



For Immediate Release

June 3, 2014

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS CARRY TORCH FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS ILLINOIS

Beginning Sunday, June 8, 2014 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 8th at 3pm 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 9th at 10am officers from the Belvidere Police Department and the Boone County Sheriff's Department will run through Belvidere.

On Wednesday, June 11th beginning at 6am Rockford Police Officers, Rockford Park District Police Officers, Loves Park Police Officers, Rock Valley College Police Officers, South Beloit Police Officers, Rockton Police Officers, Winnebago County Sheriff's Deputies, Illinois State Police Troopers and agents with the FBI will carry the "Flame of Hope" through the streets of South Beloit, Rockton, Machesney Park, Loves Park, Rockford.

The Rockford Run will begin at the RocVale Children's Home, 4450 N. Rockton Avenue. Rockford Police Officers will welcome the runners coming from South Beloit, Rockton, Loves Park and Machesney Park. Milestone Special Olympics athletes will cheer on the officers and pose for photographs before sending the Rockford Police Officers on their trek through the City.

After completing the Rockford run the Flame of Hope will travel to Rochelle where the Rochelle Police Department will carry the torch through their community. The Flame will then travel to Sterling where the Illinois State Police District 1 Troopers and area

officers will carry the torch through Sterling. Finally the Torch will travel to Mendota and will be carried by Mendota Police Officers through their community.

On Thursday, June 12th at 3pm 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 13th legs of the run from all over the state will converge on Normal. That evening at dusk, a dramatic moment occurs during the 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 28th 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 \$3.3 million was raised last year by the Illinois Law Enforcement Torch Run, making it the fourth highest grossing program in the world!

Illinois' Torch Run program has raised over \$30 million since its inception in 1986.

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 11TH AT 8:15AM IN THE PARKING LOT OF THE ROCKVALE CHILDREN'S HOME, 4450 NORTH ROCKTON AVENUE.

Please contact Rockford Police Lieutenant Pat Hoey for information.

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