson County can certainly feel a sense of accomplishment and pride. Aaron was chosen to represent Special Olympics Oregon as a member of a group of athletes that ran with law enforcement officers during the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Boise, Idaho. While participating in the week long event, Aaron logged over 60 miles running with the Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run® Final Leg Team. During that time, he made friends with athletes from all over the world, as well as law enforcement officers.

One of the officers Aaron became friends with invited him to participate in a Torch Run through the Lincoln Tunnel in New York City! Aaron jumped at the chance, and flew to New York in order to participate. After the run in NYC he was presented with his very own torch to commemorate the experience.

On the way back home from NYC, Aaron ran into a bit of a challenge. He had to change planes in San Francisco but when he arrived he found out that the flight from San Francisco to Medford was cancelled. Aaron had difficulty receiving assistance at the airport to get another flight to Medford so he immediately called his mom, who immediately called Aaron's friend in Law Enforcement - an officer in Oklahoma City. The officer told Evie Aarseth not to worry and that he had a friend who worked in law enforcement in San Francisco. He committed that he would make sure Aaron got safely to a new flight. The officer in Oklahoma City then made the call to his friend in San Francisco who was off-duty but came to Aaron's aid. He drove out to the airport, found Aaron, and got him safely on a new flight home.

These officers went above and beyond the call of simply "serving and protecting." They jumped in to help a Special Olympics Oregon athlete who was also their new friend. As a result of Aaron's experience, these two officers from different states are now working together, along with additional officers across the nation, to help airport personnel become more understanding of people with special needs.

PRAISE FOR POLICE OFFICERS

FROM THE FATHER OF A SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE



Special Olympics athlete Lyndon LaPlante (L.), and his father Don

Don LaPlante lives in Keller, Texas, a city of about 38,000 on the northern edge of Fort Worth in Tarrant County. Recently Don LaPlante sent the following e-mail to Galveston Police Chief Charles Wiley.

"I took these photos of one of your officers happily signing autographs for some Special Olympics athletes at the Opening Ceremonies in Arlington, Texas in May. I was not able to get his name due to the large crowd of athletes gathered around him. Please forward these photos to him.

I am the father of a Special Olympic athlete and we appreciate so much the work that Police Officers across the Nation and especially our officers in Texas do for Special Olympics."

The officer in the photo referred to by Mr. LaPlante was Sgt. Michael Gray, a member of the police department's Special Operations Group, and a participant in the statewide initiative to raise funds for Special Olympics. Special Olympics is a worldwide organization made up of passionate, committed individuals from every walk of life, who recognize the value and unique gifts of people with intellectual disabilities, and who, together, share the common belief in dignity, equality and opportunity for ALL people.

Gray and several officers in the Special Ops group have been involved in several functions both in Galveston and other cities, helping to raise needed funds in support of this very needed and worthy cause. Most recently a fundraiser at Joe's Crab Shack and Cops On Top at Shipley Donuts.

In May Galveston police officers joined law enforcement officers from throughout Texas participating in the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics and that's how Don LaPlante from Keller, met Michael Gray from Galveston.

LaPlante became involved in Special Olympics 22 years ago when his son Lyndon, was born with special needs. Through all these years, LaPlante, a retired firefighter, has worked tirelessly in support of the organization which contributes so much to Lyndon.

Lyndon has participated in various sporting events in Special Olympics since he was 8-years old including power lifting, track and field, golf, basketball, relay, and shot put and is active in sporting events outside Special Olympics.

"Without the Police Officer's dedication to Special Olympics, the program may not have grown to it's size now. We are very grateful for their selfless acts of kindness," said LaPlante. You can find more about Lyndon LaPlante by doing a Google search of his name. Through Special Olympics Lyndon has been able to fulfill a dream of getting to play and scoring a TD for his Keller High School Football Team."



Sgt. Michael Gray autographs a hat for a Special Olympics athlete in Arlington



St. James' Pilgrimage Walk

"The Promise"

By: Francis Williams, LETR Director, Gibraltar

Robert (Bob) Charles Peliza is a Police Inspector with the Royal Gibraltar Police Force. He is married to his wonderful wife, Moira and is the father of three children, a son aged 27 (also a Police Officer) and two daughters, aged 22 and 12.

Bob who had represented the police on other charitable organizations was asked on the 24th November 2000 by the Police Commissioner to become the liaison officer between the police force and the Law Enforcement Torch Run®. This coincided with a Torch Run Kick off conference, and although he knew of Special Olympics, he had not been involved before. This served to open his mind and heart and he has been committed to the program since then.

After several years of producing excellent work for the Torch Run in fundraising and involving fellow officers in our runs, Bob was nominated on the 20th May 2005 to become the LETR Secretary, the position he still holds to date.

Following a minor progressive hereditary illness, on the 19th March 2007, he underwent a total hip replacement operation to his left leg. Whilst in hospital recovering from the operation, he made himself (and to God as a practicing Catholic) a promise, to do the 'Camino De Santiago' as soon as possible after the operation.



The First Day

From Left to Right, Ian Dignam, Brian Bagu, Bob Peliza, Mathew Dignam, Christopher Torilla and Michael Sene

time involved on the trip, the first step was to seek others who would be interested in carrying out the Walk. He managed to recruit two friends Mr. Brian Bagu, aged 50 a Highways Engineer and Mr. Ian Dignam, aged 47 an Inspector in the Highways Infrastructure Department. Ian is also a Scout Leader and intended to use the Walk as part of the program for the 'Queens Scout Award' for three Adventure Scouts, one of whom was his son, Mathew and the two other Adventure Scouts, Christopher Torilla and Michael Sene. After several preliminary meetings during March April 2008, the date for the travel was agreed departing Gibraltar on Saturday 20th September 2008 and returning to Gibraltar on Sunday 28th September 2008.

The 'Camino De Santiago' or The Way of St James as it is commonly known in English, is a pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago De Compostela in Galicia, north-western Spain. Legend has it that the remains of the apostle St James the Great are buried in Santiago de Compostela.

The Way of St James has existed for over a thousand years and it was one of the most important Christian pilgrimages during medieval times, during which plenary indulgence could be earned. However today, the pilgrimage or walk is carried out by people of all ages and walks of life and religious beliefs.

"This promise became a goal which I had to complete to prove something to myself. At the same time, I intended to use the Walk as a fundraising activity in aid of the LETR" stated Bob.

Due to the nature and the amount of

St. James' Pilgrimage Walk

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Bob at the 100K land mark

In order to be officially recognized as having participated in the Pilgrimage, a distance of no less than 100 kilometres had to be completed. Pilgrims are issued with an official document that must be officially stamped along the way at the places specified within the document (small parishes, churches, cafeterias and council lodgings along the route), so planning the Route and distance to be covered was the next step. It was decided to commence the Walk at the town of Sarria in Lugo, 115 kilometres from Santiago.

Thanks to two Gibraltarian veterans of the Walk Mr. Andrew Pinna and Mr. Richard Bear, they were able to facilitate the group with telephone numbers to pre-book the accommodations, and advised them that travelling along the route involved carrying all necessities with them.

They were recommended to travel light and were given a list of the items, including clothing and personal hygiene, to take, all inside a 65 – 70 litre haversack. This they would have to carry every day as they traveled from town to town. Bob recalls that no matter how much he tried to keep the weight down, his haversack still weighed 13 kilos. (29.6 lbs.)

It was May and the main issues were dealt with, now they had to concentrate on the two remaining matters, the most important one the training. Bob had always done some training but had not been doing any physical activities as per doctor's instruction since the operation. To build up their strength and stamina they initially went on 8 – 10 km hikes once a week which increased to two to three times a week as the date grew nearer.

The other matter was fundraising; the Law Enforcement Torch Run® Gibraltar has fundraising activities all year-round, and being a small community of just 30,000 it is difficult to approach the same sponsors for the same organization without detracting funds from the other events.



The group on arrival at the Cathedral of Santiago De Compostela proudly flying the Gibraltar flag

The group decided that instead of seeking business sponsorship, which could affect the other activities that they would fundraise individually from work colleagues, friends and relatives. A total of £1,478 sterling (\$2426 USD) was raised through this sponsorship in aid of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics (Gibraltar).

Fate would have it that the date selected would coincide with the 700th Anniversary of Our Lady of Europa, Patron Saint of Gibraltar and Europe. The Bishop of Gibraltar, Bishop Caruana asked the group if they were willing to symbolically start the walk at the Shrine of Our Lady of Europa, and it was agreed to walk all the way from the Shrine to the land frontier with Spain, although this added about 10 kilometres to the walk before they even started.

At 8:00 am on Sunday 21st September 2008, all six of them started the walk from the starting point of their route "Sarria"; it was still relatively dark as the sun had still not risen over the horizon. Within minutes, much to their dismay, they were walking through a forest hill path that practically took the wind out of their sails.

St. James' Pilgrimage Walk

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However, they reached the hilltop as the sun started to shine. Thankfully, it was a sunny day with a cool breeze, something that made the walk very pleasant despite the 25 kilometres that lay ahead. The steep hill descent to reach the footbridge that would take them into the town of Portomarin, turned out to be a knee-killer, after having walked for five hours practically non-stop with 13 kilos on their backs. They soon realized that this would be the routine for the next four days, early morning starts with cool sunny days and plenty of breathtaking sights and fresh air.

During their trip they encountered people of different walks of life and some that impressed them were:

The Spanish man was on his 28th day of the walk, would be turning seventy in November. Despite the number of days that he had been on the march, he was still in a jovial mood, full of advice and carrying his haversack.

The elderly couple and their son, who seemed to be in his early twenties, it was evident that the elderly man was in poor health, and was doing the walk aided by his son and wife.

The two French nuns, who were in their early twenties, and walking wearing sandals as opposed to walking boots and each carrying their haversack.

The elderly Hebrew and a Palestinian doing the 'Walk' together, the young teenager, crying with pain from ailing knees, refusing to give up and take up the offer of a lift to Santiago, and many others. All with the same goal, to walk to and reach the Cathedral of Santiago De Compostela, only God and they themselves know what had driven them to this ordeal.

In hindsight Bob stated that "It soon became clear to me that despite all I had read and heard about the 'Walk' and the different personal and religious reasons some carry out the 'Walk', one had to actually 'live' the 'Walk' to experience what it actually meant."

The 'Walk' was extremely pleasant and enjoyable, the countryside was certainly different from the south of Spain and the people friendly and the culture educational. On their free evening time in each town, they experienced the tasting of the diverse culinary and enjoying the local cider. A sense of fulfilment and joy overcame them as they reached Santiago on the final walking day, "It seemed that we had only just started the walk but I cannot deny that I was overjoyed that the end was near," as they realized that they were being joined by dozens of pilgrims descending upon the City of Santiago, some of which they had come across on the walk.



Arrival back at the Shrine of Our Lady of Europa in Gibraltar signing the visitors book. The only truly wet day of the walk, at home!

The following day they attended the church service that is held every day at the Cathedral which welcomes the pilgrims that have arrived the previous day. "It was an experience to see such a large Cathedral packed to capacity with the many pilgrims that had concluded their walk."

Seeing that the walk had symbolically started at the Shrine of Our Lady of Europa, it was decided that on arrival at the Gibraltar frontier, they would walk the extra 10 kilometres to the Shrine to symbolically finish the walk. On reaching the Shrine, they were met by the Bishop of Gibraltar, Bishop Caruana, who held a small church service to welcome them back to Gibraltar.

"The whole experience turned out to be very emotional for me and my colleagues" says Bob, "Personally to know that finally I had fulfilled my promise and at the same time used my efforts to raise funds for my Torch Run program was very gratifying."

WAITING FOR THE ICE TO THAW!

By: Constable Roxanne Dreilich

Well, the Northwest Territories, Canada LETR may have missed the Polar Plunge feature in the Winter/Spring Guardian newsletter but we sure didn't miss the fun. Our late submission is because we had to wait until summer for the ice on the lake to be thin enough to make a hole to jump into!

The inaugural Northwest Territories Polar Plunge was held on May 16th at Long Lake in the city of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada. The morning temperature was -3 degrees Celcius or 26 degrees Fahrenheit, it was snowing and the wind was howling inland off the lake ice. It seemed like it was almost warmer in the water! Almost..... if you really, really, really used your imagination. Everyone had warm hearts though as 45 plungers and nearly 300 spectators gathered for the plunge. Our first ever polar plunge raised nearly \$14,000.00 and dozens of people have already committed to participating next year. Bring it on!!!



Northern California Final Leg Torch Run

A Day to Remember

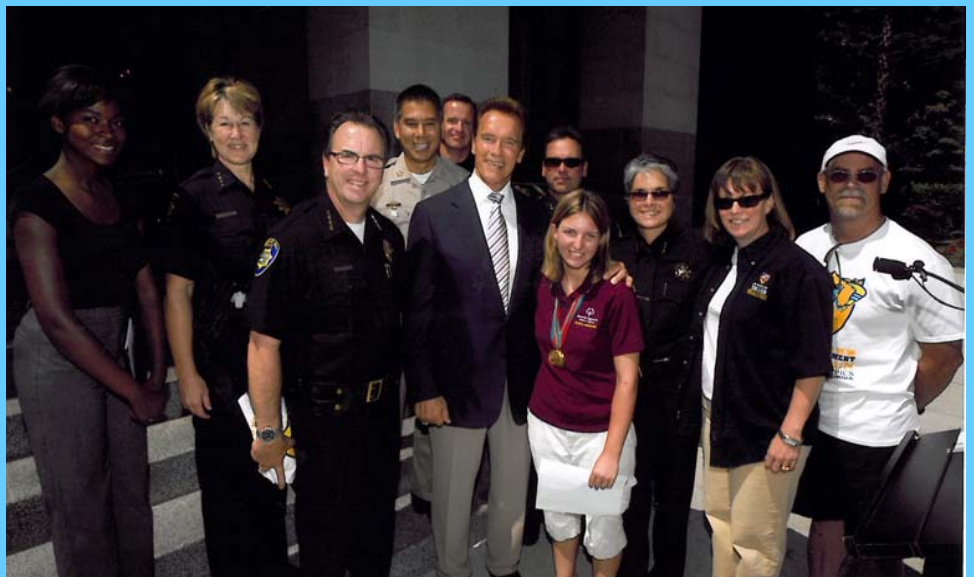
By: Pete Dunbar

For over twenty-three years, our Torch Run has left Sacramento, our State Capitol, for a journey to Summer Games. For many years, those Games were in Southern California and the journey brought it from Sacramento to the Bay Area and south to Southern California. When Special Olympics Northern California was born several years ago, the torch started in Sacramento for a trip to Stockton and most recently, UC Berkeley. But this year, with the Summer Games kicking off on June 26th at UC Davis, the Final Leg began in Sacramento.

This year, our program was embraced by Commissioner Joe Farrow of the California Highway Patrol and has been part of the many offices throughout the entire state. Chiefs Annette Spicuzza of UC Davis, Janet Thiessen of Tracy, Brian Masterson of Rohnert Park and Jay Varney of Chowchilla have enthusiastically supported and participated in many events to demonstrate their role and commitment to the Torch Run. With these “heavy hitters”, it made sense to bring them together in Sacramento to kick off the Final Leg.

One more piece to this list of Torch Run supporters was missing. If we were going to be on the doorstep of the son-in-law of the founder of Special Olympics, a global ambassador of Special Olympics for many years, it only seemed right to invite him to the party.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger eagerly accepted the invitation and joined the group for a mid-morning kickoff. With a crowd of over 50 Final Leg runners, parents, press and interested onlookers, Governor Schwarzenegger welcomed co-emcee Amber Kasler, a Special Olympics athlete from Folsom Hills and herself a power lifter, asking her for a hug and telling her how proud he was to meet her. He continued his remarks about the importance of Special Olympics, especially in these tough economic times as Special Olympics doesn't rely on government funding for its programs. And who better to carry the torch and dreams of the athletes but the guardians of our society than law enforcement, whom he praised for our volunteerism and fundraising. The governor took the torch from Final Leg runner Lt. Dan Winter of the Santa Clara Police Department and handed it to Special Olympics athlete Andrew Daley, son of Sergeant Kevin Daley of the Danville Police Department. And as the torch took off towards UC Davis, the governor sought out the remaining Special Olympics athletes for a few words and photos.



Governor Schwarzenegger with Northern California Torch Runners

And with the Games returning to UC Davis next year, the governor can know one thing-“We’ll be BACK!”



A NEW MEMBER AT THE “SURETÉ DU QUÉBEC”

Quebec Provincial Police Service

By Johanne Lesage, LETR Provincial Director



Commander Yves Guay with Jonathan

Several months ago, in the district of “La Mauricie” in the beautiful Province of Quebec, Canada, the provincial police service got a new member. He is not a police officer, but he’s got the drive of one. His name is Jonathan Dupont.

Jonathan is a Special Olympics athlete and a global messenger for Special Olympics Quebec.

Jonathan and I were participating in the Special Olympics Conference at Three Rivers when we met the Commander of the Provincial Police in the region, Mr. Yves Guay. I mentioned to Commander Guay how Jonathan was an accomplished athlete and how he was such a big fan of police officers.

accomplished athlete and how he was such a big fan of police officers.

Jonathan is registered in different sports such as hockey, baseball and swimming. In his free time, he likes bike riding and in the winter, alpine skiing. He is also a volunteer for Special Olympics.

He is the biggest fan of the NHL Montreal Canadians but now, he has found a new passion...the Provincial Police Service.. La Sureté du Québec!

During the conference, the Commander came to us and mentioned that he really needed somebody like Jonathan to help him at his station. Since that moment in November 2008 a new relationship started between the police department and Jonathan. Everyday, Jonathan now a part of the provincial police, makes sure that all police reports and important papers requiring destruction are shredded before everything is collected for disposal. His work is supervised by Commander Guay and a new friendship is on the way. Sometimes we wonder what we can do to promote awareness. Just look around you and you will be surprised!!!!

My name is Johanne Lesage and I’m the provincial director in Quebec. The group that makes up our Torch Run program is small, but what a group we are! Awareness is not always easy. We would like people to give and share in what we do but this is not always easy, but believing in what we do is what helps us to continue. We don’t make miracles happen...we give hope, courage and possibilities. But on the other side, Special Olympic athletes make us realize that anything is possible. Why am I still doing what I do? I would like to say, just because. Because the athletes give me the courage to continue, because they are MY heroes, because they are my friends, because with them I became a better person....Then you still want to know why???...Just Because.

We can’t explain it, you have to live it. Come with us, and we will show you!!!!

LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN

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On May 4, 2009, CN Constable Kelly Brown and members of Saskatoon's Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) committee gave the gift of sport to some very special athletes. Kelly, co-chair of the LETR, and representatives from the RCMP and Saskatoon City Police, presented a check to the Special Olympics Saskatchewan organization for a whopping \$14,000, every penny of it raised from their spirited fundraising activities of the last year. "We raised 20% of the total of all donations to Special Olympics Saskatchewan last year. It's an awesome feeling," says Kelly, who has been involved in the LETR in Saskatoon for three years and received a *CN Railroader in the Community* grant in 2008 for his work.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® is the largest fundraiser benefitting Special Olympics. In addition to an annual organized run by police officers there are a variety of fundraising activities that are organized by local LETR committees across the country. "My co-chair, Sergeant Tim Korchinski, from Saskatoon Police Service, and I looked at a number of opportunities. In the end, the committee chose three high-profile events to support: a formal dress ball, the World's Largest Truck Convoy® and participation in the Wal-Mart Toonies for Torches," says Kelly, who has eight years of service with CN. Tickets sold quickly for the premier event, a "Blue and Gold" ball held in November 2008. "CN generously donated items for the silent auction part of the evening and Jim Newton, CN Operations Superintendent for our zone, purchased a table of tickets in support of the cause. Some CN Police officers even travelled from across Saskatchewan and Manitoba to attend," reports Kelly. The World's Largest Truck Convoy® in September 2008 was also a success. "We had about 100 semi-trucks drive all in a row from Saskatoon to Regina (about 260 km) with local, provincial, and CN Police cars escorting. It not only raised a lot of money through pledges, it helped raise much needed awareness of Special Olympics," says Kelly. Public awareness was also raised during the Wal-Mart "Toonies for Torches" event, a national fundraiser by Wal-Mart in support of the LETR in which CN Police officers in Saskatoon took part. The officers appeared at their local WalMart store in January 2008 and in January 2009, helping sell symbolic paper torches to customers for \$2 or a "toonie" in support of the LETR. "CN Police officers across the company have shown tremendous spirit and given generously of their time for Special Olympics," remarks Kelly, who points to the successful "Steel Challenge" and "Polar Dip" events

held last year by officers Michael Melançon, Marc Lebreux, Rénaud Plamondon in Montreal, and CN Police Inspector Dan Ritchie's three-day sit-in for the cause on the roof of a Wal-Mart in Surrey, B.C. "It's the commitment of our officers and CN's continuing sponsorship of events that give Special Olympic athletes a chance at success."



Eastern Europe Update

By: Jacek Hachulski, Region X Coordinator

On April 29 and 30 a group of 11 Cyprus law enforcement officers and other members of the Cyprus Torch Run team participated in the annual run with the Flame of Hope™. The team made its way through several of the biggest cities in the country, ending at the Opening Ceremonies of the Special Olympics National Summer Games. This year, the runners were joined by a representative from Special Olympics Poland's Torch Run Program.



The Torch Run was preceded by a magnificent ceremony in front of the town hall building in Nikosia, Cyprus' capitol. Those in attendance included a group of Special Olympics athletes and their families, the Mayor of Nikosia, the Commander in Chief of the Cyprus Police, students from the Cyprus Police Academy, celebrities, coaches and volunteers. One highlight of the ceremony was the lighting of the Cauldron with the Flame of Hope. After the ceremony, the Flame was run across the city and through nearby Limassol and Pafos. The following day, the runners continued to Famagusta, Kornos and finished in Larnaca. In each of these cities, both the Flame of Hope and the runners were warmly welcomed by the local communities. Cyprus' Torch Run Director Chief Inspector George Zanetous received a donation from each of the participating cities. Over the course of the two-day event, the Torch Run team raised 7,000 Euros. The most generous contribution came, as usual, from E.T.A.K. Bank, which has been a main sponsor of the Cyprus Torch Run for many years.

The event, although short, was very successful and as Cyprus Torch Run Director George Zanetous said, it was an "outstanding success and all of our intended objectives were obtained."

In Poland, the IX Special Olympics National Summer Games took place in Kielce, one of the largest Polish cities (located in the central part of the country) from July 2-5, 2009. The Games brought together more than 1,000 athletes from all 18 Regional Special Olympics Programs. As usual, the Games were preceded by the Law Enforcement Torch Run® Final Leg. The event was held on July 2 as runners made their way from the Central Railway Station through the streets of Kielce and finished at the Kadzielnia amphitheater, where the Opening Ceremonies of the Games were held.

The Final Leg Team was led by Special Olympics Athlete Janusz Szkarłat, a member of the local Special Olympics Program.

He was truly an inspiration to the entire running team. The rest of the team was made up of 40 law enforcement officers from all over Poland. Each member played a vital role in the Polish Torch Run and without their enthusiasm and dedication the Torch Run would not have been possible in our country.

Opening Ceremonies was held at a very picturesque amphitheater. It was a warm and beautiful evening and the venue was filled to capacity. More than 3,000 spectators attended, and enthusiastically received the Opening Ceremonies event. The performance was moving and inspirational and included a variety of acts, such as music from the popular singer and songwriter Andrzej Piasek-Piaseczny.

The ceremony also included the traditional lighting of the Cauldron with the Flame of Hope which had been carried across

the city by Janusz Szkarłat, who was escorted by the rest of the members of the Final Leg Team. It was quite spectacular to watch the team salute the Flame as it was passed over to the Guard of Honor and then to fellow athlete Hubert Krakowiak, who did the honors of lighting the Cauldron. He was accompanied by two police officers: Alexandra Saraceń and Robert Chmielewski. The lighting of the Cauldron was, as usual, a moving experience and a fitting finale for the Final Leg for Poland's IX Special Olympics National Summer Games.



Great Britain Torch Run

By: Bob Chandler

On Sunday July 12th, Special Olympics athletes, dignitaries and police officers assembled at Much Wenlock in England. It was here in 1850 that the first ever Olympian Games were held in the country. Over subsequent years this concept inspired individuals and sporting organizations throughout Europe, inspiration that no doubt made a significant contribution to the re-birth of the modern Olympic Games in 1896.

After a short ceremony, the Flame of Hope™ began its journey around the country to Leicester, home to the 8th National Special Olympics Summer Games for Great Britain.

Between the 13th of July through the 21st, Sergeant Bob Chandler accompanied by Solly the official mascot of the Summer Games, carried the Flame of Hope™ on its journey around the country visiting Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, Northampton, Slough and London.



While in London, Prime Minister Gordon Brown and his wife Sarah invited a group of athletes and the Flame of Hope™ to visit Downing Street., the Prime Minister's residence. Athletes were invited inside for a tour of the Prime Ministers official home and even had time to wish Fraser, one of the Prime Ministers children a happy birthday!



On the July 22nd, the Flame of Hope™ arrived at Norfolk Police HQ where a team of six runners from the Norfolk Police carried the Flame of Hope™ to Leicester Police HQ arriving on the July 25th. Prior to setting off, the team had taken part in a number of fun runs raising awareness and for Special Olympics. The team were then joined by officers from the Leicester Police, volunteers from one of the sponsors, National Grid and Special Olympic athletes to take part in the final run to Leicester Town Hall, where the Flame of Hope™ was officially welcomed. The Flame of Hope™ had by then travelled over 800 miles through 45 towns and cities.



The opening ceremony was held in Walkers Stadium in the presence of Prime Minister Gordon Brown and his family along with Tim and Linda Shriver, sporting celebrities and local dignitaries.

The Flame of Hope™ carried by four Special Olympics athletes and accompanied by the Final Leg team, received a tumultuous welcome from the 2,700 Special Olympics Athletes, over 1,000 coaches, friends and families who formed the audience of 25,000.

The cauldron was lit marking the opening of the Summer Games which are going to be the largest sporting event in GB this year. Athletes competed in 21 sports across 19 venues.

An Athlete and a Coach!

Jim Chalmers

Special Olympics Minnesota Athlete/Coach



Special Olympics Minnesota athlete and coach, Jim Chalmers, 36, will run in his third Twin Cities Marathon on Oct. 4. Chalmers will run on behalf of his motivation to promote Special Olympics Minnesota and athletes with intellectual disabilities.

“I want everyone to know how great this organization is,” said Chalmers.

Chalmers has plenty of experience with training for marathons. The athlete began training for his upcoming marathon this past May and plans to train three to four times a week until October. The 22-week training program is strenuous and difficult, according to Chalmers.

“I’m taking my resting days very seriously,” said Chalmers. “It is important to give your muscles time to rest.”

Chalmers hopes to show individuals what they can do with Special Olympics Minnesota in their lives. As an athlete and coach, Special Olympics Minnesota has helped Chalmers understand what he is capable of doing.

“Special Olympics Minnesota does enrich the mind, heart, soul, and body,” said Chalmers.

Chalmers also ran in last year’s Twin Cities Marathon with four local law enforcement officers on behalf of promoting and raising awareness for the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics Minnesota. Chalmers ran the race recovering from a slightly sprained Achilles. Prior to the race, permission from the doctor was luckily given, according to Chalmers.

When asked how Torch Run has impacted his life, Chalmers said, “I’m so thankful for the law enforcement agencies that were involved. They have to deal with an unpleasant side of society and I am thankful that they came to support Special Olympics Minnesota.”

Chalmers also said that one of his favorite memories from last year’s Torch Run marathon was carrying the Special Olympics Minnesota flag.

“I made a lot of friends along the way,” Chalmers said. “Carrying the flag helped a lot of my friends remember the reasons why I was running.”

SUPER PLUNGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

SUPER PLUNGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

BY: SERGEANT TIM CRAIG, POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND



At 12 midday on Friday 12th June 2009 at Bangor Harbour in Northern Ireland, the Police Service of Northern Ireland hosted the first 'Super Plunge' on the island of Ireland. Okay.. so it's not winter but we created arctic conditions!! Super Plungers who were joined by a number of Special Olympics athletes, jumped into an above ground swimming pool that had been filled with ice and water, every hour on the hour for twenty four hours. Torch Run Director Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland OBE led the way and was the first to take the plunge into the icy water with Liam Rafferty from the local North Down Special Olympics Athletics Club. They were quickly followed by the core group of thirty Super Plungers (a mix of both Police Officers and supporters of Special Olympics) the madness continued in time honoured Super Plunge tradition for the next twenty four hours; the final plunge took place at 11am on Saturday 13th June. Periodically, the Bangor Plunge team was joined by local celebrities for 'one-off' plunges and on one occasion, a teacher from Torbank, a local special needs school, was "helped" into the pool by some pupils. Staff from Clifton School, another local special needs school were part of the Plunge

team and were supported by both pupils and other staff members. The Bangor Lifeboat crew joined us for a plunge as did student officers from the PSNI College.

The fancy dress (costume) plunge at 6pm turned out to be quite a fashion parade...from the neolithic man, a penguin, to wonder woman not to mention the fitting appearance of two leprechauns and a pixie!! The Police uniform plunge was also a popular plunge. The Plunge Team were housed in a marquee which was equipped with 'in-house' entertainment and bedding. The entertainment took various forms from a golf competition on the Wii to the team quiz in the small hours. Whilst there were unlimited snacks available the team were fed and watered onsite and the catering was supplied by Edgumbe Catering a local catering company who train and employ young adults with learning disabilities. A large Hot Tub was located beside the marquee to assist the plungers in their recovery between plunges!!

The Plunge could not have taken place without the support of North Down Borough Council and Quays Marinas. The Plunge was included as part of the Bangor Maritime Month which included the visit of the tall ship the Thalassa which was moored in the harbour during the plunge. The date of the plunge was also significant. The 13th of June marked the sixth anniversary of the arrival of the Final Leg Team and the Flame of Hope™ in Bangor having made its way around Europe on its way to Dublin and the opening ceremony of the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games.

The Bangor Super Plunge was organized as the result of a visit by Gareth McKeown and me, to the Maryland State Police Polar Bear Plunge and Super Plunge in January 2008. As Gareth said "the event in Maryland was both inspirational and fun, what a wonderful way to raise the profile of Special Olympics whilst raising money and having so much fun. The key to the success of the Super Plunge was the involvement of the athletes." Building on our experiences from Maryland, the enthusiasm of Torch Runner Steve Douglas and the continued support from Captain John Newnan of the Howard County Police in Maryland and Tom Schriedwind, Executive Vice President of Special Olympics Maryland, the Super Plunge was brought to Northern Ireland.

SUPER PLUNGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

SUPER PLUNGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND



We in the North of Ireland have a long way to go if we wish to reach the standards that have been set by SO Maryland and their plunge which was simply amazing. But from small acorns and all that....who knows! We have introduced something new to Ireland we have now got a pool that can be used anytime of the year. Who knows we may even do a polar plunge in the winter next year and it is mobile we can with the right facilities have a plunge anywhere!!

Like so many Special Olympics and Torch Run events there success is in no small way due to the support given by volunteers and this event was no

different. A Super Plunge is an arduous event sleep deprivation makes the plunges in the 'wee hours' hard work to say the least. Participants must have a desire and the determination to complete the challenge. I would like to say a big thank you to all of the Super Plunge team for their commitment and generosity as they raised the awareness of and funds for Special Olympics. I would also like to thank Liam Rafferty; Darragh Conlon and Bobby McAllister the athletes from Glenraig School who were inspirational and led from the front throughout. The

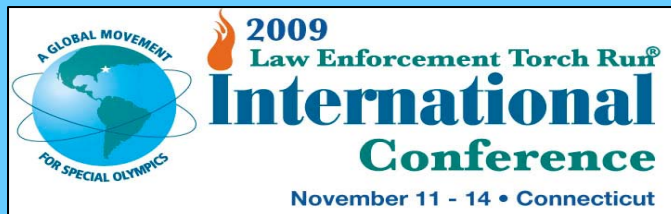
main objective of the Plunge was to raise funds for the SO Ulster Regional Games that were being held in Letterkenny Donegal over the same weekend. All in all it was a busy weekend for the Torch Run as The PSNI and An Garda Siochana also had a Torch Run delivering the Flame of Hope™ to the Arora Stadium in Letterkenny for the Opening Ceremony of the Games. There were

over 500 athletes participating in the Games which were a resounding success. My son Ryan who is now 13 years of age came home with a bronze in the 80 metre sprint...he had a ball by all accounts, so did all of the athletes!! The Torch Run team in Letterkenny was led by Pauline Crompton. Pauline who is a Torch Run veteran recently retired from the PSNI but is still heavily involved in both the Torch Run and was a member of the Regional Games Organizing Committee.

Monies are still being collected by Plunge Team members but it is safe to say that their efforts have raised several thousand pounds for Special Olympics.

We look forward to the next one!





Our Goal is to INSPIRE-EDUCATE-MOTIVATE

Our Desire is to WOW You!

Location: MGM Grand at Foxwoods

www.mgmatfoxwoods.com

www.foxwoods.com

Please join us in Connecticut for a Global Perspective of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® Program. Help us celebrate the success and growth experienced around the World in 2009! Here is what we have in store for you:

Transportation: Complimentary continuous shuttle service will be available to attendees from/to Bradley International Airport (BDL) ONLY. Times will be as follows:

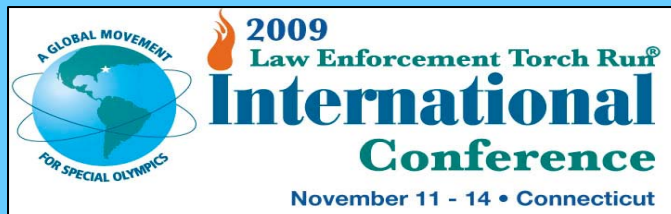
Wednesday November 11 – starting 8:00 am (last bus departs airport at 6:30 pm for the MGM Grand)

Sunday November 15 – starting at 4:00 am (last bus departing at 10:30 am for the airport)

PLEASE plan your flights accordingly. The airport is approximately one hour from the resort.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION: Located in the Pre-function area outside of the Premier Ballroom at the MGM Grand. Please be sure to stop by to pick up your conference credentials, meet some of our athletes and see live demonstrations of our Fundraising Events) i.e. the Segway Challenge and Ladder Golf), say hello to one of our conference sponsors (Knights of Columbus), and pick up your conference gift bag!

THE FOXTROT BEGINS: Sign up for our very own Foxtrot.....



What is the Foxtrot? You will receive an event t-shirt and passport and be asked to find at least 10 establishments located at the MGM Grand and related Foxwoods properties, purchase and consume an alcoholic or non-alcoholic “specialty” drink, and then return the completed event passport Saturday evening for a chance to win an 8 day/7 night stay at the ESJ Towers on the beach in sunny Puerto Rico! (airfare not included) Entry fee \$20.00.

PRE-CONFERENCE EVENT: No pre-conference event is planned, freeing you up to relax, explore, shop, experience the many fantastic restaurants, visit the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Museum (complimentary tickets available) or take a chance in the largest casino in the World! Whatever you choose to do, be sure to join us for a Hospitality Night unlike all others!

HOSPITALITY NIGHT: Wednesday, November 11th beginning at 8:00 m. The Grand Pequot Ballroom will be transformed into a Monte Carlo event for this evening. All proceeds will benefit Special Olympics Connecticut as you take a chance at Blackjack, roulette, craps, baccarat, the “Money Wheel” and of course, Poker! Buy-in for just \$25.00 and receive \$500 in chips. (\$2,000 for Poker). Re-buys are also available. Prizes will be given out at various intervals. If games of chance are not for you then enjoy reacquainting with friends or making new ones! Lite fare will be available.

OPENING CEREMONIES/CONCURRENT SESSIONS/HALL OF FAME: The theme “Global Movement” is in the forefront at our events. Look for a motivational and inspirational opening ceremony and a moving and celebratory Hall of Fame dinner.

Many new case studies and fundraising events will be featured along with some conference staples that have been popular in previous years. Stay tuned.

NEW ENGLAND HOST NIGHT: Thursday evening November 12th. Great food, live music by Avenue Groove (the band you might have heard at our Hospitality Night in Dallas) and complimentary beverages. The venue will be the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Museum’s Gathering Place. The Museum is located on property but about 1 mile from the main entrance of the MGM Grand. A continuous shuttle(s) will be running. Anyone interested in touring the museum will have the opportunity to do so prior to the Host Night event. Shuttle service will be available for this purpose as well. Tickets are complimentary for the Museum from your friends at Special Olympics Connecticut.

LIVE/SILENT AUCTION: Friday evening, November 13th – to date secured items include: a South Africa Photo Safari; a week in Puerto Rico; Hot Air Balloon Rides; autographed guitars by Bon Jovi, Martina McBride, Alabama, Rascal Flatts; football helmets signed by Philadelphia Eagles QB, Donovan McNabb, 2008 Heisman Trophy Winner, Sam Bradford (U of Oklahoma), 2008 runner up Colt McCoy (U of Texas); a LETR t-shirt quilt featuring shirts from around the country, and much more...

FUNDRAISING EVENTS/DEMONSTRATION EVENTS:

Torch Run/Walk – Not a race but a Torch Run – event t-shirt will be available for all who enter. The 3.2 mile course will take runners/walkers “behind the scenes” of the resort, past the beautiful Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Museum, the unbelievable Public Safety facility (photo op) to the front of the resort hotels, and back to the MGM Grand. Entry fee: \$20.00

The Segway Challenge – a team challenge featuring a Segway, red man suit, vision impairment goggles, a cone course and much more! Event t-shirt included. Entry fee \$20.00 per team member (4 – 5 members per team)

Ladder Golf – a Unified® event which will pair up athletes with officers/attendees. FREE! Come enjoy the interaction with our athletes.

Event times are being coordinated to allow attendees to participate in all events. Discounts will be available for those entering more than one event.

A complimentary lunch will be available to all attendees in the fundraising events area.....



Southern California Hospitality Night: Saturday night immediately following the Richard LaMunyon Hall of Fame Banquet. Enjoy a special evening with your 2010 conference host, Southern California. Whether you want to dance the night away to the classic surf-rock favorites of the live band “The Aquatudes,” talk with Torch Run friends or just relax and unwind with a “Blue Wave” specialty beverage, Southern California promises to provide the perfect opportunity to preview what is in store for you in Long Beach California. Drop your banquet attire, come casual and get ready to “Catch the Wave.” This will be held on site in the beautifully appointed pre-function reception area directly outside the Premier Ballroom.

The Flame of Hope Rekindles in Portugal

By: Francis Williams, LETR Director, Gibraltar



Torch Runners starting their run from the airport

In 1992 two Police officers from the Policia de Segurança Publica (PSP) from Lisbon Portugal, were invited to attend the Law Enforcement Torch Run® in Gibraltar, the intention was to promote the program in Portugal. After the visit, contact was maintained with Comisario Waldemar Pires Martin Coroado who had expressed the desire to start the Torch Run in their country.

In 1993, the Torch Run program in Gibraltar presented the Portuguese Police with two torches at a conference organized by Waldemar, so that the program could be presented to all the senior officers from Portugal. After several speeches by the then

Gibraltar Torch Run Director John Lewis and myself, the torches were presented to the Commanding General of the PSP. The Law Enforcement Torch Run® was thus formed in Portugal and we had the privilege of attending the 1st Run which was held in Lisbon in 1994.

Unfortunately due to some problems with the committee and Special Olympics Portugal, the Law Enforcement Torch Run remained in waiting until last year. Waldemar, who had maintained the Flame of Hope™ alight within his department, had been promoted to 2nd Commander of the Special Police Unit, and he felt that the time had come to pass on the responsibility. A new committee was formed on the 25th November 2008.

Portugal would be hosting the Special Olympics Euro Cup 2009, a 7 a side football game from the 7th to the 10th May and the new committee were entrusted to organize a Torch Run to initiate the Games. To provide assistance and experience from our side, contact was maintained between the Portuguese Torch Run Director Luis Ferreira, the Western European Region Coordinator, Jeremy Adams and myself from Gibraltar. Luis extended an invitation for some runners from other European Torch Run programs to attend but unfortunately due to the current financial situation it was impossible to get support except from Gibraltar, being one of the closest countries.



Mr. Luis Ferreira receives the torch From Special Olympics athlete and Ms. Rosa Mota Marathon, an Olympic Gold Medallist in Seoul in 1988 and avid supporter of Special Olympics Portugal

On Wednesday, the 6th of May a group of eight LETR committee and sub-committee members from Gibraltar drove the short seven hours that separates us, to support and assist the Torch Run committee in Lisbon. Early Thursday morning on the 7th we were driven to the Lisbon International Airport from where the Torch would symbolically arrive. In a short exchange of speeches, the Torch Run Director Luis Ferreira accepted the Torch from the athlete who was accompanied by Ms Rosa Mota, marathon gold medallist at the Seoul Olympics and a keen supporter of Special Olympics. She would be accompanying the run along the whole route.

The Flame of Hope Rekindles in Portugal

-- continued --



Runners escorted by citizens of Oeiras

The Run which would cover approximately 90 kilometres would take us through some of the main areas of Lisbon and the surrounding districts Oeiras, Cascais and Sintra to conclude at Porto Salvo the location where the Opening Ceremonies would take place round about 7 pm.

All of the cities made preparations for the arrival of the torch and we felt welcome in all of them. But I think that the one that our runners enjoyed most was Oeiras. They had arranged for children and adults alike to await the runners at specific locations to welcome them and accompanied the run in a relay fashion all carrying imitation torches.

On arriving at each city, speeches were delivered by the Mayor and the President of Special Olympics welcoming the Flame of Hope™ to the city and highlighting Special Olympics and the Games that would be taking place the following day.

The route was run all the way in formation by the whole group of runners especially at the entrance to the cities. It was well escorted all through out by a large contingent of motorcycle and vehicle escort, being a busy city, it was very necessary!

Awaiting the entrance to the Porto Salvo Sports hall where the Opening Ceremonies were taking place I was approached by Luis and the Games Director and was given the distinct honour of lighting the cauldron which culminated the Opening Ceremonies of the Games.

I wish to commend Luis and the Law Enforcement Torch Run® committee Portugal who had been dropped into the deep end with little time to acquaint themselves with all that entails to organize a well coordinated event.

Special Olympics Portugal will be happy to have the continuing support of this highly dedicated group of people and the officers of the PSP Special Unit. On behalf of the traveling group from Gibraltar, a big THANK YOU for taking care of us and allowing us to be part of this new era, as the Flame of Hope™ rekindles in Portugal.



Francis Williams (LETR Director Gibraltar) Lights the Cauldron

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