

Winter 2013

The Guardian

The Newsletter of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® Executive Council

Raised the Game in Indianapolis



Inside this issue:

<i>Chairman's Corner</i>	3
<i>2012 LETR Conference "Raised the Game" in Indianapolis</i>	4-5
<i>Danny Hall's Love of Running Turns into Special Passion</i>	6,7
<i>13 Polar Plunges in Missouri Raise Almost \$1 Million</i>	7
<i>The Human Experience; A Conference View From Art</i>	8,9
<i>Saving an American Flag</i>	10
<i>An Amazing Experience as a Torch Run Final Leg Runner</i>	11
<i>Final Leg</i>	12
<i>I Get By With a Little Help From My Friends</i>	12
<i>Torch Runner Profile — Sergeant Mark Koeller</i>	13
<i>U.S. Army Provost Marshal Office</i>	14
<i>Florida Selected to Host the 2013 International LETR</i>	15
<i>Strikes for Special Olympics</i>	16

Cover Photo by: Andrea Kramer

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Mike Peretti, LETR Executive Council

Torch Runners,

Welcome to an explosive start to 2013. Having just returned from a fantastic Final Leg in The Republic of Korea, I can tell you new and exciting opportunities await us all this year. The Law Enforcement Torch Run® Executive Council has wasted no time diving into the business of the Torch Run for 2013. You will hear more details about the Final Leg in this edition of the Guardian, but I can tell you that follow up efforts to develop a sustained Torch Run in the Republic of Korea are under way. Keep a close eye on this topic to see if the National Police Service of Korea becomes the newest member of the Torch Run family.

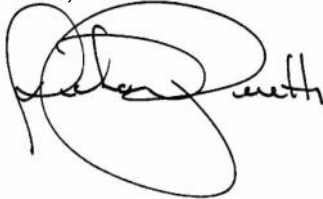
International expansion has been a strategic focus for the Law Enforcement Torch Run and Special Olympics International the past couple years and will continue to be so this year. We are a global movement, and to that end, it is incumbent upon the entire movement to support and encourage growth throughout the regions, all the while strengthening our home programs. In 2012, SOI invested nearly \$65,000 in the LETR Executive Council to pursue this initiative. With great success, efforts in Latin America, Europe, Australia and Asia were implemented. The results, Latvia, a new Torch Run Program; unparalleled growth in Australia and Latin America; and most recently, greater diversity and international representation on our Final Leg team in Korea.

In further support of this initiative, the Executive Council International Expansion Committee is exploring the concept of establishing a "Torch Run Sister Program," whereby established programs embrace the role of mentor to a developing program. More on that as the year unfolds.

Needless to say, the Law Enforcement Torch Run, like law enforcement itself, has no boundaries, and the success of any LETR program is a success for all of us. Together, law enforcement worldwide, will continue to change the world.

Thanks to all of you who make this happen. Keep the Flame of Hope Burning Bright as we set sail for uncharted territory in 2013.

Mike Peretti
Chair, LETR Executive Council



2012 LETR CONFERENCE "RAISED THE GAME" IN INDIANAPOLIS



On, November 8-10, 2012, nearly 1,000 law enforcement officers, Torch Run volunteers, and Special Olympics Accredited Program leaders gathered at the JW Marriott in downtown Indianapolis for the annual International Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) conference focused on "Raising the Game." It was an incredible event filled with key discussions, valuable trainings and many new friendships for those who attended. Conference attendees came from 48 states and eight countries to join together in the Hoosier state, the "Crossroads of America."

The three-day event centered on how LETR can continue to increase its proven success as a critical fundraising tool for

Special Olympics at the grassroots level and as an important mechanism of building communities of acceptance and inclusion for Special Olympics athletes around the world.

Michael Furnish, President and CEO of Special Olympics Indiana, the 2012 conference host program shared, "Hosting the International LETR Conference was definitely a once-in-a-lifetime experience. We were pleased that everyone who attended seemed to enjoy Indianapolis and benefit from the various activities we planned."

For hundreds of great photos of everything from Opening Ceremonies to the Founders Luncheon, please visit http://www.flickr.com/photos/2012_letr_indiana.



In addition to the fantastic events and trainings at the 2012 LETR conference, a few of the many dedicated individuals who give of their time and talents to the Torch Run were recognized at the event. The John Carion Award recognizes an outstanding individual who has contributed to the success of the Law Enforcement Torch Run on a local, state or community level. Jack Allen from Montana, Steve Nigrelli from

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

New York, and Kevin Torgerson from Minnesota received the “Unsung Hero” award for their contribution to the LETR and Special Olympics through their spirit, dedication and enthusiasm in an effective and unheralded fashion. The Unsung Hero award is a tribute to Sergeant John Carion, Sterling Heights Police Department (MI), who epitomized the term “Unsung Hero” during his lifetime before his death in a plane crash in January, 1994. John was an effective leader in the Torch Run effort, especially in the areas of law enforcement volunteerism for Special Olympics and furthering the ideals of Unified Sports in Special Olympics. Teresa Garagan from Alberta, Canada, Joe Pellicci from South Carolina and Lisa Walter from Wisconsin were all inducted into the Richard LaMunyon Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Hall of Fame for demonstrating a sustained and significant contribution to LETR and Special Olympics.

Concurrently, Special Olympics International’s Board of Directors met in Indianapolis, hosting its board meeting at the LETR conference for the first time.

The LETR is the largest grassroots fundraiser for Special Olympics with more than 142,000 law enforcement participants in more than 48 countries. LETR raised more than \$42.6 million in 2011 for Special Olympics athletes with a cumulative sum of more than \$414 million raised since its inception in 1981.



Danny Hall's Love of Running Turns Into Special Passion

By Jon Buzby, Special Olympics Delaware

Danny Hall has a passion for running. So, when the opportunity was presented to him that he could not only run, but do so for a great cause, it was a no-brainer.

"When I became a trooper in 1990, I started my field training in May and remember the day that the Special Olympics Torch Run was held," Hall recalls. "I wasn't able to participate because I was a recruit, and I remember being mad that I couldn't because I loved to run and remembered how great an experience I had volunteering for Special Olympics when I was in college."

Although he couldn't run that year, the Delaware graduate asked many questions about the partnership between Special Olympics and law enforcement. When he heard the answers, he knew it was a "match made in heaven," he says.

Hall's passion for Special Olympics will take him to the Republic of Korea at the end of January for the 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games. The Delaware State Police lieutenant will be one of hundreds of officers and athletes from 19 countries participating in the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg® for Special Olympics. The Final Leg heightens awareness of the Winter Games by literally running the *Flame of Hope* to every corner of Korea, spreading the message of Special Olympics.

"I am looking forward to traveling to Korea and seeing a part of the world that I have never seen," Hall says of his upcoming trip. "I am very excited about meeting all of the other runners and sharing their passion that they have for the greatest athletes in the world."



Delaware State Police Lieutenant Danny Hall

Here in Delaware, Hall has spent the past two decades participating in Special Olympics in just about every way possible. He coaches, volunteers at events, serves on committees and participates in several fundraisers, including the Polar Bear Plunge and Over the Edge. But through all those experiences, there's one volunteer opportunity he treasures most.

"I had always heard that when you present a medal to an athlete, it is a magical experience," Hall says passionately. "I still remember the first time I was able to present medals to athletes and words can't express what it meant to me and continues to mean every time I hang a medal around an athlete's neck. They give you the greatest hug in the world and that special smile. It's always nice to look at the family members and see the enjoyment they have watching their relative receive an award from a law enforcement officer."

Hall has shared his personal experiences countless times with police recruits, encouraging them to just give Special Olympics a chance, promising them that it will not only make a difference in the athletes' lives, but also their own.

(Continued on page 7)

13 Polar Plunges in Missouri Raise Almost \$1 Million

By Susan Stegeman, Special Olympics Missouri



Top fundraising Team raises \$27,000 at the Lake of the Ozarks.

Thanks to 4,438 people in Missouri, almost \$1,000,000 was raised from the 2013 Polar Plunge® season. This effort is exceptionally impressive considering snowstorms and colder temperatures rounded out February. Missouri's Polar Plunges are all LETR projects hosted and planned by LETR agencies. This is the 18th year for Plunges in Missouri.



Lake Saint Louis event planned by 5 law enforcement agencies raised over \$82,000. This sign says it all.

(Continued from page 6)

"Special Olympics Delaware has already provided me with the greatest experiences of a lifetime," Hall says. "I hope to continue serving as a volunteer with Special Olympics Delaware for the rest of my life and spread my passion to other law enforcement officers. Participating in Special Olympics allows you to see the good in each and every person and it gives me hope for my future and the future for my children."

For now, Hall's future includes a special trip to PyeongChang.

"I know from other runners that have participated in the Final Leg at a World Games that it is a life-changing experience," Hall explains. "I can't wait. Next to my family, I have no greater joy in life than Special Olympics."



Delaware State Police Lieutenant Danny Hall – and Korea Final Leg runners

The Human Experience; A Conference View from Art

By Montana Highway Patrolman Art Collins

Earlier this past summer I received an e-mail from Special Olympics/Law Enforcement Torch Run® Coordinator Terri Sappington inviting me to attend the International Law Enforcement Torch Run Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. My response was an unenthusiastic “sure I’d be happy to.” Little did I know at the time what a gift she had just offered me. Don’t get me wrong, I think the Law Enforcement Torch Run is a great organization and one I have enjoyed being a part of for the past four years. But, as most of you know, I have been the AMT President for the past five years, and I’ve been to more conferences than I can easily remember. Quite honestly, I was “conferenced out.” A short while later Terri sent another e-mail asking if I would be willing to serve as an escort for the “Miner’s Lamp”. This time out of a sense of duty and wanting to “earn my keep,” I agreed to serve in any way I could during this convention. And again, I had no idea the gift she had just offered.

Fast forward to November, we are about to leave for the conference and I am still no more enthusiastic about it than when I was first asked. On the morning of November 7, eighteen Montanans departed from all over the state en route to Indianapolis. Fourteen of us met up at our connection in Minneapolis. From there we spent nearly every waking hour together for the next four days.

Upon arrival in Indy, I managed to get myself registered in my room and for the conference and am told to be at a meeting for Miner’s Lamp escorts at 4:00 p.m. Being the dutiful soldier you all know me to be, I arrived at my briefing ahead of time and ready to be told what was next. This being the day before the conference “hurry up and wait” is, of course, the order of the day. No problem, after nearly 30 years of service between the military and the Highway Patrol, I’m used to this. Eventually, those of us waiting were given the briefing we had assembled for. For me it was also a chance to learn what the Miner’s Lamp is and what it represents. As members of the Torch Run movement, we have taken on the responsibility to be the Guardians of the Flame. The Miner’s Lamp reminds us of this responsibility as well as those that have passed before us that guarded the same Flame of Hope. I was assigned to be an escort during the Honors Luncheon on Friday afternoon. This is a dual role because there will also be a Ceremony of Remembrance to pay our respects to the LETR members that have passed away over the past year. Okay, that is pretty cool; they were starting to get my attention.

That night we attended a comedy night show at Cracker Comedy Club. The featured comedian was Scott Long of Indianapolis. Scott is a professional comedian who also just happens to have a daughter that is a Special Olympics Athlete. While some of his performance was adult in nature, he also spent a good amount of time sharing with us in a humorous way just what it was like to have a child with special needs. He talked about the damage and hurt caused when people use the “R” word in all its different forms. He also talked about how these people with special needs (specifically his daughter) want nothing but to be treated kindly, respectfully, and with dignity. And, if you will do this, they (she) will be your friend for life with “no guile.” This last part about no guile struck me. A lot of us in law enforcement have for some very good reasons become cynical of most everything we see and hear from people. We are nearly always wondering about the motivations and agendas of other people. I thought how wonderful it must be to be friends

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

with someone who is simply motivated by nothing more than a desire to be your friend, someone who is incapable of guile. That was the reason for the first lump in my throat for the week.

The next morning was the opening ceremony and address by the Chairman and CEO of Special Olympics Mr. Tim Shriver (yes, of the Kennedy/Shriver family). Two things in particular struck me about his presentation. The first was his message about what he called a “Dignity Revolution.” Quite simply, we all deserve to be treated with respect and human dignity, regardless of our race, color, creed, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, and finally intellectual ability or cognitive differences. One of the first steps in this revolution is the eradication of the “R” word. It has no place or reason to exist in our vocabulary. This word does nothing but displays our own ignorance and shows a complete disrespect for an entire group of people. The second thing that I was particularly impressed with was a story that Mr. Shriver told about Montana’s own Dave Hedley. He told the crowd of over 1,000 people how Dave, while fighting leukemia and being weak of body, demonstrated his strong spirit by driving himself to the opening ceremonies for the summer games last year so he could be part of the Circle of Honor one last time. As some of you already know, Dave succumbed to the leukemia in September. What I took away from this was just how much a family this Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics really is.

For the next couple of days, I spent my time going from breakout session to breakout session, shaking hands, hugging, and visiting with Special Olympics athletes from all over the world. I witnessed different agencies of law enforcement men and women working together, laughing together and getting their batteries recharged from the athletes. It didn’t take long to realize, we were not there for the athletes, they were there for us. I heard Hall of Fame Major League Pitcher, Carl Erskine, tell us how his own son, born with Down syndrome changed his life. I was honored to congratulate our own Montana LETR Director Jack Allen after receiving one of three John Carion “Unsung Hero” awards this year. I also witnessed about a million smiles and more than a few tears of joy.

At the beginning of this story, I mentioned how Terri Sappington had offered me a gift I wasn’t aware of. For the past few months, I had been re-evaluating my career and what was to come next. I am nearly at the point that I can take a retirement and look for gainful employment with another agency or get out of law enforcement all together. The gift that Terri unknowingly offered me and I received at the conference was a reason to continue with my law enforcement career. I know, I can continue to work with Special Olympics and the Law Enforcement Torch Run as a civilian, but I just can’t imagine how it could be as good.

For those of you who have read my story to this point, you are probably saying to yourself “geez Art, it sounds like you had some kind of religious experience.” My answer to that would be “no, just a human experience” and one that I would highly recommend. If you would like to learn more about the Law Enforcement Torch Run® or Special Olympics log on to www.SOMT.org.

Saving an American Flag

By Tracy J. Garabedian, Special Olympics Rhode Island

It was during the 2001 Final Leg in Alaska when Sergeant Joe Coffey (now Captain Coffey), Warwick PD, Warwick, Rhode Island (RI) noticed an American flag on the side of the road during a run. The flag was ripped and ragged and had been buried in the snow.

He picked it up and tucked it in his pocket and carried it with him the rest of the day. Once the flag had dried off, he had the idea to have his running teammates sign the flag.

When Joe came back to RI from the Final Leg, he shared the story with the RI Torch Run committee and gave the flag to the state office for safe keeping. It was at this time that we decided to start a tradition of passing the flag on to each RI Final Leg Runner to carry with them and to be signed.



In this picture, US Marshall Jamie Hainsworth passes the flag to Chief Elwood Johnson prior to his trip to Korea.

To date, the flag has been to 5 countries (Ireland, Japan, China, Greece and most recently S. Korea). The flag has also traveled to Idaho for the 2009 World Winter Games and Iowa and Nebraska for National Games.

Since 2001, each RI Final Leg runner carrying the flag has kept the tradition of having the flag signed by teammates/athletes and friends made along the way during the Final Leg.

The once small, frayed flag has been sewn onto fabric creating a border allowing for more signatures over the years to come. There are currently about 80-90 signatures on the flag!

It's become a tradition that the flag be passed from the runner who carried it last to the next runner prior to their departure.

In this picture, US Marshall Jamie Hainsworth passes the flag to Chief Elwood Johnson prior to his trip to Korea.

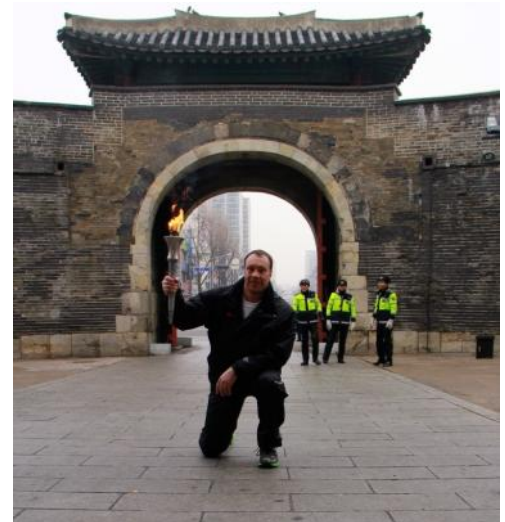
An Amazing Experience as a Torch Run Final Leg Runner

By Captain Thurman Whisnant, Hickory Police Department, North Carolina

Captain Thurman Whisnant of the Hickory Police Department in Hickory, North Carolina describes his experience participating during the 2013 Torch Run Final Leg in Republic of Korea. The Final Leg was held in conjunction to the 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games.

I cannot say enough amazing things about my experience as a Torch Run Final Leg runner! From the new culture to the new friends, I have a lot of great memories from my trip.

I was blown away by just how friendly everyone was to us as a group. I quickly felt accepted and appreciated by the Korean people. The people lined the streets as we ran. They were waving flags with the Special Olympics logo on them. And when I say people, I mean LOTS of people. The Torch coming through their city was a big deal, and we were treated like rock stars. The Korean National Police Officers assigned to us were great as well. I got to know the two who were assigned to our bus really well and am already keeping in touch with them via Facebook. We all formed friendships so quickly; by mid-week, the jokes were going back and forth between us and our Korean friends just like what happens back home at our local police departments.



Captain Thurman Whisnant poses with the Flame of Hope during the 2013 Torch Run Final Leg.

I also created long-lasting friendships with the athletes who were part of our group. My roommate, Andy (a Special Olympics Washington athlete), and I formed a very strong bond during the two weeks. I loved watching him go from being shy and introverted to completely confident in his public speaking abilities. Since that time, Andy has sent me a video thanking me for being his roommate and we've been talking frequently. Everyone on our bus got really close and we've been talking daily. It's amazing to see just how quickly these life-long friendships formed.

We saw so many memorable things during our trip and each of our four daily stops had something unique about it. One of my favorites was a city on the northwest coast of the Republic of Korea called Paju. It's the closest place anyone can get to the North Korean border. You can actually see the DMZ and there are a lot of memorials and tributes to the individuals who served in the Korean War. That was special to me because my father served in the Air Force during that time. Another favorite of mine (and almost everyone on the trip) was a city named Hwacheon. We ran the Torch into the city and down some steps made of ice on to a frozen lake where they had built a stage for us. They had constructed a partial castle out of ice blocks that was behind our stage. There were ice skaters performing for us and hundreds of people there to welcome us. They also had an ice fishing tournament there, sledding, and even had a go-cart track on the ice. It was such a cool experience, literally!

I came home completely re-energized about my role with the Torch Run. Since I've been back, I've spoken to at least four new and young officers just starting their career about what an opportunity they have to make a difference. I firmly believe no one remembers an officer at the end of his career for the number of arrests they make or how many cases he solves, but for the opportunities he takes to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Being involved with the Torch Run is the perfect way to do that and I could not be more grateful that I was given the opportunity to be a part of it at the international level.

Final Leg

By Jennifer Lightle, Special Olympics Oklahoma

Oklahoma LETR was excited to have our very own Sergeant Jacob Thompson, Tulsa Police Department, represent Oklahoma in the Final Leg for the Special Olympics World Winter Games, South Korea 2013. This was Sgt. Thompson's first Final Leg experience. "We had a great trip and accomplished a lot. We did a good job of spreading the message of acceptance and support of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Our message was received well in every city we spoke. Our 10 athletes that joined us were wonderful and very inspiring. It is truly amazing the benefits that Special Olympics provide for the athletes. We were able to witness a few of the athletes who were somewhat reserved and nervous and after 2 or 3 programs they were the life of the party and had gained an abundance of confidence in speaking and interacting with the crowds."



Sgt. Jacob Thompson, Tulsa Police Department at the Korea Final Leg

"This was a great experience and I will never forget the time I was able to spend in Korea," Thompson said. Oklahoma was proud to be a part of the Final Leg tradition representing Oklahoma's Law Enforcement Torch Run® and Special Olympics as Guardians of the Flame and carry the Special Olympics Torch and *Flame of Hope* to the Opening Ceremonies of the Special Olympics World Winter Games.

I Get By With a Little Help From My Friends

By Jana L. Fornelli, Special Olympics Kansas

Just 24 hours after arriving back home on Kansas from the World Games in Korea, New Hope Bulldogs athlete, Scott Ball, took the Polar Plunge in Pittsburg, Kansas. Scott raised \$233 for the Polar Plunge before he even left for Korea!

Scott competed in the 100 M & 200 M Snowshoeing competition at World Games and took 4th in both events! We are proud of Scott's accomplishments in Kansas and in Korea!



Pictured Left to Right: Officer Chris Moore, Pittsburg Police Department; Special Olympics athlete, Scott Ball; and Coach John Lair, New Hope Bulldogs

Torch Runner Profile — Sergeant Mark Koeller

By Ellen Coots, Special Olympics Missouri

At our Law Enforcement Torch Run® Kick-off this past December, the John Michael Letz Award, was presented to an individual whose unselfish efforts and contributions were directly responsible for the success of the Torch Run for Special Olympics Missouri. This is the highest award given within the Missouri LETR program. In order to receive this award, the recipient must be responsible for significant fundraising results, participate year round supporting events, exemplify the Special Olympics mission, be a visionary for the Torch Run, and be someone whose source of motivation comes from helping the athletes.

We have many men and women who are Torch Run enthusiasts; most of whom we don't know. We don't know them because they do the work without looking for recognition – and that is why they are deserving of the Letz Award. Our recipient this year was Sergeant Mark Koeller with the St. Louis County Police Department. Sgt. Koeller has been involved with the Torch Run for 12 years, and he was recognized as the Region Unsung Hero after six years of Torch Run involvement. Having served as his agencies' Co-Coordinator, he has helped recruit and participate in every event his agency has been involved in. To give more specific examples, he coordinated a regional event with four agencies for five years that brought in sponsors, agencies, truckers and athletes, raising over \$22,429. In 2010, not only did he create a different route of the Torch Run covering a new part of the region, he recruited 48 runners from 15 agencies.

Now, let me tell you a little more about Sgt. Koeller. When he was asked what Special Olympics Missouri means to him, his response was, "It's not just something I do, it's a part of me." Sgt. Koeller helped start and still serves on the

Over the Edge committee, which has raised \$511,000 in 4 years. He got his whole family involved, by helping fundraise for his wife and mother to participate in "going over the edge." His daughter also helps volunteer and fundraise.

Sgt. Koeller's answer to the question why he became involved with Special Olympics Missouri was this, "It was a visible way to give back to the community that I work in. It melts your heart and you want to stay involved. I got hooked immediately after the first competition. I was at Area Spring Games at Rockwood Summit, and during a race an athlete took a hard fall. What happened next stayed with me. All of the other athletes stopped running, helped the athlete back to his feet and walked with him to the finish line. It's not just about winning to the athletes. Special Olympics Missouri is a great social atmosphere and it does so much." Currently, Sgt. Koeller volunteers to present medals at the State basketball championship as well as Area Spring Games.

Sgt. Mark Koeller is a piece of the Special Olympics Missouri puzzle. He is well deserving of the Letz Award, and we want to thank him for all that he has done and continues to do.



Sgt. Mark Koeller and his family after receiving the LETZ Award. They drove from St. Louis to the Torch Run Kickoff in Jefferson City, MO to surprise him.

U.S. Army Provost Marshal Office

By Charles Steitz, United States Army Japan

For the past 13 years, the U.S. Army Provost Marshal Office, (PMO) has taken part in the Kadena Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run®. Forty Soldiers participated running from Torii Station to Kadena Air Base on Saturday, November 3. Close to 150 first responders from the four services on the island gathered at the Kadena Security forces headquarters and ran together to the Risner Fitness Center parking lot for the streamer pinning ceremony and a few words from Kadena Air Base's Vice Commander Colonel Charles McDaniel. Col. McDaniel reminded all about the importance of celebrating the successes and achievements of individuals with intellectual disabilities and thanked everyone for taking time to improve the lives of special needs athletes and artists across Japan.



Florida Selected to Host the 2013 International LETR

By Rodney Seurer, Special Olympics Florida



Special Olympics, Florida will host the 2013 Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) International Conference. With an assist from Walt Disney World, Florida will make "Dreams Come True, One Athlete at a Time." The 2013 LETR International Conference may very well be one of the best attended conferences ever, with an anticipated 1,200 law enforcement officers from all corners of the globe arriving at one of the world's most sought after vacation destinations.

Every year, the International Conference provides an opportunity for Torch Run volunteers to network, share, and learn how to improve their local Torch Run programs. The 2013 conference, scheduled for November 7-9 at the Dolphin Hotel and Conference Center in Walt Disney World, will celebrate the 32nd year of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics.

Florida's LETR Director, Chief Deputy Dave Sklarek of the Osceola Sheriff's Office, is ready for you to come enjoy great weather, world-famous attractions, a 5-star resort, and a conference packed with interesting and informative break-out sessions, which are sure to keep you excited about the upcoming LETR year. Among the activities planned for conference attendees, following the arrival of the Flame of Hope is a run around the world in 30 minutes or less with a 5K run through EPCOT's World Showcase. We will also offer a walk around the world at the same time for those who would rather walk then run and still enjoy the beautiful World Showcase at Epcot.

With attendees expected from North America, Europe, Latin America, China, Korea, and Australia, the LETR International Conference welcomes volunteers to mingle, share inspirational stories and learn from one another as they collaborate to improve their local Torch Run programs. In turn, the conference will build public awareness and continue to change the lives of Special Olympic athletes through new and fresh ideas.

Check for up-to-date information at the official website of the 2013 International LETR Conference at <http://www.soflletrinternationalconference.com>.



Strikes for Special Olympics

By Stephanie Stewart, Special Olympics Indiana

Programming: The Opening Ceremony consisted of a brief welcome from the Special Olympics Indiana Law Enforcement Torch Run® Liaison who introduced SO International board member Sam Perkins. Sam briefly welcomed everyone and thanked the BPAA, then gave the floor to Martha Hill, an athlete member of the LETR Executive Council. Then Bart Burger of BPAA, who helped establish the BPAA/LETR partnership, and Jim Doty (regional BPAA bowling center manager for Indianapolis) presented the LETR/BPAA bowling balls that the Association donated as the first place prizes. The national anthem was played, then an SO Indiana athlete led the crowd in the Special Olympics Athlete Oath, rolled the ceremonial first ball and bowling began. During bowling, there were door prizes chosen from tickets given to all conference attendees who participated.



Awards: All bowlers received an event shirt and each pre-registered team received a commemorative bowling pin. Once scores were counted, Bart Burger of BPAA and a Special Olympics Indiana Athlete presented the winners their awards.

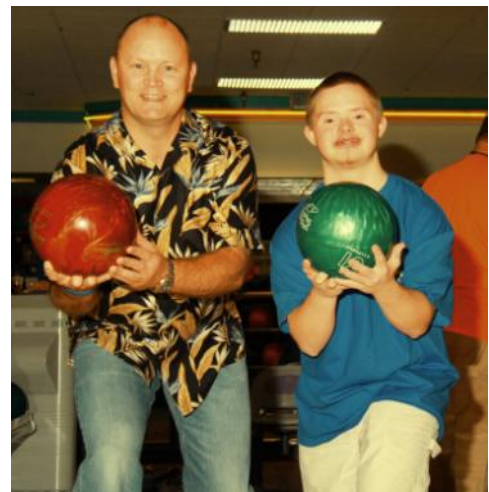
1st place – Each bowler (4 conference attendees and 1 SOIN athlete) received a gold medal and a bowling ball. 2nd place – Each bowler received a silver medal and the team received a bowling pin trophy. 3rd place – Each bowler received a bronze medal and the team received a bowling pin trophy.



Conference Lunch: The lunch was provided at the bowling center in conjunction with the event. Participants seemed to enjoy the tailgate style atmosphere, especially with the great weather we were lucky enough to have. Special Olympics Indiana volunteers and athletes, from around the state, brought handmade dessert to pass out to participants. This program had

great feedback. Chips and desserts were donated, but the remainder of the meal was prepared and transported to the bowling center by Indiana LETR sponsor Gordon Food Services.

Overview: The conference attendees who participated enjoyed themselves and there was a good energy in the bowling center. I think that the officers enjoyed bowling with the athletes and in most cases, the team of officers gave the athlete the team incentive commemorative bowling pin. Some officers even signed it with a message to their team's athlete member. We flipped the Summer Games roles of



(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 16)



chance to spend time with our athletes and allowed all volunteers to show the officers great hospitality.

The bowling center, Western Bowl, was a great example of how the partnership can work. The bowling center arranged for all names to be ready on the screen when participants arrived, placed the proper shoes at all lanes and calculated the winners. They also helped clean up and set up. They made many dynamics of the event run extremely smooth. One idea to increase revenue for a bowling event allowing outside participation is to sell lane and

athletes and officers with the high-five line and awards. As the officers entered the bowling facility, they were high-fived by a row of athletes. Athletes also handed the officers a lapel pin and door prize ticket. Once winners were established, a Special Olympics Athlete placed medals around the officer's necks, just like officers can do at competitions. Officers were later spotted at the banquet sporting those medals with pride. There were also athletes in attendance as volunteers in various roles. These things all gave attending officers a great



team sponsorships to local businesses, individuals, and corporations.

Overall the event went well, participants had a nice time and feedback from the event was positive.



REGIONAL COORDINATORS

**Special Olympics Appointee****Glenn MacDonnell**

Special Olympics Ontario

Special Olympics Appointee**Peter Wheeler**

Special Olympics International

Special Olympics At-Large**Mark Musso**

Special Olympics Missouri

Special Olympics At-Large**Adrian DeWendt (Vice-Chair)**

Special Olympics Oklahoma

Special Olympics At-Large**Rich Fernandez**

Special Olympics Southern California

SOI Executive Director of LETR**Michael Teem**

Special Olympics, Inc.

Chairman Emeritus**Richard LaMunyon (Ret.)**

Kansas, LETR

IACP Appointee**Russ Laine**

Illinois, LETR

IACP Appointee**Joe Pena**

Illinois, LETR

Council Appointee**Roy Forrest**

North Carolina, LETR

Council Appointee**Luis A Rosa**

Connecticut, LETR

Law Enforcement At-Large**Antonio Williams**

Hawaii, LETR

Law Enforcement At-Large**Kurt Kendro**

Hawaii, LETR

Law Enforcement At-Large**Mike Peretti (chair)**

Northern California, LETR

Special Olympics Athlete Appointee**Sam Tam**

Special Olympics Hong Kong

Region I

CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT

Joe Carlone

Connecticut, LETR

Region II

DC, DE, MD, PA, NJ, NY, VA, WV

John Newnan

Maryland, LETR

Region III

AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC, TN

Mike Anderson

Florida, LETR

Region IV

IL, IN, KY, MI, OH

Jim Reno

Indiana, LETR

Region V

IA, MN, NE, ND, SD, WI

Jeri Roeder

Nebraska, LETR

Region VI

AR, KS, LA, MO, OK, TX

Mark Wollmershauser

Oklahoma, LETR

Region VII

AZ, N. CA, S. CA, CO, HI, NV, NM, UT, GUAM

Roberta Abner

Southern California, LETR

Region VIII

AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY

Ron Casalenda

Wyoming, LETR

Region IX**Western Europe****Jeremy Adams**

Ireland, LETR

Region X**Eastern Europe/Eurasia****Jacek Hachulski**

Poland, LETR

Region XI**Canada**

(AB, BS, MB, NB, NF, NWT, NS, ON, PEI, PQ, SK, YK)

Paul Manuel**Region XII****East Asia****Patrick Chan**

Special Olympics Hong Kong

Region XIII**Caribbean**

(St. Vincent, Jamaica, Barbados, Dominica, Antigua, St. Lucia, St. Kitts & Nevis, Puerto Rico, Grand Cayman, Bahamas, Grenada, Trinidad & Tobago, Guadeloupe, Martinique, US Virgin Islands, St. Maarten, Bonaire, Curacao, Aruba, Haiti, Belize, Guyana, Montserrat, Suriname)

Bill Buford (Ret.)

Arkansas, LETR

Region XIV**Oceania****Scott Whyte**

Australia, LETR

Region XV**Latin America****Vladimir Caceres**

Policia Nacional Civil de El Salvador

El Salvador, LETR