

SPRING 2010

The Guardian

The Newsletter of the Law Enforcement Torch Run Executive Council

Lighting of the 2000 Sydney
Olympic Games Cauldron by
NSW Police Commissioner
Andrew Scipione and
Special Olympics Athlete
Joshua Elston

Story Page 16

Photo Courtesy of
News Limited

The Guardian

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Chairman's CORNER

June 8, 2010

Torch Run Friends:

I hope this correspondence finds you doing very well during this busy Torch Run season! Most of you have just concluded your Torch Runs and Summer Games for the year and are ready to take a well-deserved break over the summer. If you are in the midst of your Torch Run, Final Leg and Summer Games, I hope all goes well and that you achieve your goal of showcasing the ability of Special Olympics athletes as well as the commitment that we in law enforcement have to Special Olympics.

On behalf of the Law Enforcement Torch Run Executive Council, congratulations on a very successful Torch Run year to date! The incredible stories and articles found in this edition of The Guardian certainly demonstrate how the Torch Run movement continues to grow and develop. Looking at the great plunge pictures from all over amazes me and makes me wonder what our next "big idea" will be. Seeing the Torch Run grow in Australia by leaps and bounds excites me for our future and where we are heading as a global Torch Run movement with one focused goal and mission—to support the athletes of Special Olympics in any way possible. The recent Final Leg for the Latin American Games in Puerto Rico was a tremendous success and the Latin American region is poised to receive recognition as a full-fledged Torch Run region. Upcoming Final Legs in the USA, across Europe, and in Canada will no doubt leave their mark on the areas covered as well as the officers and athletes involved on the Final Leg Teams.

On a personal note, I retired on May 1st and concluded a 28 year career in law enforcement. The highlight of my career was being a Torch Runner and supporting Special Olympics athletes. My fondest memories are those where officers and athletes gathered together side-by-side to accomplish some great achievements in the name of Special Olympics. I feel very proud and privileged to be a part of the Law Enforcement Torch Run Family, and I thank you for your friendship, support, and inspiration that you have given to me over the years. Have a great summer!

All the Best,

Michael

Michael Teem

Chairman, LETR Executive Council

You DON'T Mess with Our Athletes!

By: Lt. Dixon Andrews, Oregon LETR Program

Over the past couple of years I have gotten acquainted with an athlete named Jesse and his Bocce coach, Keri. Jesse is about 52 years old and has competed as a Special Olympics athlete for several years.

When it comes to LETR fundraising Jesse is one of the athletes that is always there to help and always has a smile on his face. Jesse is a regular at our Cops On Donut Shops event we have in May, he ran with our Torch Run in June, and helped me with Tip A Cop in September.

This past August I received an e-mail at work from Coach Keri. Coach Keri relayed to me that Jesse had possibly been financially bilked by a caregiver who was paid to assist Jesse with his financial affairs. As a result, Jesse's bank account was several hundred dollars overdrawn and Jesse had no money for food or to pay bills. Jesse, it seems, was out a little over \$1,000 in cash, and had been charged over \$400 in bank overdraft fees.



Lt. Dixon Andrews (L) and Jesse

This information had been reported to Jesse's case manager who works for our county Department Of Human Services Developmental Disabilities section who in turn had reported the information to an Adult Protective Services worker assigned to the Developmental Disabilities section but nothing was happening from a criminal investigation aspect and the caregiver was still working and servicing four other clients.

As a lieutenant with the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office I oversee our department's major drug unit, an inter-agency street crimes unit, and the property crimes section of our detective division. I looked at our available resources and saw that all of the property crimes detectives were tied up on major frauds and embezzlement cases ranging from \$500,000 to \$1.4 million in loss and the likelihood of assigning a case with a loss of just under \$1500 was pretty slim.

- continued -

You DON'T Mess with Our Athletes!

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From my twenty-six years in law enforcement I know that our special needs population are often victimized because they are seen as easy prey, they have difficulty articulating what has happened to them, and often don't have a lot of support. This case wasn't huge in dollar loss in comparison to a 1.4 million dollar case but this loss represented all the money that Jesse has in this world so it meant everything to him. I wasn't going to let Jesse's case fall through the cracks so I initiated a crime report and had the case assigned to myself.

As soon as I began investigating this case I received a call from Jesse's caseworker who was delighted, but very surprised that a Sheriff's Office Lieutenant was involved in the case and commented about the connections that the Special Olympics coach and Jesse must have with the Sheriff's Office. After a few days into the case I was able to get the bank to reimburse Jesse's account for the overdraft fees that were a direct result of the bilking of his money. That took Jesse's account from a negative balance and put him back on the plus side. Jesse's coach made sure that Jesse had food and essentials for the rest of the month and assisted me in gathering Jesse's bank documents.

During my contact with Jesse I learned some things about him that just amazed me. You see, Jesse grew up at the Fairview Training Center in Salem, Oregon. The Fairview training center has long since closed but during the 1950's and 1960's it was the place in Oregon where people with severe intellectual disabilities went to live, to be tucked out of the sight and sound of the world. By all accounts it was a difficult place to be and many residents died there over the years with their remains never to be claimed by their relatives. When Jesse told me that he had grown up at the Fairview Training Center I was shocked. To see Jesse, living today in his own apartment with very little support and doing so well was totally amazing. This made me want to fight even more for Jesse.

My investigation went well and the suspect caregiver in this case was subsequently indicted and has pled guilty to a felony theft charge.

I am convinced that without Special Olympics playing a very major role in Jesse's life, the dedication of his coach, and those special relationships that have developed between law enforcement, the athletes, and the coaches and staff of Special Olympics, this case would have not been successfully investigated and the perpetrator brought to justice.



Athlete

Isaura Vijilla

Profile

Special Olympics Wyoming



Izzy center, with Officer Mike Kavenius left, and Acting Chief Ron Caselenda, right

Isaura “Izzy” Vijilla is 17 years old and was born in Romania. Izzy lived in an orphanage in Romania until she was nine years of age when she was adopted and brought to America. Izzy was welcomed with “open arms” by her foster parents & grand parents and is supported in her efforts by them.

Her “big brothers and sisters” Tracy 35, Michelle 29, Chelsey 26, Josh 25, and Ryan 24, are an active part of her life though they live in various areas of the state. Izzy first moved to Douglas, Wyoming where she attended grade school and then moved with her family to Gillette, Wyoming. Izzy also has an “extended family” at the North East Wyoming Board of Cooperative Educational Services (NEW BOCES) where she now attends school. Izzy began participating in Special Olympics as soon as she started attending NEW BOCES in 2006. She quickly became an enthusiastic Special Olympics athlete and in 2008,

Izzy was given the honor of being the torch bearer at the Opening Ceremonies of the State Fall Games. According to a staff member at NEW BOCES, Izzy, gives 100% in everything she does. Izzy recently commented that carrying the torch, or in her word “The Terch,” was the most exciting thing she has ever done. As a part of the honor of carrying the torch, Izzy was interviewed for the nightly news broadcast and introduced the weather for the upcoming day’s competition during the same news broadcast.

Izzy competes in cycling, snowshoeing, bowling basketball, running and shot put and can be found at various Special Olympics Wyoming competitions throughout the year, giving 100% in everything she does!

POLAR PLUNGES AROUND THE WORLD

**THERE'S NOTHING LIKE FREEZIN'
FOR A GREAT REASON!**



Polar Plunge Oregon expanded from two plunges to five in 2010! More than 1800 people collected more than \$320,000 for the athletes of Special Olympics Oregon



Giant waves form a backdrop for Cpl. Andrew Slutsky (DE Troop 3) and a group of plungers as they huddle for a photo at this year's Polar Bear Plunge benefiting Special Olympics Delaware at Rehoboth Beach



Photo by: Jim Crawford, Cincinnati Photography

Guards from the Kenton County Detention Center in Covington, Kentucky jump at the 2010 Kentucky-Ohio Polar Plunge in Newport, Kentucky



One great photo from one of three Special Olympics Pennsylvania Polar Bear Plunges. 1600 participants from across the state raised over \$227,000



Sgt. Louise Speth, Logan Police Department in Utah prepares her little cowgirl to take the plunge



"Freezin' for a Reason", hosted by the Horry County Torch Run dispelled the theory that you can't hold a true Polar Plunge in South Carolina! The January 30th event at Myrtle Beach made more than \$80,000.



Special Olympics athlete/pirate and top fundraiser Daniel Robertson heads for shore at the Guilford County Sheriff's Office Polar Plunge in Greensboro, North Carolina.

POLAR PLUNGES AROUND THE WORLD



Whose idea was it to swim to freedom?
Johnson County Park Police Officers at
Kansas City Polar Plunge, Jan 30, 2010



Missouri's Law Enforcement Torch Run®
hosted 13 Polar Plunges during February
2010. In total 3,761 people plunged and
raised \$748,725 for Special Olympics
Missouri athletes. This was the 15th year
of Freezin' for a Reason in Missouri.



Michigan Law Enforcement Torch Run
Director Ken Bennett kicking off the
2010 Mt. Pleasant Polar Plunge by
helping Special Olympic athlete
Eugene Comstock into the water!



Sheriff Ken Irwin of the Yakima
County, Washington Sheriff's Office
taking the plunge!



The Maryland State Police Polar Bear Plunge on January 30th hosted a record crowd
of 12,000 participants on a snowy Saturday, raising \$3.5 million for SOMD.



Best Costume,
"Captain
Quack" at the
San Francisco,
California
plunge



The "Smurf-sicles" helped
Special Olympics Indiana
celebrate their 11th Polar
Plunge in Indianapolis. The
Plunge season had more than
1,400 plungers and raised more
than \$290,000!

POLAR PLUNGES AROUND THE WORLD



The Arizona Polar Plunge raised 45K this year. The theme came from the reality that our Special Olympics athletes are Law Enforcement's true Super Heroes!



Britt Wallace – Fish, Wildlife & Parks is not too chicken to take the plunge during the President's Plunge in Bozeman, Montana.



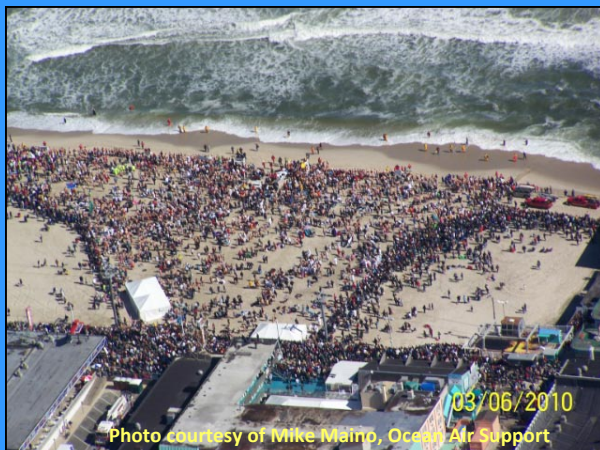
Plungers warming up before the frigid Polar Plunge in Ontario, Canada. Their mothers would be so proud!



The Texas Law Enforcement Torch Run held five Polar Plunges this winter, "bearing" frigid waters in Abilene, Amarillo, North Richland Hills (Dallas/Fort Worth), Odessa and Wichita Falls. The five plunges raised almost \$55,000 for Special Olympics Texas.



*Deputy **Boot Hill** of the Sheridan County Sheriff's Department takes the plunge through 18" of Wyoming ice while his jump partner, Josh Wilson prepares for his jump in matching hula garb!*



New Jersey experienced their largest Plunge on March 6th when 4,800+ jumped into the Atlantic and raised over \$1.2 million!

POLAR PLUNGES AROUND THE WORLD



The Cops and Bobbers team joined more than 9,580 Plungers into Wisconsin's icy waters raising a record \$1.7 million through 12 Polar Plunges held statewide



At New Hampshire's Penguin Plunge over 700 plungers raised nearly \$600,000



No winter weather? No problem! Special Olympics Hawaii used 10 tons of ice in a swimming pool for its Polar Plunge in paradise.



Officers from the Plainfield Police Department plunge at the 2010 Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge in Yorkville, Illinois. More than 5,100 people took the plunge at 17 sites in Illinois, raising nearly \$1.3 million in 2010!



Testing the waters at the Thunder Bay Polar Plunge Ontario, Canada



A PLUNGING VOLUNTEER!

By: Hannah Wohler



Special Olympics Minnesota has so many volunteers who make events, like the Polar Bear Plunge possible. Without these crucial volunteers, our events would not be successful. This is certainly true of Minnesota Law Enforcement Torch Run volunteer Jonathan Otten.

Otten, who works for Hennepin County Sheriff's office, has been a volunteer with Special Olympics Minnesota for the past 20 years. His first volunteer experience was working security at the International Special Olympics Games in 1991 while he was in law enforcement school. This event sparked Otten's interest, and he continued to devote time to raising money for Special Olympics Minnesota.

Throughout the years, Otten has held raffles to raise money for Special Olympics Minnesota and served as a committee member of the Law Enforcement Torch Run. Now, Jon has a vital role in helping to coordinate Polar Bear Plunges.

His first experience at a Polar Bear Plunge was when he was a Plunger himself. Since then, he has helped start many Plunges, including the events at Maple Grove, White Bear Lake, Rochester and Duluth. Now he is primarily involved in the Maple Grove Polar Bear Plunge where he markets and coordinates the Plunge, acquires permits and monitors the safety and security of the event.

When asked why he is so involved in the Plunges, Otten said, "I do it because I was asked, and now I have a cousin who has a child with Down's Syndrome and I like to think I did it for them."

His favorite aspect of coordinating the plunges is fundraising. He says that the Plunges have been so successful because "people will pay to see other people do crazy things."

In the future, Otten hopes to see the Plunges get bigger and better. Otten used to hope that the Plunges would raise 100,000 dollars for Special Olympics Minnesota, and now they have reached the one million dollar mark! He is constantly thinking of new and exciting ways to benefit the Special Olympics Minnesota community. The commitment that Otten has to Special Olympics athletes is truly inspiring!



2010 USA NATIONAL GAMES - NEBRASKA FINAL LEG TORCH RUN

Excitement is building by the day here in Nebraska. Everyone in the state is buzzing about the Special Olympics National Games coming to Nebraska in July. As you drive through downtown Lincoln, Nebraska there is a huge electronic ticker board counting down the days till Opening Ceremonies. Our athletes count down each day with excitement and anticipation of all of the fun to come. For those organizing the events, watching the days tick away can make one a little anxious. But there is no denying that everyone in the State of Nebraska knows that something very big is about to happen.

Almost seventy communities around Nebraska are busy preparing for the Final Leg Team to arrive for their ceremonies. For many Nebraskans the visit by the Final Leg Team will be the only chance they will have to be a part of the 2010 National Special Olympics Games and they are very excited to welcome the Team to their communities in their own special ways.

We are expecting a Final Leg Team of approximately 110 members strong with runners, athletes, team leaders, and support team members. We are gearing up to showcase Nebraska and what we traditionally call, "The Good Life". Runners will arrive in Iowa for a day of ceremonies and hospitality by Special Olympics Iowa and the Iowa LETR. We have a spectacular bridge crossing planned in Omaha when we receive the torch into Nebraska from our good friends in Iowa which was the site of the first ever National Games.

Those coming to Nebraska will see plenty of corn and wheat fields, center pivot irrigation systems, feed lots and wide open space. In the eastern part of Nebraska you will find our two largest cities, Omaha and Lincoln which are a mere 50 miles apart. As you move out to western Nebraska you will find that life is very simple and laid-back here. People enjoy the outdoors, the small town atmosphere and down home hospitality which they will proudly share with our Final Leg Team. Some team members will experience a tubing trip down the Niobrara River, others will visit the historical Scottsbluff Monument and some will stop for a team photo at Carhenge which is a spin off from Stonehenge but made of cars. All runners will visit Ole's Big Game Bar for a meat and potatoes dinner. In the 40's an adventurous man from the tiny town of Paxton, Nebraska went on many big game hunts and brought his trophies back to Paxton where they are still proudly displayed. You will be surprised what you see here. The team will also visit the Great Platte River Road Archway Monument which is a bridge that stretches over I-80 and houses a museum of Nebraska history.

The Nebraska LETR, Special Olympics Nebraska, the 2010 Games Organizing Committee, our volunteers, coaches and sponsors are all very excited to be welcoming the Final Leg Team and the National Games to Nebraska. But there is no one more excited to be hosting the games than our 4,000 athletes who call Nebraska home. Come to Nebraska in July and visit, "The Good Life".

FINAL LEG TEAM

LEO RUNNERS

Charles Sutherlin
 Kris Sell
 Trey Dupuy
 Charley Armendariz
 Terry Bartholomew
 Gary Beecher
 Patrick Fleming
 Tom Madera
 Charles Simpson
 Joe Whitson
 Jeff Vaughn
 Antonio Williams
 Terisa Howell
 Amy Williams
 Tony Gatto
 Jana Rooker
 John Cosgrove
 Walter Littleton, Jr.
 Marc Robitaille
 Pete Landon
 Shawn Rowley
 Katie Lynch
 Joe Saxon
 Bernadette Bond

PROGRAM

Alabama
 Alaska
 Arkansas
 Arizona
 California, Northern
 California, Southern
 Colorado
 Connecticut
 Delaware
 Florida
 Georgia
 Hawaii
 Idaho
 Illinois
 Indiana
 Iowa
 Kansas
 Louisiana
 Maine
 Maryland
 Michigan
 Minnesota
 Mississippi
 Missouri

LEO RUNNERS

Gordon Schmill
 Chris Weber
 Douglas McCulloch
 Michael Murray
 William Zika
 Amanda Valencia
 Walter Sanders III
 Karen Morrow
 Dale Plessas
 Anne Ralston
 Paul Fox
 Dustin Neuman
 Donald McMonagle
 Dan O'Neil
 David Spivey
 Ron Schauer
 Eric Guerrero
 Kerry Cole
 John Frechette
 Pat Thomas
 Ted Rutt
 Mark Mauthe
 Jason Niemi

PROGRAM

Montana
 Nebraska
 Nevada
 New Hampshire
 New Jersey
 New Mexico
 New York
 North Carolina
 North Dakota
 Ohio
 Oklahoma
 Oregon
 Pennsylvania
 Rhode Island
 South Carolina
 South Dakota
 Texas
 Utah
 Vermont
 Virginia
 Washington
 Wisconsin
 Wyoming



FINAL LEG TEAM

Special Olympics Athletes

Ben Beavers	New York
James Chalmers	Minnesota
Evan Davis	Nebraska
Roxanne Johnson	Arizona
Ronnie Lowe	Missouri
David Ritchie	Idaho
Robbie Strickland	Rhode Island
Michael Warren	Iowa
Nate Webb	New Hampshire

Running Team Leaders

Bill Buford	Arkansas
Shawn Byrne	Oklahoma
Roy Forrest	North Carolina
Jack Harris	Vermont
John Newnan	Maryland
Joe Pellicci	South Carolina
Mike Peretti	Northern California
Luis Rosa	Connecticut
Kevin Stary	Nebraska

Council Support Team Members

Rich Banahan	Missouri
Julie Buedding	Wisconsin
Christy Collum	SOI
Rich Fernandez	Southern California
Sal Gerbino	New York
Jim Kerns	Idaho
Russ Laine	Illinois
Jimmy Meier	Illinois
Steve Palmer	Iowa
Tina Perkins	Idaho
Terri Sappington	Montana
Jeanette Steinfeldt	Iowa
Paul Zarnetske	Connecticut

Nebraska Support Team Members

Beth Bauer	Nebraska
Jeff Boston	Nebraska
Carol Case	Nebraska
Katie Bowser	Nebraska
Char Estes	Nebraska
Kelsey Messerschmidt	Nebraska
Aaron Moore	Nebraska
Sean Morgan	Nebraska
Jeri Roeder	Nebraska
Lynette Russell	Nebraska
Kevin Weise	Nebraska

RV Drivers

Bob Clinkenbeard	Nebraska
Jeff Franzen	Iowa
Jake Johnson	Idaho
Larry Mays	New Jersey
John Mertz	Iowa
Rod Rhiner	Iowa

Escorts

Jason Bauer	Nebraska
Mitchell Blum	Nebraska
Nicholas Goodwin	Nebraska
John Lukesh	Nebraska
Bob Veal	Nebraska
Ryan Young	Nebraska

Documentation Team (3)

Herb Gelb	Pennsylvania
Andrea Kramer	Idaho
Dave Kramer	Idaho

Team Captain

Michael Teem North Carolina

The Biloxi Police Department

Shows Their Support for Special Olympics!

As a strong supporter of Special Olympics Mississippi, the Biloxi Police Department is always looking for ways to show its support for the athletes of Special Olympics. In addition to untold volunteer hours before and during the Games, this support was recently made more visible by the addition of a very special vehicle to the department's fleet.

In August 2003, officers of the Biloxi Police Department, with the assistance of the US Drug Enforcement Administration and the US Marshall's Service, arrested two people and impounded a 2003 Chevrolet Avalanche for distributing illegal narcotics. Upon their conviction in the year 2005, the court awarded the truck to the Biloxi Police Department to be used to further their efforts against the flow of illegal drugs. This not only serves as an example to others who may break the law, but also shows the commitment of the department to serve its citizens in all aspects of their community. At the time the truck was awarded to Biloxi it was a bright red color and was in need of some minor repairs. However, with a vision in mind and a new set of tires, officers saw to it that the Avalanche was eventually put to good use.

As good fortune would have it, while participating in the Law Enforcement Torch Run in 2009, Biloxi officers met Mr. Will Alexander of Alexander Body Shop in Natchez, Mississippi. Sharing a mutual passion for the works of Special Olympics Mississippi, Mr. Alexander graciously volunteered his creativity and talent, as well as his services and those of his employees, to paint the Avalanche with the scheme it proudly wears today. Mr. Robby Grant of Jackson, Mississippi also assisted in painting the graphic artwork on the vehicle. Bearing the markings of the Biloxi Police Department, the Special Olympics flame and logo, and highlighted by subdued blue flames on its entirety, the Avalanche is now a rolling billboard for not only the city of Biloxi, but also for the spirit of support demonstrated by the entire state of Mississippi. As the only police vehicle in the state dressed in the Special Olympics logo, it proudly displays a Mississippi personalized tag of "TORCHRN". This unique and visible vehicle is an item of pride for the department and directly reflects upon the spirit of honor and commitment shown by its officers every day.





Aussie... Aussie... Aussie...

Oui... Oui... Oui...

Over 22,000 local Aussies got behind the biggest ever Law Enforcement Torch Run across Australia in March/April 2010.



Launch - Media Release, NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione, Sydney Opera House

LETR Australia, State LETR programs across Queensland, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia, teamed up with the Special Olympics Australia team in a joint venture to drive the biggest awareness, fundraising, community engagement and Torch Run with the Special Olympics athletes in the history of Australia.

In November 2008, Don Stuart (LETR Oceania Region Coordinator) debriefed the opportunities that were shared from the 2008 LETR International conference and mentioned one specific program that was taking place in Illinois. The program was designed to encourage and invite the wider community and younger supporters to get behind the LETR program for local Special Olympics.

In Australia, awareness of Special Olympics is much lower than America and Europe. Awareness of the LETR program is also small and only operational in some states.

In an effort to grow and build on the great work already happening in a few states across Australia, The 2010 Law Enforcement Torch Run program "Run with the LAW" was born.

Together LETR and Special Olympics Australia have a common goal for "Run with the LAW".

- Celebrate the achievements of our Special Olympics athletes, families and supporters in local clubs across the country
- Raise much needed funds to help make the 50 Special Olympics programs sustainable and reduce the financial pressures on families and communities to supply weekly SO sports and participation programs
- Celebrate the 2010 National Special Olympics Games with the biggest ever National Final Leg Torch Run
- Drive awareness of the LETR programs into the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, and become a truly national geographical LETR program across all states and territories in the country
- Recruit new members and younger supporters
- Attract new supporters and provide sponsorship opportunities for long term support
- Bring both new LETR and SO programs together in every state of Australia through local partnerships and new friendships

Cato Purnell and designer Ken Cato designed a new logo for all new registered runner t-shirts, as well as a new website for registrations and donations www.runwiththelaw.com.au The new look really helped us in attracting schools, students, corporate teams, local sports clubs and local community groups not already involved in Special Olympics.

Over 2000 registered runners signed up to take part and raise funds for their local Special Olympics athletes across 43 towns and cities in 29 days (19 March – 19 April)



Special Olympics Australia supported LETR for this major national event by building and managing the new website, marketing, financial support to our state LETR committees, operational planning and attracting over \$500k in sponsorship and cash donations. Alex McNeilly, General Manager of Special Olympics Australia said "With such a major event and commitment from the LETR officers from across Australia, we were able to reduce our costs 100% to ensure that all personal, business and corporate donations given to the Special Olympics athletes through the sponsor us in the Run with the LAW program went directly to the cause.

Part of the sponsorship secured by Special Olympics Australia included \$25k cash to cover costs of t-shirts for LETR officers, athletes and registered runners as well as over \$420k worth of advertising to support marketing and PR of the Final Leg Torch Run. The support by News Limited was amazing with over 230 newspaper and website stories across the country.

Other new sponsors who supported Special Olympics to reduce LETR costs were Coca Cola Australia, Goodman Fielder and Peppercorn Foods which provided every runner with refreshments, healthy food snacks and BBQ supplies for each of the torch events.



So many new supporters shared donations, new corporate teams got involved and even more LETR officers showed their support. Over 2000 Law Officers across Australia got involved in this year's torch event.

Our LETR officers ran with the flame of hope® across 43 cities and travelled more than 7000 kilometers through cyclones in Cairns Queensland, rain in Townsville, floods through Mackay, and even the occasional heat wave. Nothing could stop the flame of hope® and its quest to reach the opening ceremony in the city of Adelaide in South Australia for the National Games.

Over 200 Australia Federal Police ran through the capital of Australia, Canberra, with pride and are keen to get more involved in the coming 12 months.

Australia loves sports! National sporting bodies also supported LETR and made available some of the biggest and best sporting venues as the final location of each torch leg city.

At the launch for Run with the LAW on the Gold Coast, Detective Inspector Ralph Knust spoke emotionally about the police support for Special Olympics and his son's personal involvement in the program



Surfers Paradise Beach, Queensland. (The Flame of Hope is to the right!)



250 LETR officers and Athletes run from the Sydney Oprah House to the Sydney Cricket Ground



Lighting of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games Cauldron by NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione and Special Athlete Joshua Elston. This is one of only two other occasions that the IOC has granted permission for the Caldron to be lit

The Chair of the Australian LETR National Council, Retired Assistant Commissioner Chris Evans, said "The Run With the Law" concept was embraced by athletes, supporters, police and the general public across Australia. The LETR Programs in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia organized very successful Torch Runs across their states and they assisted police in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and Tasmania (TAS) to conduct runs in those jurisdictions. The success of these Torch Runs can be judged by the Commissioners of Police in the ACT and TAS both agreeing to establishing LETR Programs in their jurisdictions. This is an outstanding result! Additionally we are talking with the Commissioners of Police in Western Australia (WA) and the Northern Territory (NT) and because of the success of this Run with the Law; we will see LETR Programs established in both WA and in the NT.



Victoria Police Commissioner, Simon Overland and athletes running to the Melbourne Cricket Ground



LETR Officers, Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Police and athletes on the lawn in front of the Australian Parliament House, Canberra. (Our White House)

In Tasmania the Police lined the streets when the torch arrived in the city of Hobart. The entire city rejoiced and celebrated when LETR officers, Commissioner Darren Hine, Special Olympics athletes and supporters ran through the city to Parliament House, a remarkable moment!



Tasmania LETR officers and athletes run through Hobart city.



The Flame of Hope finally arrives in South Australia!

LETR Australian programs are proud to have been able to support Special Olympics Australia and will be presenting 40 checks to the local Special Olympics programs across the country totaling \$124,000. We are also proud to report that applications received by the Special Olympics Australia office for volunteering, coaches and new athletes have been pouring in and many more were inspired to get more involved through their participation in the LETR and Run with the LAW events. Disability services and special needs schools are expressing interest in affiliating and new regional committee members are hoping to start up several new programs. That all said, the benefits of this years LETR Final Leg event will go towards and directly help and support transforming the lives of more wonderful Australians living with intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics Australia - CEO Message, Ms Catriona Barry

Sustainable revenue is something every CEO dreams about ,and for Special Olympics in Australia, the LETR is making our dreams come true. Just one of the programs they have introduced is the Run With the Law, and as with all LETR projects, it was ambitious in its scope and it delivered in abundance in ways we never thought possible.

There were the expected outcomes of raising funds, but there were many other outcomes, things we never expected. As the run went across the states of Australia, it meant that all athletes got to enjoy it and it was a great chance for those who were disappointed at not being part of National Games to participate. It was also a positive involvement of athletes and families with corporate partners, donors and all the other stakeholders that make up a Special Olympics program.

Run with the Law was a great program to take to the market and sponsors wishing to get involved in local community level projects and they embraced it. For the first time ever, it meant that Special Olympics Australia had a media partner and we built relationships with others that will last for yearsas I said the things we have dreamt of for years. Our new CRM technology was put to the test and having a project of this magnitude made investing in technology well worthwhile.

And personally, I took on the challenge of getting involved in a 4.2k run through Sydney. I trained and benefited from getting fit and when the day came, the rain could not wipe the smile from my face. I got to run beside the athletes, our corporate supporters, lots of happy police men and women and my colleagues at Special Olympics Australia I was part of the action and it was great. The atmosphere was inspiring and the buzz was terrific as we ran through the streets of Sydney with bystanders cheering us on along the way.

When the torch finally arrived in the stadium at the Opening Ceremony of the Special Olympics Australia National Games in Adelaide, we all knew the journey the flame of hope® had been on as we had all "touched it" along the way, and we were privileged and proud to have done so. And it was also great to raise \$120,000 in our first event.!



LETR International Executive Council Member – Don Stuart

I am very pleased with the success of the Australian Final Leg and RWTL programs. As a direct result of the Final Leg and RWTL, it would appear that there will be a number of new SO programs in each state. The awareness of Special Olympics brought by the Final Leg and the huge media support for RWTL by News Limited, was overwhelming. Congratulations go out to the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and South Australia LETR Programs, for conducting their first ever Torch Runs. I was fortunate enough to participate in 13 of the Final Leg runs and given an opportunity to run with so many Special Olympics athletes. Their smiles were huge, particularly when carrying the flame of hope®. I am already looking forward to the Final Leg prior to the 2014 Summer Games in Melbourne! Finally, I must thank Chris Evans and Jenny Kelly LETR, Australian National Council, Alex McNeilly and Fran Eustace, Special Olympics Australia and each of the Australian LETR Directors and their respective committees for their professionalism in the planning and execution of a successful Australian LETR Final Leg and RWTL program.



South Australian Police Commissioner Mal Hyde and South Australian Special Olympics Athlete, Laura Hester light the Cauldron at the Opening Ceremony watch on by a packed stadium



Western Australia SO Team return from the National Games to a hero's welcome. Police were there with the Flame of Hope to welcome the athlete's home. Thanks Western Australia

IT DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO FIGURE IT OUT!

By: Randy Boehm, Missouri LETR

I've been involved with the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for over 23 years and it didn't take long for me to figure out that I received more from the Special Olympics athletes than I would ever be able to give them.

A perfect example of that is Larry Stephens. Larry has been a Special Olympics athlete for as long as I've been involved with the program, over 23 years. He participates in aquatics, basketball, bocce, bowling, volleyball, golf and floor hockey. In past years Larry has participated in track & field, softball, soccer, and tennis. To say that he has a very busy sports schedule would be an understatement.



Larry (left), carrying the Torch with Columbia Police Officer Jason McClintic at the Opening of our Summer Games.

Larry's Special Olympics activities have become a family affair. He and his dad are Unified partners in bowling, golf, and bocce. They will be competing as Unified partners in bocce at the National Games in Nebraska this July. This won't be Larry's first time on a big stage. He won a Gold Medal in swimming in the 1999 World Games in North Carolina. In addition, Larry has won too many medals to count in state competitions.

In addition to his dad, his mom is a very active volunteer for Special Olympics Missouri and his sister is a coach and volunteer.

His family says that Larry had very poor social skills before he started with Special Olympics to the point that he was scared of being around anyone but his family. These days Larry is many times the "life of the party", something I have witnessed on many occasions.

As further proof of his development, Larry was a Global Messenger for 10 years and is now a Global Ambassador. He has gone from being "scared" of people to never meeting a stranger.

IT DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO FIGURE IT OUT!

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Larry's social skill development has allowed him to stay busy with a job in addition to all his SOMO activities. Larry has worked for the University of Missouri's Recreation Center for over seven years. He is responsible for laundry and cleaning the courts. But his "additional duty" there is interacting with all the students that use the center. He has been awarded their "MVP" award 6 of the years he has been employed at the center.



In 2009 Larry was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame, the highest honor awarded an athlete in the state., a true indication of how far Special Olympics Missouri has taken Larry.

Larry, like so many Special Olympics athletes, is always looking for a way to help those that help him. He is very active in Law Enforcement Torch Run activities and fundraisers. Larry has plunged in our Annual Polar Plunge for the last eight years dressing as a banana, a heart, and his most popular costume, Elvis. He also completed the 5K Polar Bear Strut on three occasions. For many years Larry assisted the Columbia Police Department at our Annual Red Lobster "Tip-A-Cop" as a greeter. He has also assisted with our Annual Trivia Night event.

In 2009 Larry and Officer Jason McClintic of the Columbia Police Department carried our Torch to open the Special Olympics Outdoor Games. He also carried a wreath at our Annual Missouri Law Enforcement Memorial that same year.

Over the years Larry has become much more than a Special Olympics athlete that we support. He has become a friend. I know I'm a better person because I have Larry as a friend.

Larry decked out in full regalia for the Polar Plunge!

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

**By: Wendy O'Neill, Police Sergeant, Torch Runner & Proud Mother
Queensland, Australia**



Congratulations to Isaac O'Neill for being selected to represent Queensland at the 2010 Special Olympics Australia National Games, soccer B team.

This was an exciting goal for Isaac to achieve and it was great to share his excitement with him.

Isaac seemed to have challenges from the moment he was born however nothing specific was identified until he started to get older. Through the Child Health Centre in Brisbane we started seeing specialists at the Royal Children's Hospital. Isaac's feet positioning required correction with physiotherapy and with the assistance of splints. This included stretching his feet "until you know it hurts him" – and this had to be done at every nappy change. Isaac also had to have his neck manipulated by taking hold of his head, pulling it out and twisting it to one side to stretch the muscle so that he would not end up with his head resting on one side.

At about five months I suspected Isaac was deaf in one ear and a visit to the Doctor revealed he was deaf in both ears due to the corrupted development of his ear canals and some damage to the nerves. So at eight months Isaac had hearing aids and started his schooling at the deaf centre. Sign language lessons commenced, as did his journey with speech therapy, occupational therapy and more physiotherapy. The teachers set up specific tasks to be done at home with Isaac with some to specifically include his older brother. It was through this time that Isaac was taught to crawl and just after two he was able to walk unaided and now runs around the soccer field with so much joy.

Isaac then started to have small seizures, and although managed, it was difficult at times to get the medication correct, thankfully these stopped when he was about nine years old.

The day before he turned two, Isaac had his first major operation where an ear canal was created - this was followed by a number of smaller operations/procedures to monitor the progress etc of the ear. Isaac soon learned that the people wearing mauve gave him food and the ones in white generally caused him some pain. Although it was a major operation he seemed to be totally aware that it was his birthday and the next day did not settle that night until the nurses sang 'Happy Birthday'. Fifteen months later he had the other ear operated on. These two operations were repeated again when he was 14 years old (but weren't as long) since due to normal growth, created the canals closing up again reducing his ability to hear. Isaac became a favourite of his specialist and still sees him for check ups.

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OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

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While at the deaf centre it was ascertained that he had low muscle tone and a language disorder. Isaac was recommended to a school that offered specific teaching and where he could continue speech, physiotherapy and occupational therapies.

Isaac then learned a new form of sign language winning an award for his ability to not only learn it but also teach other students, and assist teachers also learning it. During his school years and through his own abilities and in overcoming his own challenges he was rewarded by being presented with the schools highest award, the school shield for overall student. He was also selected as a school leader for two years running before leaving to commence work at the Red Cross. He was nominated and is now a part of the Athletes Leadership Program with Special Olympics.

One of the most interesting situations Isaac had at school was when a teacher (with a view to assisting the students in transition from school to public life) wrote out a list of demeaning names for them to be called which they had to pick out of a hat. This was to assist the students in getting used to being called names. Isaac was one of about 15 students and the teacher brought this scenario to my attention because he was concerned that Isaac got upset. In fact he was the only student that got upset at the name calling, as I recall telling the teacher, 'Isaac wouldn't call other people these names so why should he accept these names from other people.'

Prior to learning about and becoming involved in Special Olympics, Isaac played soccer with the local teams including back yard games with the next door neighbors. Isaac could always be heard giving words of encouragement and showing the younger boys how to do things. Isaac has always showed a willingness to assist others and he now assists his soccer coach train the younger Special Olympics athletes. He also follows the UK football league, is a fan of the Chelsea Team and one day hopes to visit the UK and watch them play.



Isaac with his proud Mom, Wendy

Isaac then took up the challenge of learning acoustic guitar around the same time his brother learned the electric guitar – this was a wonderful way for them to connect more as brothers.

Isaac has a persistent nature which I know has assisted him to overcome many things and strive to try new things. Isaac enjoyed his first international LETR conference and meeting so many people. That support him and his peers around the world – he certainly enjoyed himself and from time to time mentions things as he remembers them. Special Olympics gives him opportunities which help him expand on his skills, increases his confidence and allows him the ability to achieve goals.



2010 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg

In July of 2010 law enforcement officers from across Canada will gather in Ontario for the 2010 Law Enforcement Torch Run® Final Leg, a two-day event that will set the stage for the opening ceremonies of the Special Olympics Canada Summer Games. This national competition will be held in London, Ontario from July 13 to 17 and will see more than 1,000 athletes coming together, each with an eye to represent Canada in 2011 at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens, Greece.

Special Olympics athletes and officers from the Law Enforcement Torch Run will begin the Final Leg of the run after an early morning kick-off on July 12 at Toronto Police Service headquarters.

The Flame of Hope™ will be transported over 300 kilometers and through communities in the Greater Toronto Area and London for the rest of the day, spreading the message of the Law Enforcement Torch Run and Special Olympics. Each stop on the route gives the Final Leg team a chance to meet with local officers involved in the torch run.

Upon arriving in London, the Final Leg team will be honored guests at the opening ceremonies, entering with their respective provincial or territorial team into TD Waterhouse Stadium. More than 500 runners, comprised of officers from services across the province and cadets at the Ontario Police College, will carry in the Flame of Hope and light the cauldron.

Traditionally, law enforcement officers depart soon after a Final Leg concludes. For the 2010 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games, members of the Final Leg team have been invited to attend the games as guests, taking in the competition and seeing firsthand the successes of the athletes they support. Additionally, Final Leg team members will be included in medal ceremonies, personally congratulating athletes on their accomplishments.

The games have a strong association with the law enforcement community, with Chief Murray Faulkner of the London Police Service serving as tri-chair of the games and numerous officers involved in senior volunteer roles.

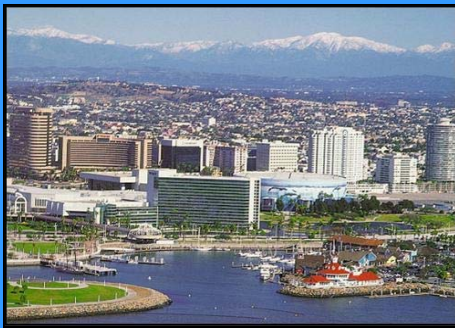
For more information about the 2010 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games, please visit www.london2010.ca.





**2010 LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN® INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA
“Catch the Wave”
October 19-22, 2010**

Has the course of your Torch Run program been altered by the doldrums? Sailors avoid travel on the open sea near the equator because there is no wind to fill their sails. Those unfortunate enough to venture into these waters are said to be “caught in the doldrums,” not making significant progress toward their intended goal. Well, here’s your chance to escape the doldrums and re-energize your program; come to the west coast of the United States and be motivated, inspired and educated! Let the temperate breezes guide your boat to Southern California, then “Catch the Wave” into Long Beach in 2010! Join hundreds of others at the biggest Beach Blanket Bingo party ever, which runs from *Tuesday* through *Friday* this year. You don’t want to miss it!



Port of Call – Located about 25 miles south of downtown Los Angeles, the city of Long Beach serves as a perfect conference destination. Visit www.sosc.org/2010TorchRun and you’ll see beautiful snapshots of the area, helpful information and links to important Web sites. The three anchor hotels, The Hyatt Regency Long Beach, The Westin Long Beach and the Renaissance Long Beach Hotel are all within steps of the Long Beach Convention Center (our meeting venue), dining, entertainment and the inviting waterfront area. Since you’ll be doing a lot of strolling in the hub of the downtown activity center this year, you’ll be able to attend *all* the conference events *and* see all the local sites. To have some fun and help show your ingenuity, we’ve incorporated a scavenger hunt over the course of a few days that will test your knowledge of the city and Torch Run history!

Arrival – You will be greeted in your concourse’s baggage area at the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), then you’ll be directed to a pickup zone and driven to Long Beach via van or motor coach. On Saturday after the conference, we’ll get you back to the airport for your flight home. Please note that although there are other airports nearby, transportation is only being provided to and from LAX!

Local Event – For those who come in advance, join us Monday evening at the Long Beach Laugh Factory where we’ll enjoy a side-splitting appetizer of comedy (\$25 General Admission, \$35 VIP). Discounted hotel rates have been extended for three days before and after the conference, so if you’re in town early or leave late, visit some of the finest attractions Southern California has to offer! Within walking distance is the Aquarium of the Pacific and just a short distance away is Universal Studios Hollywood, Disneyland, Knott’s Berry Farm and Catalina Island, just to name a few.



Hospitality Night – Unwind from your journey and join us Tuesday evening in a casual Southern California beach party atmosphere at Rainbow Lagoon Park. The beautiful Long Beach harbor and the Toyota Grand Prix race course will be your backdrop; however, you certainly won’t want to “race” through the evening as you sip beverages and have a bite to eat with friends!

Opening Ceremonies – On Wednesday morning, wear those surf shirts, board shorts and flip-flops and hearken back to the good ol’ days when Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello ruled the beach! You’ve really never seen the Special Olympics flame arrive at an Opening Ceremony until you’ve seen it arrive in Southern California style!

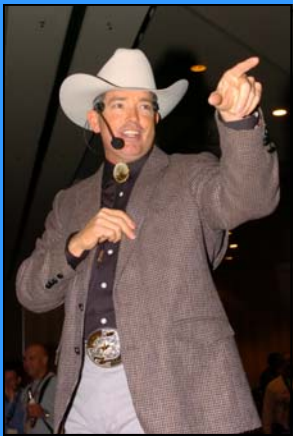


**2010 LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN® INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
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Sessions – This year’s Sessions theme is “Expect More!” The 2010 Sessions are aimed to appeal to Torch Run newcomers and veterans alike. There will be something for everyone, and the innovative Sessions and Case Studies will be designed to elevate your program to new levels!

So Cal Host Night – It’s a black and white theme, so let your imagination run wild while selecting your apparel. A tuxedo-print t-shirt and black shorts? Sure! Black and white Roaring 20s attire? You bet! A piano keyboard tie with a black and white Fedora? Absolutely! Spice up this unique Southern California event held aboard the stately Queen Mary oceanliner. Motor coaches will transport you from your hotels to the ship, where you’ll dine and be soothed by live music wafting through the halls of this legendary, historic vessel!



Live and Silent Auction – Greg Askren is back for our live auction! You don’t want to miss the opportunity to “take home the prizes” when Greg and his staff host a lively auction on Thursday night. Some of the notable auction items are autographed guitars from Vince Gill, Toby Keith and the Farewell Tour of Brooks and Dunn; autographed Hannah Montana scripts; an autographed Michael Israel painting; a worldwide Torch Run t-shirt quilt; gift baskets for the ladies; attraction and travel packages; hand-crafted rocking horses and a vintage pedal police car with Torch Run logos!

Demonstration/Fundraising Events – Nothing beats a Torch Run on the beach! Both the walking and running routes follow picturesque pathways along the Long Beach harbor and beach. We’ll end at the beach volleyball courts where we’ll enjoy lunch and compete in the Misty May volleyball tournament! After your physical workout, join in “virtual” sporting events by participating in the Unified Sports Wii tournament at the Convention Center.

Hall of Fame Banquet - Experience an Academy Awards type event and wear your tuxedos, formal attire or business attire, then walk the red carpet and be exposed to paparazzi and camera flashes! This is the evening to recognize the outstanding efforts of those who work so hard to make the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics a success!



Calgary 2011 Hospitality Night – It’s time to “Jump the Border” and enjoy some of the finest Canadian hospitality. Wear something red and white and share in our Canadian pride. We will treat you to some unique Canadian food and some enticing beverages, like the Caesar, and of course Canadian beer. In celebration of Alberta’s Wild West, you can don your cowboy duds as well.



BREAKING NEWS!

2011 & 2012 INTERNATIONAL LETR CONFERENCE SITES SELECTED

LETR Executive Council Awards 2011 and 2012 International Conference

Since the inception of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® in 1981, there have been twenty-six Torch Run International Conferences held with the twenty-seventh soon to be upon us in Long Beach, Southern California. Each of the previous conference locations have offered unique experiences ranging from the tie dye of the Haight Ashbury District of San Francisco to the glamour of the Foxwood's Resort in Connecticut. We have celebrated milestone anniversaries in the birth place of the Torch Run, Wichita (20 Years), and spent our silver anniversary in New York. In 2011, the Torch Run will celebrate its 30th anniversary in high fashion, stepping out of the box and out of the United States as the Law Enforcement Torch Run International Conference goes to Alberta, Canada! Surrounded by the glitter of Calgary, the Telus Convention center will play host to the global Torch Run movement November 2-5, 2011. Situated in the heart of Calgary, the Telus Convention center is pedestrian friendly to a multitude of sights within the former Olympic city. Get your passports ready, this is one you will not want to miss.

Not to be overshadowed by a Canadian conference, our 2012 awardee will focus our attention on the foundation of the Special Olympic movement, SPORT! As what seems to be the hub of collegiate and professional sports in the United States, Indiana, USA will play host for our 2012 conference. Opening in early 2001, the brand new JW Marriot in Indianapolis will welcome Torch Runners from around the world November 7-10, to a city known for fast cars and big plays.

Stay tuned for more information and plans as we set our sights into the future!

Mike Peretti

Chair

International Conference Planning Committee

UNIQUE LETR FUNDRAISING EVENT

By: Jason Johnson, Montana LETR

Break and Run Pool Tournament



On September 12, 2009, Eagles 4040 in East Helena hosted the first Break & Run Tournament for Special Olympics. This was a Law Enforcement Torch Run event put together by Sgt John Fosket and Officer Domingo Zapata of the Helena Police Department in Montana.

That day, over \$1500 was raised for Special Olympics Montana in various ways. To enter the

pool tournament, participants had to pay a \$10 registration fee. There was an all-you-can-eat BBQ for a \$6 cover charge, as well as donations and raffles. The Eagles 4040 sold cookbooks at the event and donated all proceeds to the event. Officer Zapata and his father, American Pool Players Association Southwest Montana League Operator, Robert Zapata, came up with the tournament idea after Officer Zapata attended the 2009 Torch Run Kick-Off Conference. The tournament was easy to set up. Players had to break and run as many balls possible on one of four tables. Once the player missed on one table, they moved onto the next table. Players had a one minute time limit to pocket as many balls as possible. The highest score during the tournament was 13 pocketed balls.

The biggest success story of the tournament was the interaction between the SOMT athletes and the general public. The athletes came out in full force, adorned in their medals and jumped in to help. The crowd had the opportunity to speak with the athletes, learn about the events they compete in and gained awareness about Special Olympics from the truest source.



Torch Runner Profile



Sheriff Bob Hansell **Osceola County Sheriff's Office** **South Carolina**

Bob Hansell was elected Sheriff of Osceola County in 2005 and today, over a year into his second term, continues to lead the agency that has been his place of employment for the last 33 years. During his years with the agency, Sheriff Hansell has earned promotions to the rank of captain, served as a member and commander of the SWAT team and supervised virtually all areas of the Sheriff's Office. Strongly committed to law enforcement, Sheriff Hansell also actively supports local non-profit agencies and the community.

For more than 20 years, Bob Hansell has been a constant advocate for Special Olympics and has assisted with the coordination of the Summer Games when they were held in Kissimmee, Florida. He has been involved as a runner and Guardians of the Flame®, and has carried the torch during the local run and at the Final Leg before the state Summer Games. Bob's volunteer efforts have brought a greater awareness of Special Olympics to the Osceola County community.

"Special Olympics helps build a stronger community by heightening understanding, awareness and changing attitudes about those individuals who have intellectual disabilities. I am proud to support this great cause," states Hansell.



TORCH RUN ACROSS EUROPE FOR 2010 EUROPEAN SPECIAL OLYMPICS GAMES

By: Jeremy Adams, Region IX Coordinator, LETR Executive Council



Jeremy Adams, Region IX Coordinator, (L), Mary Davis, Managing Director, Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia, and Jacek Hachulski, Region X Coordinator

The 2010 Special Olympics European Games Final Leg Law Enforcement Torch Run® will take place from September 5-18, 2010 to herald the opening of the Games

The Special Olympics Flame of Hope™ will be lit by the rays of the sun on September 5th in a Ceremony in Thessaloniki, Greece

Nine law enforcement officers including Regional Coordinators Jeremy Adams and Jacek Hachulski will be joined by law enforcement officers and Special Olympics athletes as well as volunteers and partners from across Europe as they carry the flame in a series of relays through eight European countries – Greece, Turkey, Slovenia, Gibraltar, Great Britain, France, Luxembourg and Belgium.

A “Welcoming the Flame of Hope” ceremony will take place in the capital city of each of the nine countries and they will open their doors and hearts to welcome the Flame of Hope and the Torch Run team while paying tribute to Special Olympics athletes from their community who will compete in the 2010 European Games.

High profile runs, opening ceremonies, special events and concerts will take place to celebrate the Flame of Hope as it travels through Europe.

On September 15th, the Final Leg Team, joined by members of the Polish police force, will begin to carry the torch through 58 communities in Poland hosting Special Olympics athletes.

On September 18th, the Flame of Hope will be safely delivered by the Guardians of the Flame® into Legia Stadium in Warsaw, Poland to light the cauldron at the Special Olympics Opening Ceremonies, officially opening the 2010 European Special Olympics Games.

1,600 athletes from across Europe/Eurasia will compete in the 2010 Special Olympics European Summer Games. Both Jeremy and Jacek hope that this Torch Run will highlight the Torch Run movement across Europe and will encourage new law enforcement agencies to become involved in the Law Enforcement Torch Run movement to benefit Special Olympics.

LORETTA CLAIBORNE INSPIRES

LOS ANGELES COUNTY CITY MANAGERS!

January 29, 2010



Loretta speaks to attendees at the 22nd Annual Los Angeles County City Managers' Conference

Special Olympics Athlete Loretta Claiborne was invited to address guests at the 22nd Annual Los Angeles County City Managers' Conference, hosted by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. With Universal Studios Hollywood as the backdrop, Special Olympics Southern California President and Chief Executive Officer Bill Shumard introduced Loretta to sheriff's department executives, city staff members and 88 city managers. Loretta's comments to this particular group were vital since the cities' decision makers are key supporters of the deputies' involvement in the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics!

As she's done many times in the past, Loretta captivated the audience with her awe-inspiring life story. From her humble childhood, where she was labeled by others as "mentally retarded," through her amazing success as a student and an athlete, Loretta spoke from her heart and inspired and motivated everyone in the room!

Early in Loretta's life, professionals urged her mother to "institutionalize" her because of her intellectual disability and her expected inability to learn. But Loretta's mother was motivated by her mission to see Loretta receive an education and graduate from high school. Loretta didn't walk until age four and was held back in school for three years once she began attending at age five. She was eventually introduced to a caring special education teacher, who took a personal interest in Loretta's success and became "the best teacher" she ever had. Loretta broke through personal self-esteem barriers when she learned sign language from an intellectually disabled friend. That's when she discovered that she *could* learn! Loretta's revelation inspired her to new heights. She was driven to learn and become an excellent athlete.

After first being challenged by her mother long ago to participate in the Special Olympics, Loretta now speaks on behalf of more than three million of its athletes! She's run in twenty-six marathons, has two honorary doctorate degrees, and is a fourth-degree black belt. "Not bad for a child who was told they couldn't learn!" she quipped. Loretta then looked around at all the government professionals in attendance and said *they* are the people who empower Special Olympics athletes today!

LORETTA CLAIBORNE INSPIRES

LOS ANGELES COUNTY CITY MANAGERS!

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Loretta explained how she was first approached by law enforcement representatives and asked to participate in the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics. At the time, she lived in the city's projects, where there was significant tension between the police and its residents. "I don't deal with cops!" said Loretta. Somehow she was convinced to participate, but only if they picked her up wearing non-descript clothes and driving an unmarked car. The audience laughed as Loretta recounted the neighborhood uproar caused by the *uniformed* officer who arrived early one Saturday morning in his *marked* police car with its *lights flashing!* So began Loretta's association with the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics.

Loretta was later coaxed into participating in a Polar Plunge event where \$2 million was raised for Special Olympics! She stressed the importance of local fundraising events and told guests how money raised locally supports local Special Olympics athletes. Loretta expressed her appreciation to those in the audience, saying, "Yes, you provide sports, but you also provide hope! Some of our athletes wouldn't have the drive that they have if it wasn't for the monies that you raise." Loretta said faith and belief in the athletes helps them overcome obstacles. She closed by saying that Special Olympics Founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver is now gone, but her vision lives on. Loretta then peered into the eyes of those in the room and said, "*You* are the change makers!" Upon concluding her exhilarating presentation, the audience rose to give Loretta a standing ovation!



Loretta receives a Los Angeles Sheriff's Department star-pin from Sergeants Joel Barnett and Matthew Squire



On the morning of October 23, hundreds of Best Buddies and Special Olympics supporters will cycle, run and walk the streets of Washington DC at the National Mall to honor the legacy of Eunice Kennedy Shriver. The inaugural *Eunice Kennedy Shriver Challenge* presented by Audi features a 20-mile bike ride on closed roads through DC, the Carl Lewis Challenge 5K run/3K walk, a youth fun run, and a series of Criterium Races.

Following the athletic events there will be a victory celebration and private luncheon. The entire day will be focused around inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and the global movement that Eunice Kennedy Shriver made her life's work. The awareness and funds raised through the Challenge will further support the programs of Best Buddies and Special Olympics International.

The 20-mile cycling route starts by heading up Constitution Avenue before moving to Independence Avenue as it passes Robert F. Kennedy Stadium and crosses into Anacostia Park along the Anacostia River. The route then goes over the Frederick Douglass Bridge and past Nationals Park before looping by East Potomac Park and past the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials, and finally culminating at the Washington Monument. The other events will all start and conclude at the Washington Monument as well, and entire families are encouraged to join in the spirit of athletics and inclusion.

Best Buddies is dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with IDD.

Special Olympics is a global organization that uses sports as a catalyst to change society's perceptions and treatment of people with intellectual disabilities.

Best Buddies participants and Special Olympics athletes have reached millions of milestones over the last decades. However, there are many areas of the country and regions of the world that still lack programs to help people with IDD become a part of mainstream society. Together, Best Buddies and Special Olympics have taken the torch from Eunice Kennedy Shriver to become the driving force behind the nation's disabilities movement.

Washington Capitals and Wizards owner Ted Leonsis and his Buddy Ken Holden – a former Special Olympics Athlete – are the honorary co-chairs of the event. Join Ted, Ken, Mayor Adrian Fenty, members of the Shriver Family, politicians, celebrities, Best Buddies and Special Olympics in this amazing event by registering here: www.ekschallenge.org. For more information please visit that website or E-mail Ted McCartan at tedmccartan@bestbuddies.org.

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