



Special Olympics
Illinois



For Immediate Release

June 7, 2012

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS CARRY TORCH FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS ILLINOIS

Beginning Sunday, June 9, 2013 area law enforcement officers will be running through the streets of their communities to raise money and awareness for Special Olympics. Throughout the week, 3,000 officers representing every branch of law enforcement will cover the 23 legs of the Illinois Law Enforcement Torch Run.

On Sunday, June 9th officers from the Dekalb County Sheriff's Department, Dekalb Police Department, Sycamore Police Department and Northern Illinois University Police Department will run in their communities.

On Monday, June 10th officers from the Belvidere Police Department, Boone County Sheriff's Department will run through Belvidere.

On Wednesday, June 12th Rockford Police Officers, Rockford Park District Police Officers, Loves Park Police Officers South Beloit Police Officers, Rockton Police Officers, Winnebago County Sheriff's Deputies, Illinois State Police Troopers will carry the "Flame of Hope" through the streets of South Beloit, Rockton, Loves Park, Rockford and northern and southern Winnebago County.

On Thursday, June 13th officers with the Freeport Police Department, the Stephenson County Sheriff's Department and representatives from the Freeport Park District and the Illinois Department of Corrections-Parole will carry the torch through the streets of Freeport.

The Illinois Law Enforcement Torch Run is the single largest year-round fund-raising event benefiting Special Olympics Illinois. This intrastate relay and its various fundraisers have two goals: to raise money and increase public awareness for the athletes of Special Olympics. Each year, officers in Illinois run more than 1500 miles carrying the Flame of Hope through the streets of their hometowns and deliver it to the State Summer Games in Normal in June.

On Friday, June 14th legs of the run from all over the state will converge on Normal. That evening at dusk, a dramatic moment during Opening Ceremonies of the Special Olympics Illinois State Summer Games, officers from every leg of the Torch Run will enter Illinois State University's Hancock Stadium with torches lit and hand off the "Flame of Hope" to Special Olympics athletes. When the cauldron is lit and the games declared open, more than 3,500 athletes will continue three days of competition and celebration.

This year is the 27th running of the Law Enforcement Torch Run in Illinois. When it began in 1986, the Torch Run raised \$16,000. It has since grown into the largest fundraiser of Special Olympics Illinois. More than \$2.98 million was raised last year by the Illinois Law Enforcement Torch Run, making it the second highest grossing program in the world!

Illinois' Torch Run program has raised nearly \$28 million since its inception in 1986.

This year's theme for the LETR is "Lighting the Way" with the goal of inspiring officers and departments to become passionate about raising money for Special Olympics, therefore allowing more athletes to experience the joy of participating in the program.

Special Olympics Illinois (SO ILL) provides year-round training and competition in 19 different sports to children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Currently, SO ILL serves more than 21,300 children and adults with intellectual disabilities and nearly 13,000 Young Athletes (ages 2-7) with and without intellectual disabilities. All athletes **participate at no cost** to themselves or their families! The benefits of Special Olympics for the athletes are tremendous-including physical fitness, sports skills, self-esteem and especially the social benefits. Special Olympics transforms the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

ROCKFORD MEDIA PRESS CONFERENCE IS SCHEDULED ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12TH AT 8:00 AM IN THE PARKING LOT OF THE ROCVALE CHILDREN'S HOME, 4450 NORTH ROCKTON AVENUE.

Please contact Rockford Police Lieutenant Pat Hoey for information.

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