

SUMMER 2008

# The Guardian

The Newsletter of the Law Enforcement Torch Run Executive Council



"I'LL NEVER FORGET"

Story - Page 4

# The Guardian

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# Chairman's CORNER

August 25, 2008

**Torch Run Friends:**

I hope all of you have had a great summer so far and have Torch Run preparations well in hand for the rest of this year! We have a great deal of activity still to come this year with numerous local events, the Truck Convoy, and the International Torch Run Conference in Dallas on the horizon. And just around the corner is the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games and Torch Run Final Leg in Idaho!

Speaking of Olympic Games, I'm sure that all of you marveled at the Beijing Olympic Games and the many feats accomplished by the world-class athletes as well as the incredible opening and closing ceremonies. To me and I'm sure many others, it was rewarding to think that over 7,000 Special Olympics athletes got to enjoy their "China experience" last year at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Shanghai. I know for a fact that many members of the 2007 Final Leg Team recalled wonderful memories of their Final Leg experiences in China while watching the Olympics, especially the coverage of the opening ceremonies and the many pictures of the Great Wall outside of Beijing.

We are so blessed to be a part of the Special Olympics movement! What a great partnership we have! The funds and awareness we raise helps to fuel Special Olympics programming, get more athletes involved and truly make a difference in the lives of millions of people—us included! We all know the positive influence that our experiences with Special Olympics athletes and events give to us!

We are very well-positioned to continue to grow the cause of Special Olympics through the Law Enforcement Torch Run and spread our message to law enforcement officers and agencies around the world. We amazed even ourselves when we shattered the 30 million dollar mark, and I know we have a great deal of potential and untapped resources to maximize over the years ahead!

I hope you enjoy this edition of The Guardian! In closing I'd like to give a big thanks to John Newnan, Director of the Maryland Torch Run and Executive Council Member, for his hard work, patience and tireless efforts on behalf of this newsletter. Thank you, John!! Please carefully review the page on advertising in The Guardian and see if you know of a person or business that may be interested. Take care and I look forward to seeing you in Dallas at the International Conference!

All the Best,

*Michael*

Major Michael Teem, Raleigh, NC PD

Chairman, LETR Executive Council

# ILLINOIS LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN & SOIL SUMMER GAMES

## ILLINOIS LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN & SOIL SUMMER GAMES

### "I'LL NEVER FORGET!"

By: Officer Dwayne English, Joilet Police Department, Illinois

Well once again, another great experience, another great Torch Run, but this year's Illinois Law Enforcement Torch Run and Summer Games I will NEVER forget.

Throughout the past year, my son Cole has participated in the Special Olympics Illinois Young Athletes program, a program for children with intellectual disabilities ages 2-7 to begin working on numerous skills that would not only facilitate a smooth transition to full athlete status at age 8, but also skills for growth development. This program is facilitated by a sports kit. When he "plays" with the equipment it is magic, because Cole doesn't really "play." Right from the start I had a feeling that we may be on to something big. Within the past year, I've made speeches about the impact of this program. I find that the hits keep on rolling in as Cole and I were asked to light the cauldron with the Flame of Hope to start the 2008 Special Olympics Summer Games!

I have to admit, Wendy and I were a bit worried all the way up to Opening Ceremonies. I hoped and prayed that he would be able to tolerate something of this size - 4,000 cheering athletes/families,



lights out, spotlight, and FIRE. This was enough to make me nervous, but I kept telling people that worst case scenario I would carry him throughout the process. To be honest, I was worried sick all during Torch Run week. Coordinating the largest Torch Run leg in Illinois, I had enough to worry about! :)

My leg arrives in Normal, IL on Friday (the 13th) and that night is opening ceremonies. Cole is in a pretty good mood, so far so good. As the evening begins, we run the torch the 2.2 miles (yes, I ran :) to the VIP reception where we presented a check for over \$2 million to Special Olympics Illinois for 2008!

About an hour and a half later, it's time to go. The lights in the stadium are turned off, all 23 torches are lit (1 torch for each leg) and we

enter the stadium. Even after 9 years of doing this, entering the stadium to the roar of all these grateful athletes still gives me goose bumps. At this point I can feel the lump in my throat growing. We make a lap around the football field and there I arrive to find Cole awaiting me with a big smile! At that point, I pretty much can't control the tears and I am now getting the feeling everything is going to turn out fine. The remaining torch runners make their way past and hand the torch to an athlete that participated in the very first Special Olympics event in 1968. The torch is then handed to a present coach and then the torch is on its way to Cole and I.

# ILLINOIS LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN & SOIL SUMMER GAMES

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### "I'LL NEVER FORGET!"

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Cole and I received the torch and the second Cole's hand touched the torch, the biggest and brightest smile came across his face!! It's a smile and jubilation that I don't think I've seen out of him in some time. At that point it's like he knew EXACTLY what to do. We walked slowly through the honor guard of uniformed police officers. The stress of the week completely lifted from my body through my tears because at this point I'm almost sobbing. I've never seen him this happy. I've never seen his smile so bright! He was waving his arms wildly in excitement. We walked up the stairs to the cauldron and then I realized that the cauldron was a little too tall and I was going to have to pick him up. They were playing Queen's "we are the champions" and I'm told later when we lit the cauldron it was completely in sync with the music. I eventually had to

light the cauldron because I probably would have burnt my son's hair off if he did it :) We both remained on the podium for a while after the lighting. I did not want the moment to end. He was so happy. It was like I was holding the "old" Cole. The Cole I had BEFORE autism came and took what limited speech he already had and his overall interest in just about everything in the world. Since his autism diagnosis, it has been especially hard on our family because sometimes we just don't know which way to go. So moments like these are extra special. We spend so much time finding something that Cole will respond to. I didn't want the moment to end. It was surreal.

The rest of the weekend, Cole was a rock star, people were stopping us left and right. I had people telling me that they haven't seen a moment like that in years. Cole received standing ovations and kudos all weekend. In fact, I was almost late to my unified bocce match because we were getting stopped by so many people.

I think my biggest worry was that Cole wouldn't be able to comprehend what was going on. I already know how special this was and I wanted him to share in the experience. I am relieved to think that he knew what he was doing was very special and important. To see his understanding means the world to me. I gave a couple interviews to media over the weekend and the same topic kept coming up. It's so ironic that a disability is perceived so negatively at first, but then becomes a blessing. Would I be a torch runner without Cole? Would I have spent 2 weeks in Japan without Cole? In regards to the Law Enforcement Torch Run and Special Olympics, the emphasis is and ALWAYS will be on the athletes, but as parents we are finding that we are given just as much hope and inspiration from Special Olympics as the athletes. For that, I am grateful.



## The Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics Final Leg for the 2009 World Winter Games

### *Event Overview*

An international team of approximately 142 members, which includes an estimated 95 Law Enforcement Officer runners, 10 Special Olympics athletes and support personnel, will serve as Guardians of the Flame® as they welcome and receive the “Flame of Hope” in Idaho. To symbolize the significant contribution of law enforcement and the inclusion of Special Olympics athletes in this unified Torch Run, the Final Leg Team will conduct extensive runs and ceremonies in all of the Host Town Program communities and in many other towns throughout Idaho to heighten awareness of Special Olympics and the World Games. The Final Leg Team will safely deliver the “Flame of Hope” to the 2009 World Winter Games Opening Ceremony in Nampa, Idaho on February 7th.

### *Final Leg Mission*

- Create awareness and excitement for Special Olympics and the World Winter Games
- Encourage support and attendance of the World Winter Games
- Serve as Guardians of the Flame by maintaining and protecting the “Flame of Hope” until the lighting of the cauldron at the World Winter Games Opening Ceremony
- Showcase the abilities and involvement of the Special Olympics athletes who serve on the unified Final Leg Team
- Proudly represent Law Enforcement and Torch Run programs from around the world as a symbol of our deep commitment to the athletes of Special Olympics
- Involve, inspire and motivate Law Enforcement Torch Run® and Special Olympics athlete participants to increase their level of commitment to Special Olympics when they return to their home programs

### *When and Where*

The 2009 Final Leg will precede the Special Olympics World Winter Games held in Boise, Idaho. From January 29th through February 6th, the Final Leg Team will conduct extensive runs and ceremonies in all of the Host Town Program communities and in many other towns throughout Idaho to heighten awareness of Special Olympics and the World Games. The Final Leg will conclude with the lighting of the cauldron at Opening Ceremonies of the 2009 World Winter Games in Nampa, Idaho on 7 February.

### *Who*

Each Torch Run Program from around the globe will be invited to select one law enforcement runner to represent their program at the Final Leg. Nomination forms will be sent to Programs the week of August 25, 2008 and runners will be chosen by mid October 2008. Ten Special Olympics athletes will also be selected from the pool of nominations submitted by Special Olympics Programs to be part of the Final Leg Team.



## 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games Fact Sheet

**Dates:** February 7-13, 2009

**Participants:** Up to 3,000 athletes from more than 100 countries  
6,000 volunteers  
800 event officials  
Thousands of families, friends, spectators, journalists, from around the world

**Location:** Idaho, USA—Boise, McCall, and Sun Valley Regions

**Sports:** Special Olympics athletes of all ability levels will compete in seven different Olympic-type sports and Motor Activities Training Program

Alpine Skiing	Bogus Basin Mountain Recreation Area, Boise
Cross Country Skiing	Sun Valley Resort Nordic Center, Sun Valley
Figure Skating	Qwest Arena, Boise
Floor Hockey	Expo Idaho, Boise
Snowboarding	Dollar Mountain, Sun Valley
Snowshoeing	Ponderosa State Park, McCall
Speed Skating	Idaho Ice World, Boise
MATP (Motor Activities Training Program)	TBD

For more information on the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg for the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games, please contact Final Leg Committee Chairman and Team Captain Michael Teem at: [mrteem@hotmail.com](mailto:mrteem@hotmail.com)

# Athlete

# Profile

## Special Olympics Ohio

# Edward "Rusty" Vanscoy

When Special Olympics athlete Edward "Rusty" Vanscoy was selected to be the athlete representative on the Cleveland Leg of the Ohio Law Enforcement Torch Run, he was honored, but he had no idea the experiences he would have or the people he would get to meet during the run. Vanscoy joined the leg on June 25 as the torch came into Tallmadge, Ohio at the workshop where he is employed. He then began the three day trek and made law enforcement friends for a lifetime as he traveled more than 100 miles to Columbus with the Torch Run team.

Vanscoy, 42, is a familiar face around Special Olympics Ohio and he has been competing in the sports of speed skating and volleyball for 29 years. He also serves as the manager for both the softball and basketball teams for Summit County MR/DD. Rusty is the eldest of five siblings in the Vanscoy family which includes his youngest brother Patrick who also competes in Special Olympics. "We never thought Rusty would get the chance to carry the torch because Patrick participated on the same torch run leg several years ago," stated Vanscoy's mother, Martha.

the Mayor of the city of Wadsworth. Rusty also joined law enforcement officers from around Ohio when all of the legs met at the State Highway Patrol Academy in Columbus, and ran the torch over to the Opening Ceremonies in the Final Leg. He then had the honor of carrying the torch into the stadium of 7,000 people and passing it off to fellow Special Olympics athlete, Jamie Campbell.

When asked what he liked best about his Torch Run experience, Rusty replied, "I met lots of new friends in law enforcement. I have their email addresses and I am going to keep in touch with them. We had lots of fun! The Torch Run was just the beginning for Rusty. He was invited to participate in the Polar Plunge® event and he and his family plan on traveling to Geneva next winter to jump into the icy waters of Lake Erie with the rest of the Torch Run officers.

After a long journey to Columbus, Rusty competed in the Summer Games with his volleyball team and earned 5<sup>th</sup> place honors. Rusty is most proud of all to be the godfather to his nephew Max, age 6.



Rusty Vanscoy (second from right) at the 2008 Special Olympics Ohio Summer Games

Rusty's outgoing and vibrant personality made him a natural ambassador for the Torch Run. His journey included visiting nearly 30 different communities, making press stops and of course carrying the torch along the way to Columbus. One of his favorite moments along the run came when he received a proclamation from



# IACP Keeps the Flame of Hope Burning Brightly!

By: Rodney Seurer, Chief of Police  
Savage Police Department, Minnesota

I had received the 2008 edition of *The Police Chief*, the magazine of the IACP, and while thumbing through the magazine, I found a full page message from the current IACP President, Ronald Ruecker, entitled "Carrying the Flame: Volunteering for Special Olympics". I believe that each and everyone of us who have been involved with Special Olympics have shared the same feelings of being one of the more gratifying experiences of our law enforcement career. The article had also mentioned our good friend, Chief Russell Laine, who will honorably accept the position of President of the IACP this November.

The article brought to mind another friend of Special Olympics and the Law Enforcement Torch Run and who is vying for the position of 4th Vice President of the IACP this November. His name is Chief Scott Knight of the Chaska Police Department here in MN. While presiding as president of the MN Chiefs Of Police Association, it was his dedication, huge heart and hard work that enabled the LETR Program and Special Olympics Athletes to gain support from the Chiefs. Chief Knight has been a part of Special Olympics Minnesota Summer Games opening ceremonies, the SOMN Presidents luncheon and has supported the education of all chiefs about the LETR program and its partnership with the Special Olympics athletes.

We all know that having the continued support of the IACP is crucial to our officers in volunteering the numerous hours that it takes to properly operate our LETR program. Here in Minnesota, the support of the Chiefs of Police Association has been instrumental in growing our program. When your LETR program grows, the local Special Olympics program grows and we in turn involve and reach more athletes. A win, win situation for all!

We would like to thank Chief Scott Knight, a friend of the LETR and a friend of the Special Olympics Athletes everywhere, for his involvement and leadership during our LETR program growth.



Opening Ceremonies Special Olympics Minnesota 2005 Summer Games  
Special Olympics Athlete - Aimee Anwiler and  
Special Olympics Athlete - Nathan Bauer

# SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES CARRY THE OLYMPIC TORCH

The Olympic flame for the Beijing Games was lit in Olympia, Greece, on 24 March 2008. The flame then started to make its way to 21 cities around the world, including San Francisco, London and Istanbul, where three Special Olympics athletes had the honor of becoming Olympic Torch Runners. Michael Bailey, Brian Thomson and Durducan Nevruz joined the more than 20,000 other torchbearers who participate in this worldwide relay, which lasts 130 days and covers approximately 137,000 km, making it the longest relay in the history of the modern Olympic movement. On 8 August, the flame will be used to light the cauldron during the Opening Ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

## **Michael Bailey** **Special Olympics Northern California**

Special Olympics Northern California (USA) athlete Michael Bailey was one of the runners in San Francisco—the only North American stop—for the Olympic Torch Relay leading up to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Bailey was nominated by members of his San Jose and Special Olympics Northern California community when San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom expressed his interest in having a Special Olympics athlete participate in the San Francisco leg of the Olympic Torch Relay. Bailey's nomination materials went before representatives of the Beijing Organizing Committee, who ultimately selected him to be an official torchbearer.

Bailey has been described as having two moods: happy and happier. He very seldom has a bad day, loves life and meeting new people. His positive attitude and cheerful personality made him the ideal candidate to be selected to run the San Francisco leg of the Olympic Torch Relay on 9 April. "It was fun and exciting and I was proud to be a torchbearer and to be a representative of Special Olympics, Bailey said. "I will never forget the day I carried the Olympic Torch."



**Special Olympics Northern California  
athlete Mike Bailey carries the Olympic  
flame in San Francisco**

Bailey's constant optimism was an inspiration for his co-torchbearers that day. Mark Henderson, winner of the gold medal in the 400-medley relay in the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games and member of the US National Swim Team from 1989 to 1997, ran the torch alongside Bailey in San Francisco. Bailey's laughter and proclamations that "we are heroes!" kept Henderson and others smiling throughout the day's events. Bailey interacted with the crowd, smiling and waving in response to their cheers of encouragement. "It was one of the most rewarding things I've ever witnessed and participated in," said Henderson. "Mike embodied the true excitement of what the torch represents."

After his birth, doctors told Dave and Karen Bailey their son had Down syndrome. Like many parents who find out similar news, Dave and Karen were crushed; the hopes and dreams they had for their son seemed shattered. They decided to join the support group, Parents of Down Syndrome, and enrolled Michael in early intervention programs. At 7, he attended grammar school at Garden Gate Elementary and his teacher suggested that he get involved in Special Olympics. Dave and Karen took her advice, and say that "it was most likely one of, if not the most, important decisions we ever made for Mike."

# SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES CARRY THE OLYMPIC TORCH

Dave and Karen credit Special Olympics with providing their son the opportunity for lifelong physical conditioning, socialization and many great friendships. Bailey competes in bocce and power lifting and loves every minute of it, including practice. Last August, Bailey received a letter notifying him that he had been selected as the San Jose Sports Authority 2007 Special Olympian of the Year and would be recognized at the Hall of Fame dinner along with the likes of Brian Boitano, Mark Spitz and several other notable San Jose area athletes. In addition to the SJSA recognition, Bailey has been invited to ride in the Grand Marshall's car for the NBC 11 Holiday Parade in San Jose, just recently got a tour of NBC 11 studios in San Jose and has been recognized at a recent board meeting at DeAnza College.

The Bailey family believes that if Michael had not be born with Down syndrome, they would have missed out on a life filled with challenge, accomplishment, excitement, fun, lifelong friendships and the opportunity to be part of an organization like Special Olympics. From Olympic torchbearer to Hall of Famer to all-round "great guy," Bailey and his family certainly have much to celebrate.

## **Brian Thomson** **Special Olympics Great Britain**



Brian Thomson, SOGB athlete, carries the Olympic Torch in London

Across the "pond," another Special Olympics athlete has cause for celebration. When Special Olympics Great Britain athlete Brian Thomson, 17, was selected as one of the runners to carry the torch through London on 6 April for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, he was elated. "It is a 'once-in-a-lifetime' experience, and it will be something I will never forget. I am so proud to be taking part," Thomson said. Thomson, from Renfrew, Scotland, has competed in judo since 2005, training two days a week for three hours each session. He won a gold medal at the Special Olympics Games in Glasgow in 2005, and a bronze medal at the 2006 Special Olympics China National Games, which also served as the pre-Games for the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Shanghai.

An accident at age 5 caused brain damage and left Thomson paralyzed; he slipped off the veranda of a friend's house and fell to the concrete pavement. Thomson was taken to Glasgow's Southern General, where doctors brought him back to life twice after his heart stopped beating. He was in a coma for five weeks. Doctors warned his parents, Jeanette and Andy, that his condition would not improve.

Confined to a wheelchair, Thomson worked tirelessly with physical and speech therapists. In an attempt to improve his balance and coordination, he joined Special Olympics Great Britain and began taking judo lessons. "Doctors told me that he would not be able to walk or talk because of his brain damage. But he is my walking, talking miracle," said Jeanette. "We have four kids, and we love them all the same and give them as much attention, but Brian brings us so much joy," she added.

Like Bailey, Thomson has been influenced enormously by Special Olympics. Since he joined the global movement his self-esteem and confidence have improved. "He is more fit and happy. Being part of his judo group has helped him to be more focused," said Jeanette. Thomson's parents nominated him to take part in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Torch Run as part of the Samsung True Life Hero competition, which sought to find some of Britain's most inspiring people. His story moved panelists, chaired by five-time Olympic gold medalist Sir Steve Redgrave, and he was chosen, along with three others, to become an Olympic torchbearer.

# SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES CARRY THE OLYMPIC TORCH

## **Durducan Nevruz** **Special Olympics Turkey**

Like his fellow athletes in San Francisco and London, Special Olympics Turkey athlete Durducan Nevruz, 16, also had the honor of carrying the Olympic Torch. He did so through the streets of Istanbul on 3 April 2008. Joined by 80 other runners, Nevruz ran 2 km as part of the relay. "I will never forget this day," said his mother, Sevim Nevruz, who was with her son during the run. "Like the Olympic flame, the memory of my son taking part in this historic world event will burn brightly forever," she said.



Special Olympics Turkey athlete Durducan Nevruz carried the Olympic flame in Istanbul. Photo courtesy of Special Olympics Turkey

Nevruz was nominated to take part in the Olympic Torch Relay by 2008 Olympic Games sponsors Lenovo and Samsung, as well as the Turkish National Olympic Committee. He was selected for this honor due to his enthusiasm for Special Olympics competition and the great success he achieved at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Shanghai, China where he won two gold medals and one silver medal in swimming.

Nevruz has been a Special Olympics athlete for the past three years. In addition to his involvement with Special Olympics, he is also part of a local community sports club. Nevruz attends a special needs vocational school in the city of Bursa.



**Congratulations to these three outstanding Special Olympics athletes!**

# IACP TORCH RUN PHOTO CONTEST

We are pleased to announce a call for submissions for this year's IACP Torch Run Photo Contest!

Winning photos will be displayed at the 114th Annual IACP Conference and at the 2008 International Torch Run Conference in Dallas, TX. First place photos in each category will be enlarged to display size and awarded to the contributing programs. All submissions should be sent to David Paulson at IACP by **September 8, 2008**. Please see below for more information or [www.theiacp.org](http://www.theiacp.org) Please direct all questions to David at (800) 843-4227 ext. 329 or [paulsond@theiacp.org](mailto:paulsond@theiacp.org)

**Thank you!**

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[Have your favorite Torch Run photos get international recognition!](#)

**Categories: Submit photographs taken in the past five years in one of the following two categories:**

A) Law enforcement as the guardians of the flame - personnel carrying the torch, interacting with communities, raising funds and awareness of the events, etc.

B) Law enforcement in support of the Special Olympics athletes themselves – personnel in interaction with athlete(s)

**Prizes:**

Winning photos will be displayed at the 114th Annual IACP Conference and at the 2008 International Torch Run Conference. The top photos printed in Spirit magazine. First place photos in each category will be enlarged to display size and awarded to the contributing programs.

**Entry Information:**

**Entries must be received by September 8, 2008.**

A maximum of eight (8) photos per submission will be accepted.

Photos previously submitted can be sent again for consideration, provided they were not selected as winners in either category.

Each submitted photo must have a contact name, torch run program name, phone, city and state on the back. Please also include a description of the photo on the back.

Photos will not be returned. Consider making a copy of the photo(s) submitted before sending.

Photos should be of the highest possible resolution and clarity for reproduction as signs and for printing.

Winners may be requested to provide original negatives and/or higher resolution photographs.

*Digital photos may not be submitted;*

*Please submit a photo quality printing of digital photos for consideration in the contest*

Entries will be reviewed by a panel from IACP, Torch Run, and Special Olympics.

The top three photos in each category will be selected.

**Send entries to:**

The International Association of Chiefs of Police  
Annual I.A.C.P. Torch Run Photo Contest  
Attn: D. David Paulson  
515 North Washington Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

For more information, please contact:

David Paulson

[paulsond@theiacp.org](mailto:paulsond@theiacp.org)

(800) 843-4227 ext. 329



## 2008 Special Olympics Canada National Winter Games – Quebec City

### Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg

*By: Constable Danny O'Keefe, Royal Canadian Mounted Police  
Harbour Grace LETR Committee*



*Constable Danny O'Keefe (2nd from right)  
at Opening Ceremonies with  
Special Olympics athletes*

On February 24, 2008, I had the privilege of traveling to Montreal to represent Newfoundland and Labrador in the Final Leg of the Law Enforcement Torch Run at the 2008 Special Olympic National Winter Games in Quebec City. The final leg was composed of runners representing law enforcement agencies from all the Canadian provinces.

On February 25, 2008, all the runners and a Special Olympic athlete from Montreal, were welcomed by members of various Quebec Police forces, the RCMP, CN Police and other dignitaries. Following this, everyone boarded a special train that was assembled solely for the purpose of carrying the torch and runners to Quebec City. The Train of Hope stopped at several cities along the route from Montreal to Quebec City. At each stop the Special Olympics athlete and the runners would disembark and run through the streets. At the completion of each run everyone was met by local dignitaries at a special luncheon. The first night was spent in Quebec City where we had supper with the athletes.

This time of year the St. Lawrence river has very swift and changing currents and a lot of fast moving ice. Various Quebec police forces hold "Ice Canoe" competitions on the river with the aim to make it across with life and limb intact. The teams must battle the swift currents and ice pans by rowing, paddling and portaging the ice pans. This is not for the faint of heart and physical fitness is of utmost importance. You guessed it, the Torch had to get across the river. On February 26, 2008, all runners and the Special Olympics athlete were bused to the shores of the St. Lawrence to begin the next leg of the run. This time the torch bearer bravely boarded the "Ice Canoe" and with the able assistance of members of the Quebec City Police Force eventually made it across the St. Lawrence. The rest of us were in the security and warmth of a ferry.

Upon arrival on the shores of Quebec City, a troop was formed and the arduous 4.8 km run up the hills and into Quebec City began. We passed the Hotel Frontenac, onto the Plains of Abraham and arrived at the Parliament Building to a very warm reception. Following the reception and signing of the guest book we were on the run again.

In preparations for the Opening Ceremonies about 900 athletes, coaches and torch runners were assembled in a huge tent. All Torch Run representatives anxiously looked for teams from their home provinces to enter the tent. I have never seen a group of people more enthusiastic, excited, "pumped up" and ready to get moving than the Special Olympics athletes. It was infectious and thrilling to watch. I was more than surprised to see the age range of the athletes from the very young to people in their 50's and older. All 900 athletes moved in unison from the tent and made their way through the blowing snow, wind and chilling temperatures to the Opening Ceremony site.

Finally the runners were signaled that it was our turn to enter. Led by a Special Olympics athlete we entered onto the Plains of Abraham with the Flame of Hope to thunderous applause from everyone in attendance. After the official welcome everyone was treated to a live performance by some well known and talented Quebec singers. The ceremonies ended with a huge fireworks display and all the athletes filing out of the area and on to their buses to return to their hotels.

The Special Olympic athletes were quite honored to represent their province at the games. They did their provinces proud as well as their coaches and families. It was an honor for me to share this time with them. The Special Olympics athletes are truly an inspiration to us all. All I can say is you had to be there to see their excitement. I sincerely thank the provincial committee for allowing me to be part of this wonderful event.

# FRIDAY THE 13TH

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> may be unlucky for some, but not for the Law Enforcement Torch Run. In 2003, for the first time in history, the Special Olympics World Summer Games left North America and were held in Ireland. A Final Leg Torch Run was held across Europe and arrived in Ireland for the final journey to the games venue on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2003. It was a very special day for Bangor, Northern Ireland as it had been chosen as the first Irish arrival point for the Flame of Hope on its journey in the Final Leg through the island of Ireland.



*2003 Final Leg Members in Connemara, Ireland*

Jeremy Adams and Andy Galbraith, Torch Runners from Police Service of Northern Ireland, were part of the planning committee with North Down Borough Council for the Torch arrival in Bangor. The evening before, members of the planning committee enjoyed a reception in a local hotel and all were prepared for the Torch arriving by a Royal Navy helicopter the following day.

At the reception Jeremy, Andy and Wendy Smith from the Council Events Team knew that all their plans and preparation would be on show the following day and all eyes would be on Bangor as the Torch arrived in Ireland for the largest sporting event in the world in 2003. They hoped that all their preparations would go as according to plan..... it was Friday 13<sup>th</sup> after all. The big day arrived, the weather was fine, the spectators came to line the streets and, at 10:30 a.m., Tim Craig from the Police Service of Northern Ireland was suspended from a Royal Naval helicopter over Bangor harbor. He landed safely with the miner's lamp containing the flame. The Torch was lit and handed to Police Service of Northern Ireland Chief Constable Hugh Orde and An Garda Siochana Deputy Commissioner Peter Fitzgerald, who handed the Torch to North Down's Mayor, Ann Wilson.

Exactly five years to the day on Friday 13th June 2008, Wendy and Jeremy met up in Bangor to remember that wonderful day, which still is vivid in the minds of many people. Wendy remembers the day well and remembers the Torch's impressive arrival and the Final Leg team running up the town's Main Street in glorious sunshine, cheered on by thousands of spectators. Jeremy also has fond memories of the day and remembers seeing his colleague and friend Tim Craig suspended in the air with the miners lamp and his son and daughter waiting for their father to land safely. The event remains Tim's most memorable to date in his 25 year policing career and he remembers the day vividly along with the night before as he traveled aboard a Royal Navy ship with the miners lamp on it's journey from Glasgow to Northern Ireland.

The event was also the motivation for the first Special Olympics club to be formed in North Down and Jeremy is proud to be a founder and committee member of the club. He stated "I know exactly how long the club has been in existence, and I know it as the Torch Run club." The PSNI Torch Run program and the club have a close affiliation and take part each year with the committee in the Belfast Marathon relay event. Tim Craig's son Ryan is also a proud member of the club, which is significant for Tim. The 2003 Final Leg and Games was the catalyst for the creation of the Police Service of Northern Ireland Torch Run committee. This committee continues to grow the Torch Run movement, activities and objectives with their Irish colleagues in An Garda Siochana. Friday 13<sup>th</sup> now holds fond memories in Irish Torch Run and Special Olympics minds.



*Jeremy presents Law Enforcement Torch Run Endeavour Shield to the North Down Special Olympics Athletic Club*

***Friday the 13th.....not so unlucky!!***

# 2008 LETR Conference

## 2008 LETR Conference

### Dallas, Texas



By: Kelly Coffey, Special Olympics Texas

### **Pack Your Bags for the Big “D”!**

Dust off your cowboy hat and pull on your boots... the countdown is on for the 2008 International Torch Run Conference. The Conference will be held **October 30 to November 2, 2008 at the Hilton Anatole Hotel** in Dallas. If you haven't booked your travel, do so immediately; y'all won't want to miss what's in store for you in the Lone Star State!

#### **The Hotel**

You will sleep, dine and “play” in style at the prestigious Hilton Anatole Hotel. A true Dallas landmark, this expansive hotel has hosted everyone from Presidents to celebrities, and soon the largest and most respected group of law enforcement in the world. This iconic location boasts more than 1,600 luxury rooms, a full-service fitness club and spa, seven chic bars and lounges, and five restaurants including one with a breathtaking view of the Dallas skyline.

#### **BeFORE the Conference Golf Outing**

Don't miss a chance to hit the beautifully choreographed greens at The Golf Club at Castle Hills on Wednesday, October 29. The 7,245 yard championship course features rolling terrain, large lakes and wetland areas of native grasses and wildflowers. To learn more, contact Katie Wheeler at 214.943.9981 or email [kwheeler@sotx.org](mailto:kwheeler@sotx.org).

#### **Session Highlights**

From an official state welcome by the Governor of the Great State of Texas to mingling with major motion picture and television stars, some big personalities will be present to make it a conference to remember!

#### **Host Night**

Step into the Wild West and enjoy a true taste of Texas at the famous Eddie Deen's Ranch. Tex-Mex cuisine that is a favorite of President Bush will be served up Texas-style with super sized portions. It'll be a boot-scootin' good time with entertainment from breakout country music artist Jolie Holliday, who will step off the Chevrolet stage at NASCAR events to perform for this exclusive one-night event. Don't leave without visiting the sketch artist whose special expertise will send you home laughing with a memento like no other you've seen before.



#### **Put Your Game Face On**

Show your Torch Run spirit and get into the game(s) on Saturday, November 1. Lace up for the 5K; roll your way to gold in the bocce competition; or race for clues and a first place finish in the Amazing Anatole Adventure. Additional information about the events is available in the registration packet.



# 2008 LETR Conference

## 2008 LETR Conference

### Dallas, Texas



#### **Dallas Attractions**

Just like Dallas' slogan "*Live Large. Think Big.*" there are countless means of entertainment so you can do just that during your time in the Big "D". From the theatre, music and arts scene to sports and sightseeing, you need to plan out your time because there is so much to do and see! Listed below are just a few of the most renowned area attractions.

#### **Dallas Museum of Art**

[www.dm-art.org](http://www.dm-art.org)

The Museum features an outstanding collection of more than 23,000 works of art from around the world. During the conference, the featured exhibit will be *Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs*, which marks the first time King Tut's treasures will be seen in the Southwest region.

#### **Fort Worth Stockyards**

[www.fortworthstockyards.org](http://www.fortworthstockyards.org)

Its' history dates back to the mid-1800's, when cattle drives up the Chisholm Trail stopped in Fort Worth and later became the major shipping point for livestock. Today it is the only place in the U.S. that has a daily cattle drive!

#### **Kimbell Art Museum**

[www.kimbellart.org](http://www.kimbellart.org)

Some of the most celebrated and iconic works of the great Impressionist painters will be at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth until November 2. The loan of about 90 paintings from the Art Institute of Chicago includes masterpieces by the world's most beloved artists, including Édouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

#### **Sixth Floor Museum**

[www.jfk.org](http://www.jfk.org)

The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealy Plaza chronicles the legacy of President John F. Kennedy.

#### **Southfork Ranch**

[www.southforkranch.com](http://www.southforkranch.com)

Your visit won't be complete without checking out the ranch that the Ewings called home on one of the most legendary and long-running series in TV history "Dallas".

#### **Special Olympics Texas Competition**

[www.sotx.org/area10](http://www.sotx.org/area10)

October 27 through November 1, more than 2,000 athletes will bowl their way to gold, silver and bronze at the Special Olympics Texas – Greater Dallas Area Bowling Competition. Be a fan of determination. Cheer the athletes on as a volunteer or spectator at the event.

#### **Texas Motor Speedway**

[www.texasmotorspeedway.com](http://www.texasmotorspeedway.com)

Make a pit stop at Texas Motor Speedway on October 31, November 1 and November 2, and watch the engines and action rev up. Tickets are available online for the Silverado 350K, O'Reilly Challenge and Dickies 500.

To learn more about all that's happening around Metroplex, visit the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau website at [www.visitdallas.com](http://www.visitdallas.com).

# Campus Public Safety/Police

## A Partnership that Makes Sense!

**By: Lisa Walter, Chief of Police  
University of Wisconsin, Stout**

Many of you have heard this story already: On the way back to the airport at the Hawaii Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) International Conference, I was talking with another Torch Runner. We talked about the success of the conference, the many late nights and increased networking. I mentioned that I had not accomplished one of my goals at the conference: to meet other campus police members involved in the LETR. He then introduced himself, Rich Banahan, Chief at St. Louis Community College. Now that's a small world! It took me to the end of the conference to finally meet a colleague from another campus, therefore, from that point on, Rich and I have been on a mission to formalize and recognize college and university involvement in the LETR.

Our founding organization is the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA). IACLEA represents over 1,000 colleges and universities in 20 countries with more than 2,000 individual members. These members are police and public safety professionals that focus on campus safety and community policing efforts. To enhance our partnership, five years ago we started a Torch Run at the IACLEA International Conference in Ottawa. On Sunday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008, we celebrated our fifth formal Torch Run at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary IACLEA Conference in Hartford, Connecticut. More than 50 delegates and family members joined us in the 5K cadence run/walk through Hartford to increase awareness of IACLEA and the LETR. Runners donned a special Anniversary run t-shirt which was designed for the conference.



After the run/walk participants were joined by Special Olympic athletes from Connecticut to do a cadence run through the conference vendor area. Led by Paul Zarnetske, Region I Coordinator for the Law Enforcement Torch Run® Executive Council, the group presented a plaque to President Ray Thrower, Incoming President Lisa Sprague and Chief of Staff for IACLEA, Peter Berry. The plaque read:

In appreciation of IACLEA and campus safety for your partnership and support of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® and Special Olympics.

On behalf of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® Executive Council, the 85,000 officers worldwide who represent the Torch Run and the more than 2.5 million athletes served, we congratulate you on your 50th Anniversary. In addition, a survey was conducted of members of IACLEA to determine their interest and involvement in the Torch Run®. Survey results will be available soon.

As a side note, members of the Connecticut Torch Run and Special Olympics Connecticut office gave a tour of Foxwoods, the resort venue of the 2009 LETR conference. It was stunning! The 2009 LETR International Conference will not be one to miss!

Next year's IACLEA conference will be hosted by Université Laval in Québec City, Canada from June 20-23, 2009. Members of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® Executive Council Affiliates Committee continue to work on the important partnership between LETR and IACLEA and will continue to report on our progress. If you are interested in partnering with your local college or university, please do not hesitate to e-mail me for contact information at: [walterl@uwstout.edu](mailto:walterl@uwstout.edu)

# Torch Runner Profile

## Sgt. Joe Cronk

Green River PD, Wyoming



Sgt. Joe Cronk has been a police officer for the Green River PD since 1999 and had been a law enforcement representative for Wyoming Special Olympics since 1999. Joe has received numerous awards during his career and has been instrumental in helping to expand Special Olympics awareness in Sweetwater County.

Joe has not only initiated fund raising initiatives and Torch Runs within his own department. He also was able to reach out to other law enforcement agencies in his County and was able to get them involved.

Joe's family is also involved with Special Olympics and the Torch Run. His wife Brenda hosts a BBQ for athletes and participants after the local Torch Run; Joe's eldest son Will is a runner and raises pledges and donations; and his younger son Kaleb is the grill cook for the BBQ. Joe's proudest achievement with Special Olympics was in 2006 when he was selected to represent Wyoming Law Enforcement in the first ever Special Olympic USA National Games as a Torch Run Final Leg Runner where the Flame of Hope was run from Soldier Field in Chicago to the opening ceremonies in Ames, Iowa.



# COMMANDING A NEW RESPECT FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

## The Commanders; Father and Son Compete together for Special Olympics North Carolina



**The Commander's, Zach (right) and son Tysheem**

Zach Commander of Elizabeth City, North Carolina has made the most of his participation in Special Olympics. The 37 year-old is an active athlete in volleyball and basketball. He is a Sargent Shriver Global Messenger, serves on the Special Olympics North Carolina (SONC) Athlete Council and is the only athlete member of the NC Law Enforcement Torch Run Committee. He is a leader and mentor to athletes throughout the state. But at home, Zach is simply "Dad" to his three children, 15, 9 and 3 years-old.

His accomplishments in Special Olympics however did not go unnoticed. He would often come home from competing in Special Olympics North Carolina state-level events with gold, silver or bronze medals around his neck. Usually within a couple hours of returning home, Zach's medals would disappear. His oldest son, Tysheem, would sneak off to his room with the glistening awards and claim them for his own.

"He was always interested in participating," said Zach. "But he keeps a very active schedule and it wasn't until this year that he finally wanted to play sports and win some medals of his own."

Tysheem, 15, joined his father's Special Olympics North Carolina/Pasquotank/Camden volleyball team and made the trip to Raleigh to compete in the 2008 SONC Summer Games. The two roomed together in the NC State University dorms and had a terrific experience.

"I had a special feeling the whole weekend," said Zach. "Watching my son here competing with me gave me a whole new outlook on Special Olympics and the empowerment of this organization. A lot of people thought we were brothers too, and that made me laugh."

Tysheem enjoyed traveling, meeting lots of new people and winning his own gold medal! Pasquotank/Camden was in a tough championship match versus the Cabarrus County Spikers but came away winners.

"He loved winning and for days after we got home had his medal in his pocket or around his neck," said Zach about his son. "But his favorite part of the weekend, by far, was the dance. Oh boy, did he have a good time and he did not want to leave!"

Zach too had a great time during the weekend and credits his son's participation with re-energizing him and his desire to compete.

"For a long time Special Olympics was just about me and having my son compete with me has shown me how to be a stronger person, more of a leader and it has made me feel like I want to compete another 20-25 years," exclaimed Zach.

The Commanders are now counting down the days until basketball practice begins. Tysheem's goal is to attend the 2009 SONC Basketball & Cheerleading Tournament next March in Winston-Salem.

And Zach has found he still must share his medals. His 9 year-old daughter has been eyeing the gold medal since he brought it home.

# 2008 Florida LETR Final Leg.... 25 Years in the Making

By: Amie Dugan, Special Olympics Florida

It spread through the crowd like wildfire: "can you hear it?" "The "it" was the distant sound of sirens. Normally, this provokes unsettling emotions in people, but not this time. This time, it sent 3,500 athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators into a state of nearly unbearable anticipation.



The Opening Ceremony of the 36<sup>th</sup> annual Special Olympics Florida State Summer Games was finally approaching the moment everyone looks forward to each summer: the entrance of the Law Enforcement Torch Run. The "Final Leg" team consisted of over 200 law enforcement officials from throughout Florida, who represented the thousands of law enforcement personnel who participate in the statewide Torch Run each year.



And this was no ordinary Final Leg – this was the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Torch Run. As the sirens grew louder, the entire crowd was on its feet, eyes fixed on the outfield wall of the baseball stadium of *Disney's Wide World of Sports*® Complex, knowing that at any moment, this annual homecoming of sorts would occur: the Flame of Hope was about to

make its way to its rightful owners - the athletes of Special Olympics.

First came the motorcycle units with lights flashing and sirens blaring, next came an array of cruisers and vehicles – the entire stadium's perimeter was ablaze with law enforcement vehicles. And then they rounded the corner: the "Final Leg" team – columns of runners escorting in the Flame of Hope.

The deafening roar extended into a standing ovation and it was impossible to tell who was more moved, the spectators or law enforcement.

Leading the runners were six of the original twelve S.O.M.E Runners (the Florida Torch Run was originally called the S.O.M.E. "Special Olympics Mileage Event" Run. In 1984, a handful of FDLE officers ran the Flame of Hope throughout the state in an exhausting, non-stop run), and taking part in his "final" Final Leg, as he put it, was Torch Run Regional Director Bill Pakonis of the Martin County Sheriff's Office, who was retiring after over twenty years of service to Special Olympics Florida.

Osceola County Sheriff Robert Hansell had the honor of being the final law enforcement official to pass the torch to the four Special Olympics athletes who would run the torch to the cauldron.

Mark Zadra, Assistant Commissioner of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and one of the original S.O.M.E. runners, told the crowd "it [the very first Torch Run] was exhausting, but even then we knew we were part of something special. But we could have never imagined it would grow to be what it is today. It is our honor and privilege to serve as the guardians of *your* flame."

For twenty-five years, the Special Olympics Flame of Hope has traversed Florida in an intrastate relay of simultaneous routes throughout the state, covering countless thousands of miles by a legion of dedicated supporters: Florida's law enforcement community.

To this day, the torch is carried by local and state law enforcement officers all the way to the Opening Ceremonies of the annual State Summer Games; which this year, were held at *Disney's Wide World of Sports*® Complex on Friday, May 16.

Statewide, the participating chiefs, officers, sheriffs, deputies, agents and cadets from virtually every branch of federal, state, county and municipal law enforcement, represent a total of over 300 different agencies that serve as "Guardians of the Flame." Major Gene Stokes (retired, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office) serves as the Torch Run's Statewide Director.

# TORCH RUN REGION IX

## HOLDS CONFERENCE IN DUBLIN, IRELAND

Dublin was the venue for Region IX (Western Europe) Conference (9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2008) which was organized by the recently elected Regional Coordinator Jeremy Adams and Special Olympics Ireland.



*Conference Delegates (attendees)*

European delegates from Holland, Austria, Great Britain, Gibraltar, Ireland, Northern Ireland and Poland travelled to Ireland's capital for the two day conference. Jeremy was delighted that his colleague, Eastern European coordinator, Jacek Hachulski was also able to attend the conference and inform his Western European colleagues of the work ongoing in the Eastern European region.

The conference started off on the Friday evening with a visit to a local Special Olympics club, Blackrock Flyers, where the European Torch Runners were twined with club members and challenged to a table tennis competition. This proved to be a very enjoyable event!

The Special Olympics office in Dublin was the venue for the main conference business on Saturday and Jeremy was delighted that the recently appointed Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Chief Executive, Mary Davis, was able to attend and open the conference. Mary informed the conference of her vision for Special Olympics across Europe/Eurasia and highlighted the important role that the Torch Run has played in support of Special Olympics and she hoped this would continue to expand and be enhanced. Mary's European colleague, Dipak Natali, was introduced to the group as the Torch Run liaison and he gave a brief on his role and aspirations.

Full and productive sessions took place throughout the day including sponsorship issues, development/growth across Europe, enhancing current programs and mutual assistance for larger Torch Run events. The Police Service of Northern Ireland Torch Run Director, Duncan McCausland, gave a presentation on how his program had developed and highlighted some of the activities that they were involved with. A representative from Eircom (Special Olympics Ireland sponsor) gave a presentation on why they sponsor Special Olympics Ireland and how this was a two way process with mutual benefits to each other.

Jacek gave a presentation on the Special Olympics European Youth Games and Torch Run, taking place in Poland in 2010 and Bob Chandler from Great Britain Torch Run also gave a presentation on the Great Britain Games taking place in 2009. Both events will have European Torch Run involvement.

# TORCH RUN REGION IX

## HOLDS CONFERENCE IN DUBLIN, IRELAND

The afternoon breakout sessions proved to be very productive with discussion and suggestions for Torch Run progression throughout the Region;

Common discussion centered on the following points...

1. Assistance and mutual support should be given to other TR programs that aren't well developed.
2. Senior Law Enforcement commanders should be involved in the program to ensure that TR remains a high profile objective for Police.
3. The importance of involving student police officers and grass root officers was also very important to introduce new officers to what TR and SO is all about.
4. IACP would be a good forum of senior Police officers to target a TR and SO presentation to try and encourage non participating countries and services on board. Focus should be on key Policing objectives and what it achieves for the respective services.
5. Maximum use of PR and Media should be used to help promote awareness of events.
6. Wearing of TR and SO merchandise should be worn at every opportunity to help raise the profile.
7. TR personnel should make every effort to attend all SO year round events.



*Torch Run Conference delegates with local Special Olympics athletes*

After an enjoyable evening sampling Dublin's nightlife, the delegates on a sunny Sunday joined local Special Olympics athletes in a 3 mile Torch Run in Phoenix Park and this was welcomed by the large crowds in the Park.

In planning the conference Jeremy wanted to make it both interesting and enjoyable and it could have been held in any of the attendees' country as all have well established programs and this was evident from the various program updates that were delivered.

However as it was Special Olympics Ireland 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, it was fitting that the conference be held in Ireland and learn more about the 'Irish Experience' from a Special Olympics and Torch Run point of view.

Jeremy was delighted with his first conference and negotiations have already taken place to present at the European IACP conference in Estonia, April 2009. This will afford an opportunity to introduce Torch Run to fellow Law Enforcement colleagues in European Countries and enhancement of the Region. This was a key discussion topic at the conference and one which can raise the Torch Run profile across Europe.

Jeremy would like to thank all who made the conference possible, especially Special Olympics Ireland, in particular Mary Davis, Sarah Joyce and Gerry Conlan and of course all the delegates who attended to make sure that Torch Run continues to grow all across Europe !!!

# TORCH RUN TIES



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P: (202) 824-0268 F: (202) 347-3460 [aberke@specialolympics.org](mailto:aberke@specialolympics.org)



# TORCH RUN NEWS FROM

## "DOWN UNDER"

### TORCH RUN EXPANDS ACROSS AUSTRALIA



There has been a slow but steady growth of the LETR Program in Australia over the past few years. In 2002, the Chairman of Special Olympics New South Wales approached the Commissioner of the New South Wales Police Force to conduct a leg of the Torch Run in support of the Australian SO National Games that were to be held in Sydney that year. It probably helped that the SO NSW Chairman (Norm Maroney) was a retired Police Assistant Commissioner and still had some contacts.

Coincidentally, Sydney was preparing to host the 2003 Rugby World Cup and had established a Planning Team under the command of Assistant Commissioner Chris Evans to plan for that event.

Chris was given the job of planning a Torch Run and promptly handed it over to Inspector Alan Keane. Alan organized the Torch Run and was bitten by the bug of Law Enforcement Torch Run. He subsequently represented Australia on the 2003 Torch Run Final Leg Team and as a result became more determined to get the Law Enforcement Torch Run program up and running in New South Wales.

Things were a bit quiet until 2006 when the call again came for help in arranging a Torch Run from Sydney to the Gold Coast in Queensland for the 2006 National Games. Contact was made with the Queensland Police Service and Sergeant Brett Price was charged with planning the Queensland leg of the Torch Run. This event saw the birth of Torch Run programs in both states.

There has been a lot of activity in the past two years which will ultimately result in the formation of LETR Programs across the country.

In New South Wales, the Police Commissioner, Mr Andrew Scipione, has taken on the role of "Patron" of the program and has been extremely supportive of its activities. In September 2007, Sydney played host to the Flame of Hope as it made its way to Shanghai for the 2007 World Summer Games. The Police Commissioner gave his approval for the use of Police Helicopters, Launches, Motorcycle and bicycle escorts, and a team of 20 Police runners to run the torch through the streets of Sydney and he was present at Government House to light the Cauldron and welcome the Flame of Hope to Sydney.

In Queensland, the Police Commissioner, Mr. Bob Atkinson, has also taken on the role of "Patron" to the Law Enforcement Torch Run Queensland and is equally supportive of the activities of that group.

In October 2007, a group of eight Australians attended the LETR International Conference in Oklahoma City and came to understand the extent and spread of the program across the globe. They returned home determined to push out and expand across Australia.

# TORCH RUN EXPANDS ACROSS AUSTRALIA



In May 2008, following months of work, Sydney played host to the inaugural Australian National Conference for Law Enforcement Torch Run. With thanks to Special Olympics Australia, 40 delegates met to discuss plans to expand the program. The keynote speaker for the event was Major Kurt Kendro from Honolulu Police Department, who as the LETR Region XII Coordinator is responsible for Australia, New Zealand, and the Far East. Kurt spoke well and passionately about the impact that involvement in Law Enforcement Torch Run can have on Special Athletes.

The two day conference was opened by Commissioner Scipione and featured sessions explaining the role of both the Special Olympics and Law Enforcement Torch Run movements. The key objective of the Conference was to push for the establishment of an LETR National Council which would become the bridge between Special Olympics Australia and the various LETR

programs. This proposal was accepted unanimously and the inaugural National Council elected. Retired Assistant Commissioner Chris Evans from New South Wales was elected Chairman of the National Council with delegates from each of the six states also elected onto Council.

The delegates were hosted on the beautiful waters of Sydney Harbour for a few hours that night, taking in the sights of the Sydney Opera House, Harbour Bridge and Taronga Park Zoo washed down with some excellent Australian beers and wine.

There is much work to be done across the country as a result of the commitments made at the Conference, but the news is certainly positive.

## Australia – a Snapshot

Australia is situated on the south western rim of the Pacific Ocean and is roughly the size of mainland USA. There is a population of 21 million, most of whom reside in or near the six major cities.

The country is divided into six states and two territories in a parliamentary democracy which has taken the best of the British and US systems. There are only eight Police Forces in the country with the largest (New South Wales) having almost 16,000 sworn officers. The two smallest forces (Tasmania and the Northern Territory) have 1000 sworn officers.

Special Olympics started in Australia in 1976 and thirty years later is supporting over 4500 athletes in 46 regions across the country.



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# 2008 TORCH RUN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Law Enforcement At-Large (2010)

**Mike Teem (Chairman)**

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Raleigh Police Department

Special Olympics Athlete Appointee (2008)

**Sam Stillings**

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IACP Appointee (2008)

**Russ Laine**

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Algonquin Police Department

IACP Appointee (2009)

**Joe Pena**

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Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police

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