

Summer 2011

# The Guardian

The Newsletter of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® Executive Council



**Lighting of the Flame of Hope by Special Olympics Athlete Panagiotis Koutatzis from Greece  
and Officer John Pellerin from Nova Scotia, Canada**

# Inside this issue:

<i>Chairman's Corner</i>	3
<i>LETR Executive Council Summer Business Meeting Report</i>	4-5
<i>Oregon Tip-a-Cop</i>	5
<i>LETR for Special Olympics International Conference — Canada</i>	6
<i>Striking A Balance Between Work, Life, and Fundraising</i>	7-9
<i>Pounding Pavement for 30 Years</i>	9-10
<i>LETR Final Leg — Greece</i>	11-17
<i>Final Leg Athlete Profiles</i>	18-22
<i>Europe/Eurasia Legacy &amp; Development Torch Run Conference</i>	23
<i>9th Annual Oklahoma Cops on Doughnut Shops "A Sweet Success"</i>	24
<i>Final Leg — Oklahoma</i>	24
<i>LETR Executive Council</i>	24

**Cover Photo by: 2011 Final Leg Documentation Team**

**CHAIRMAN'S CORNER**  
**Mike Peretti, LETR Executive Council**

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the "The Guardian," and has it been a summer to remember! As our movement continues to grow and reach new corners of the globe, we celebrate great success in Greece and the 2011 World Summer Games Final Leg, having taken place in June. Programs in Latin America continue to raise the bar, programs in Australia take their place as leaders in the movement, and European programs prepare to meet in Malta to further the movement throughout their region.

The Executive Council congratulates all our programs on their continued success and also celebrates a very successful summer business meeting of their own. In late July, the Executive Council met in Washington, D.C. for its annual summer business meeting. Major highlights of the meeting focused on marketing the LETR global movement, international expansion, the Executive Council's Strategic Plan, and discussions updating the IACP and LETR relationship. All of these topics you will be hearing more about in the near future.

It has been a great summer, and as we near the fall, we look forward to a wonderful conference in Calgary, Canada, November 3-5, 2011. Congratulations once again on everyone's continued success and we look forward to seeing you in Canada!

Mike

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Peretti", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

# Law Enforcement Torch Run® Executive Council Summer Business Meeting Report Washington DC – July 28<sup>th</sup> – July 31<sup>st</sup>

By Martha Hill, Athlete Representative

In the fall of 2010 I received word that I had been appointed to the International LETR Executive Council. I have served on the state LETR committee for almost three years now and have regularly attended those meetings during that time. I have learned a lot during my time on the state committee and worked for the Truck Convoy those years, helped emcee the Torch Run Celebration for three years, attended numerous conferences and conventions and spoken to various state groups as the athlete representative on behalf of the state LETR. I had thought that all of this helped prepare me for my role as the athlete representative on the International Council. I was in for a big surprise! I had no idea I was becoming part of something so big and a movement that along with Special Olympics reaches around the world.

Over the past year I have spent many hours on the phone in conference calls with LETR representatives and directors from all over the world; from China to California, Australia to Northern Ireland. Up until the end of July, aside from some members I met in 2009 at the International Conference in Connecticut, most of the other council members were just voices on the phone. It was great to finally put a face to those names and voices as we met and sat around the table for two full days of meetings.

There was Patrick Chan from Hong Kong who actually knows my fellow International Global Messenger classmate, Sam. What fun it was to see

pictures on his laptop of my friend. I met Bill Buford, who represents all of the Caribbean region and Jeremy Adams from Northern Ireland. Then there was Paul Manuel, who will be our host in Calgary for the upcoming conference in November. Mike Peretti, from California, is the chairman of the council and Adrian DeWendt from Oklahoma, is the vice-chairman. There was also Jacek Hachulski from Poland, Joe Pena from Illinois who represents the International Association of Chiefs of Police. There were regional directors and representatives from all over the world who were there to meet and confer on the efforts being made on behalf of the athletes of Special Olympics.

We watched a great music video from the recent World Games in Athens, Greece and then saw a presentation on the Torch Run Final Leg journey. I even saw pictures of my friend Carolyn Voelker, from the Wisconsin Athlete Input Council. It was so much fun to see her and I was very proud of our Wisconsin athletes.

The most amazing thing about the meeting was to find out just how far reaching and large the LETR efforts are and how hard the members of the council work to raise funds and awareness all year round, all over the world.

On the final day of meetings we heard from Vladimir Caceres from El Salvador, who through Luis Rosa from Connecticut,

*(Continued on page 5)*

*(Continued from page 4)*

serving as not just a council member but a translator for Vladimir, told about efforts in the Latin American region to coordinate efforts between law enforcement representatives and Special Olympics in that area.

Some of the regional coordinators, like Don Stuart from Oceania talked about the barriers sometimes with many different languages being spoken. Bill talked about how documents and information also need to be translated for passing along information and to help develop other areas for growth.

I haven't named ALL the council members who were there, but I remember each one and look forward

to the next conference call, knowing now the faces that belong to the voices and I look forward to meeting them again in Calgary. It was fun to see Pete Wheeler and Mike Teem and to once again see and visit with Brady Lum from Special Olympics International.

It is an honor for me to be a small part of something so big and important and to serve as a voice for my fellow athletes all over the world. I hope to serve to the best of my ability as I present the viewpoint and perspective that only an athlete can provide. My hope is that I can continue to spread the vision and mission of our founder, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, and to work with this great group of men and women who dedicate so much time and energy to raise funds and awareness that Special Olympics is not just an event or nice. We are a movement and we are important!

## Oregon Tip-a-Cop

**By Allison Ellermeier, Special Olympics Oregon**



On August 9<sup>th</sup>, Michelle Kwan, world-renowned figure skater, member of the Special Olympics International Board of Directors and Coca-Cola Special Olympics Ambassador, presented a check in the amount of \$744,615 to Special Olympics on behalf of Red Robin Gourmet Burgers and The Coca-Cola Company for the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run Tip-A-Cop program.

Law Enforcement agencies across Oregon were there to meet with Michelle, share their stories on why they support Special Olympics and eat lunch with Special Olympics Oregon Athletes at their local Red Robin.

Red Robin and Coca-Cola have been long-time supporters of Special Olympics. Red Robin has been hosting Tip-A-Cop events for more than six years and has donated nearly \$2 million to Special Olympics. One of Special Olympics' longstanding corporate partners, The Coca-Cola Company, has been supporting the organization since 1968. This was the first time Red Robin and Coca-Cola have teamed up to support Special Olympics together.





They aren't kidding when they say time flies. Here we are, mere weeks away from the 2011 Law Enforcement Torch Run International Conference for Special Olympics.

Calgary is ready for you...the question is, are you ready for Calgary?

For those of you who are making your first jaunt to Canada in the winter months, there are a few things you need to know.

First and foremost, dress in layers! Calgary is just 80 kilometres – that's 50 miles for you Americans – from the majestic Canadian Rockies, and those peaks can throw a real wrench into the weather. Toss in our high elevation (about 3,500 kilometres above sea level) and November weather can run anywhere between -15 C and + 20 C, courtesy of the Chinook winds.

Be sure to bring lots of red for the opening ceremonies – as the theme incorporates all things Canadian! And pack your finest for the closing ceremonies, which is always a formal event.

The Alberta Planning Committee has been dotting I's and crossing Ts to ensure that along with great conference sessions, you have an amazing time after hours.

The Alberta Hospitality Night on Wednesday is not for the weak of heart. The Swingin' Stampede Party will have you kicking up your heels and enjoying some roping, branding and plenty of line dancing. Be sure to dress in your finest western duds.

Host night on Thursday will take you back to the Dirty 30s. We'll be taking you to a cool joint called 'Gasoline Alley' and man is that place ever the real McCoy! I mean it's the cat's me-ow! At this Speakeasy you'll be surrounded by some sweet jalopies, 'Greg and the Boys' will provide some seriously swingin' tunes and we guarantee you plenty of giggle water, and hotsy-totsy food will be had by everyone. We'll get you to the best juice joint in town, but if anybody asks...you don't know nothing, you got it?

You absolutely must participate in the spectacular scavenger hunt we have planned just for you. We guarantee you will have great fun and many crazy adventures as you visit some of our local Calgary businesses, and you will learn a few fun facts about the city along the way. The cost is \$20 to play and we have an amazing selection of prizes to be awarded.

We'll also have an invigorating 5K run through downtown Calgary, and a Train Pull fundraiser. Each event is \$20 or register for all three for just \$50.

While we're still working out the details of our sessions, we can confirm that internationally-renowned motivational speaker, author and entrepreneur, Michelle Cederberg, has signed on to present at the conference. A "Personal Energy Expert," Michelle will "lift your spirits, raise your sights and rattle the chains that have been holding you back."

In the meantime, we encourage you to visit our website at <http://visitcalgary.com/LETR2011>

Also, join our Facebook page and be sure to follow us on Twitter at [http://twitter.com/#!/2011\\_LETR\\_CONF](http://twitter.com/#!/2011_LETR_CONF)

See you soon!



## Striking a Balance Between Work, Life and Fundraising

By Michelle Cederberg

In November I have the honor of being among the presenters at the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics International Conference as it comes to Calgary – and Canada – for the first time. Back in March Constable John Langford – a member of the Calgary police service and the conference committee – asked if I would come and present a session on work-life-fundraising balance and I have to admit his request caught me off guard. Fundraising balance? Really?

It took several phone calls and a face-to-face meeting with members of the local fundraising effort to learn that the Torch Run wasn't just a run and that the more than 100,000 law enforcement personnel supporting Special Olympics world-wide weren't your average fundraisers. The officers I chatted with in Calgary exhibited a depth of passion toward this initiative that left me surprised and enlightened.

Detective Langford suggests that on a good week he might obligate 3 to 6 hours toward his fundraising efforts. That number can get as high as 10 to 12 hours depending on the time of year. Meeting with potential fundraisers, researching organizations that might support the initiative, coaching Special Olympics athletes, organizing and attending monthly events and keeping up with all the paperwork were only some of the tasks he mentioned. And if that's not enough, Detective Langford also participates yearly in the Law Enforcement Torch Ride, a fundraiser where cyclists ride stages in a 500 km (300 mile) relay to raise money and awareness.

As a man committed to his family and busy on the job he's the first to admit that those extra hours add to daily stress and fatigue, but he can't imagine not doing the work. "For sure the motivating factor is the great

feeling helping out the athletes. They truly are a very deserving and grateful group. I know of the hardships some of the families experience so it is nice to help out anyway I can."

You've made a commitment to a great organization and in doing so you've effectively asked family to get a little less of you, allowed your work to pile up at times, and have likely put your own health and wellbeing on hold more than once. You want to keep doing the good work, so let's make that possible by looking at ways to help you take care of yourself, your work and your loved ones alongside Torch Run commitments.

### Four Strategies for WORK-LIFE-FUNDRAISING BALANCE

As a fitness and health expert, life coach and professional speaker, I've addressed hundreds of audiences and coached dozens of clients around the issue of life balance, and I'll tell you that in the pursuit of work-life balance no two circumstances are the same. Life balance in my mind can't be defined by a general one-size-fits-all formula because each of us places different value on work, home life, health, and even free time.

Your work-life balance concerns will be quite different if you're single or if you have a family. They will vary based on age, work responsibilities, extra-curricular choices, and energy levels. And if you have a passion for helping Special Olympics through Torch Run initiatives it will involve a bit of awareness and creativity on your part.

Below I share four work-life-fundraising strategies to guide you toward that objective.

*(Continued on page 8)*

(Continued from page 7)

## Plan ahead

Busy people can't operate on spontaneity. In order to honor work time, family time and everything else, you need to get up close and personal with your day-planner.

At the start of each week survey your schedule and remind yourself what is coming up. This will help you anticipate challenges, block time for important tasks, and even adjust your schedule on really busy days.

At the end of each work day spend 10 minutes planning your *next* day. While you're at it, scan the next two days and get clear about what is on the horizon. If you wait until the start of your day you'll get pulled in too many directions. That's what happens to busy people. Take 10 minutes to set your priorities for the next day and gain a small head start even before you leave the office.

As part of this process plan your days off ahead of time too, especially if you have family members who are itching to spend time with you. Give them something to look forward to. Before the end of your days off, plan what you'll do on your next days off, at least in part. Make dinner reservations for you and your spouse, plan an afternoon of fun with your kids, book a tee time with your friends. By having something fun to look forward to it will give you and your family energy through the work week.

## 2) Involve your family in fundraising when you can

Think of all the benefits you get from volunteering for Torch Run and spending time with Special Olympics athletes. There's a good chance your friends and family will gain something from it too. Whenever possible include them in your efforts. Show your spouse what it is about the organization that makes you so

committed. Teach your children the value of giving back and allow them to experience, first hand, the impact you are making for this special community.

Invite friends and family to fundraising events in your community, bring them along to sporting events when you can, and make at least part of your fundraising hours a family affair.

## 3) Keep your energy up

Stress is inevitable. How you recover from it is a choice. When life gets busy we're quick to skip workouts, eat less healthfully and forgo sleep. The three resilience practices that will keep you strong and energized against stress and long hours like no amount of coffee or energy drinks ever could.

I don't need to explain the values of physical health to a group of law enforcement officers do I? No matter how crazy your schedule gets keep your fitness, nutrition and rest as a key priority. Take your breaks, go for a walk, get your exercise. Don't stress about the time away from the workload. Productivity boosts significantly after exercise so you'll get it done.

Eat healthfully *most* of the time, drink lots of water, and at the end of the day allow yourself a good night's rest. I know it's not always possible but do your best to keep the physical machinery running at optimum so you have the energy and vitality to juggle whatever comes your way.

## 4) Honor all priorities

This article addresses work, life and fundraising because all they're all important in your life. With your busy schedule it's probably not always easy to give each the attention they deserve, but it's necessary to do what you can. Identify the key commitments in your life - work, fundraising, fitness, family, and fun - and

(Continued on page 9)



(Continued from page 8)

aspire to give each even a bit of your time each week.

Remember that when the schedule is full you will default to tasks that are urgent and in- your -face, which usually means work and fundraising get the lion's share of your time and energy. That annoying work-related mosquito buzzing around your face is so much harder to ignore than the loyal, loving family dog curled in the corner.

Prioritize even small amounts of time to activities revolving around personal health and family time. A short walk or run will keep you on track mentally and physically until you have time to do more. A five-minute focused phone conversation with your son or daughter can do a lot to ease the disappointment that you're working late. Fifteen minutes of quiet one-on-one time with your spouse at the end of the day can be enough to re-connect amidst a busy schedule. You've got a lot on your plate. The good news is the pieces of pie don't always

have to be perfectly equal to restore a sense of balance.

Be proud of the work that you do. The time you give to your job in law enforcement as well as your commitment to Law Enforcement Torch Run fundraising is important work. And since you are the common denominator in making both of those things happen, do what is necessary – even in small steps – to keep yourself and your family happy and healthy along the way.

*Michelle Cederberg is a Certified Professional Speaker, life coach and author based in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. For more information and ideas for finding better balance visit her website at [www.worklifeenergy.com](http://www.worklifeenergy.com) and attend her presentation at the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics International Conference November 3-5, 2011 in Calgary.*

## Pounding Pavement for 30 years Law Enforcement Officers Support Unwavering By Donna Zimmerman

Mission, Kansas --Hundreds of officers, thousands of miles, and bazillions of t-shirts later...the Kansas Law Enforcement Torch Run® recently finished celebrating their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of raising awareness and funds for Special Olympics.



Athlete Brian Stauffer presents Chief LaMunyon with a thank you on behalf of the SOKS athletes for 30 years of LETR

It started in Wichita, Kansas, with six runners and has ballooned into an international grassroots movement. In 2010, over 85,000 officers from 40 countries raised \$38 million for Special Olympics athletes around the world.

In 1981, Police Chief Richard LaMunyon asked his Wichita Police Department to think of ideas to help Special Olympics. Officer Don "Barney" Ipsen approached Chief LaMunyon about a Torch Run with members of the running club (of which LaMunyon was also a member). The Chief thought it was a great idea. Ipsen set out to find officers and recruited Jack Leon, Jan McCloud, Walt Kuykendall and Robert G Bachman. Kirk Miles, Executive Director of

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

SOKS, supplied the torch and also agreed to run.

Chris Hahn, President & CEO of Special Olympics Kansas remembers being at the Summer Games in 1981. "Standing here 30 years ago, watching as the torch and six runners entered the stadium for the first time, I wonder if we ever thought LETR would become such a vital part of Special Olympics," Hahn said. "We can't thank the officers and their families enough for all the support they have given through the years. Their sharing of time and talents has allowed SOKS to offer every year a quality, well-rounded program to the athletes. What a difference the LETR has made."

Returning for the 30<sup>th</sup> year, LaMunyon served as Honorary Chair of Kansas LETR and Leon, McCloud, Bachman, and Kuykendall participated in the traditional Torch Run.

Miles was out of the country and Ipsen is deceased. Symbolically, the four original runners represented the four corners of Kansas, held four torches together to light just one, which was then used to open the games.

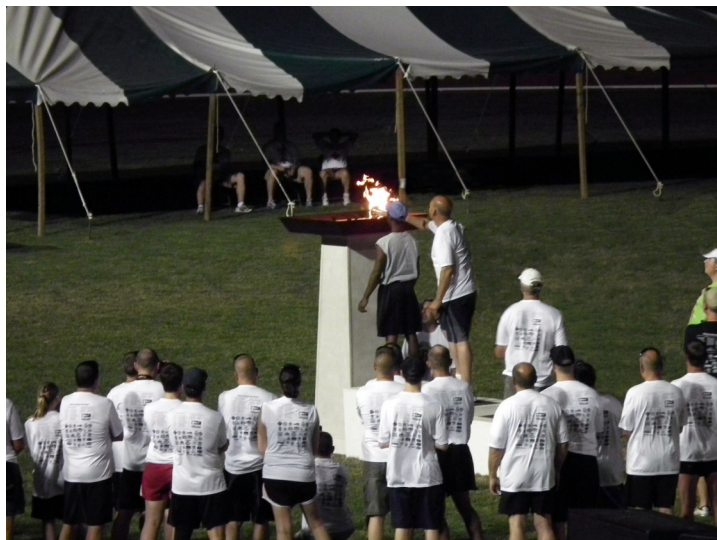


**Original runners with the 2011 torch** – Left to Right, Jack Leon, Bob Bachman, Walt Kuykendall and Jan McCloud, original runners in 1981. They symbolically stand in a square and represent the four corners of Kansas. The four torches then lighted one torch that was used to open the Summer Games.

Additionally, Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback issued a proclamation declaring June 3, 2011 official "**Law Enforcement Torch Run Day**" in Kansas and commended the Kansas Law Enforcement Torch Run for their commitment to Special Olympics Kansas, and their continued efforts in supporting children and adults with intellectual disabilities. "Through their example, others are inspired to reach their personal best and to reflect the Special Olympics spirit of skill, courage, sharing and joy."

Unique in the 30th run, officers boarded a Union Pacific train that assisted in carrying the torch to the Opening Ceremonies of Summer Games. "What started as a flicker of hope for Special Olympics has become a roaring flame of stability for SO athletes world-wide," said LaMunyon.

Mark Malick, Special Agent, Kansas Bureau of Investigation, and former State Director of Kansas LETR stated, "I have been involved for 26 of the 30 years of LETR. I do not know an officer whose life has not been changed by their participation. Athletes refer to us as their heroes, but in reality, they are the heroes for the courage they exhibit."



**Most Inspirational Athlete** Courtney Davis lights the cauldron for the Summer Games

From a single run, LETR has become a year-round fund and friend raising initiative. Other events of LETR include Polar Plunge®, Truck Convoy, Tip-A-Cop, Dodgeball and Sand Volleyball Tournaments, Cops-on-Top, Run WITH the Law, Popcorn Standoff and golf tournaments.

For more information about the Kansas Law Enforcement Torch Run contact Jana Fornelli, [Fornelli@kssso.org](mailto:Fornelli@kssso.org) or [www.kansastorchrun.org](http://www.kansastorchrun.org) or 913.236.9290.



## **The Law Enforcement Torch Run® Final Leg for the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles**

**By Roberta Abner**

On September 14, 2011, Special Olympics International announced that Los Angeles was selected as the host for the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games. The Southern California Law Enforcement Torch Run Director, Chief Roberta Abner, from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and many other law enforcement officers were at the Staples Center event in Los Angeles for the big announcement.

Los Angeles is honored for the opportunity to serve as the host in 2015 for World Summer Games. As so eloquently stated by Southern California representatives, "In a city full of movie stars and sports stars, Special Olympics athletes will be the stars of this show." Southern California LETR plans to have the Final Leg run throughout the state of California with ceremonies that include some bordering states.



**Southern California LETR Council Members at the press event to announce Los Angeles as the host of the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles.**



## The Law Enforcement Torch Run® Final Leg for the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Greece By Michael Teem, Final Leg Team Captain

The Special Olympics World Summer Games took place from June 25<sup>th</sup> to July 4<sup>th</sup> in Athens, Greece, the birthplace of the modern Olympic Games in 1896. The opportunity for Special Olympics athletes to travel from around the world to beautiful and historic Greece to display their talents in a wide variety of sporting events was very exciting, and you could feel the energy and confidence any time athletes were gathered to compete or fellowship together.

This same excitement and energy was most evident as well in the 141 members who comprised the 2011 Final Leg Team. The Unified Final Leg of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR), representing the cumulative and collective efforts of Torch Runners the world over, is the Torch Run's best connection with the global Special Olympics movement and provides the opportunity for 10 Special Olympics athletes to serve as Torch Runners and Guardians of the Flame of Hope.

The 2011 edition of the LETR Final Leg marked the 13<sup>th</sup> World Games dating back to 1987 in which law enforcement officers representing Torch Run Programs around the world gathered to raise tremendous awareness for Special Olympics and the World Games. The 2011 Final Leg Team—representing 79 Special Olympics and LETR Programs, consisted of 89 law enforcement officer runners, 10 incredible Special Olympics athletes, 10 running team leaders, and 32 support and documentation personnel—and what a great Team it was!!

For the second time in Final Leg history, the Final Leg Team was on site and participated in the Flame Lighting Ceremony in Athens on June 9<sup>th</sup>. It was a very special occasion and an honor for all members of the Team to see the Flame ignited by the rays of the sun. Several athletes from Special Olympics Hellas (Greece) took part in the ceremony and many members of Team Hellas were present to enjoy the events of the



**Athlete Panagiotis Koutatzis from Greece**

*(Continued on page 13)*





(Continued from page 12)

day. Following the lighting of the Flame of Hope, the Final Leg Team conducted a Torch Run in Athens, ending at Zappeion Palace to great cheers, photos and fellowship among the Team members. It was easy to see that this Final Leg Team had what it took to deliver the message of Special Olympics throughout Greece over the next two weeks!



On June 10<sup>th</sup>, the Team split into three parts to cover three distinctive and independent routes:

Route 1 was assigned to cover Eastern Greece, travel into Turkey with a final destination of Istanbul, and then return to Athens to cover four islands near Athens.

Route 2's mission was to cover Western Greece, to include the islands off the west coast as well as the Peloponnese region.

Route 3 embarked on a rugged, nautical journey to cover Cyprus, Crete, and many other Greek islands before returning to Athens.

From June 10-24, the Final Leg Team did a phenomenal job of delivering the powerful and inspirational message of Special Olympics to tens of thousands of people. Our mission was also to raise awareness for the World Summer Games and encourage everyone to support the Games. With competition events and venues being mainly in the Athens area, we had the opportunity to take the Games and the spirit of Special Olympics to the people in the far reaches of Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey—and that is exactly what we did! I feel that the Team and Final Leg event exceeded our goals and expectations!

The true leaders and motivators of our Team were the 10 Special Olympics athletes who were selected to participate. They spoke at every event, they carried the torch together in a unified effort with officers every step of the way, and they ran at the front of the running pack for 16 straight days. With the athletes leading the way, the Final Leg Team conducted over 130 ceremonies during this two-week period. At every ceremony an



Entire Final Leg Team

(Continued on page 14)

*(Continued from page 13)*

athlete and officer gave a speech from the heart about Special Olympics to help convey our message. Every ceremony attendee, and certainly every Final Leg Team Member, went home a better person, blessed with a very powerful and enriching experience thanks to the Special Olympics athletes on the Team and the personal message they delivered to all.



We were very impressed and encouraged by the receptions we received wherever we went! The people of Greece, Cyprus, and places visited in Turkey were excited to have the Flame of Hope visit their town and they turned out to line the streets and be a part of the festivities at the ceremonies. The Team was usually treated to big crowds and lots of Greek music and dancing, which enticed most Team members to participate in following the official part of the ceremony. My how our athletes could dance up a storm!

We all found Greece to be most beautiful, with more variety than expected. Of course the Greek isles and coastlines were incredible, but so too were the mountains of Greece to the north and the inland areas filled with history, ancient ruins, and beautiful scenery.

After two challenging weeks of long days with lots of running and ceremonies, all three routes converged together in Athens on June 24<sup>th</sup> to re-unify the three routes and Flames into one. The entire Final Leg Team ascended the Acropolis to the site of the Parthenon for a well-attended Flame Arrival Ceremony in Athens. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, the Final Leg Team conducted a unique Torch Run relay event with nine different stops. At each stop an officer and athlete were positioned with a new torch to capture the flame and lead the entire Team on its way to the next stop. Our running concluded when we arrived back at Zappeion Palace adjacent to the Marble Stadium, the site of the Opening Ceremonies as well as the 1896 Olympic Games. Every member of the Final Leg Team will always remember this moment in time as each athlete stepped forward to express their feelings and emotions about what they had experienced during their Final Leg journey.

On the evening of June 25<sup>th</sup>, the entire Final Leg Team was prominently positioned on the Main Stage as the Flame of Hope arrived by chariot to ignite the cauldron following the traditional athlete relay with the Flame. It was a magical moment for all attendees! The Team enjoyed staying on the stage during the athlete processional out of the stadium; there were lots of handshakes, high fives, and hugs with thousands of athletes as they departed and prepared for competition!

*(Continued on page 15)*



(Continued from page 14)

I want to thank all members of the Final Leg Team, including a tireless support team and outstanding documentation team, for their passion, determination, dedication and perseverance over the course of a demanding Final Leg. The 10 running team leaders set a wonderful tone and provided direction and leadership to their individual running teams. Special thanks to Stelios Konstantinidis, Torch Run Manager for the Games



**Final Leg Ceremony on the island of Rhodes with Host Town athletes and athletes from Team USA and other countries.**

Organizing Committee (GOC), and his GOC Team for all of their great work on the logistics and routes to pave the way for a successful event! And finally, a very special thanks and appreciation for the athletes on the 2011 Final Leg Team—they were truly our leaders, inspiration, and friends throughout our journey. I hope you enjoy reading the profiles and quotes from the athletes that are a part of this edition of The Guardian!

It was a powerful and beautiful thing to witness and experience—officers and athletes from all over the world, at first strangers, coming together with the power of Special Olympics in their hearts and with the purpose of influencing and motivating others—to find that they themselves are transformed and changed individuals with a new set of life-long friends! I know that the legacy of the 2011 Final Leg will continue to grow in the years ahead as the officers and athletes on the Final Leg Team take the experience they were given and significantly expand their level of involvement, look for leadership opportunities, and raise even more money in support of the wonderful athletes of Special Olympics!





**The Law Enforcement Torch Run® Final Leg  
for the 2011 Special Olympics World  
Summer Games in Greece**



**Final Leg Team A**



**Final Leg Team on Crowded Street on the Island of  
Corfu, Greece**



# The Law Enforcement Torch Run® Final Leg for the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Greece



Special Olympics North Carolina Athlete Zach Commander Celebrates the Torch Run!



Final Leg Team Delivers the Flame of Hope to the Acropolis in Athens

# Final Leg Athlete Profiles

## GREECE

### Panagiotis Koutatzis



Panagiotis has been a Special Olympics athlete for seven years. Initially, he trained in aquatics and for the past three years he has been training in cycling. Over these years he has participated in several National and Regional Games where he has finished well. He is a student in a Private Special School, where he is specialized in demodernization. He also learned how to play the "bouzouki," a traditional Greek instrument and he enjoys dancing traditional Greek dances. He was a Torch Runner for the Paralympic Games in Athens in 2004.

**"The 2011 Final Leg has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It has given me a chance to share the culture of Greece and bring the message of Special Olympics through the Flame of Hope. I am thankful for law enforcement officers who give their time to help people like me."**

### Athanasios Lagios



Athanasios has been training with Special Olympics Hellas in Badminton for three years. He participated in two National Games and the 2010 European Games in Warsaw. He is a student of the Special School where his specialization is gardening. One of his best experiences prior to the Final Leg is when he had the opportunity to participate in the Torch Run in Krakow, the Host Town for Greece for the 2010 European Games.

**"It is a big honor to run with the Flame of Hope in my home country. The love that I feel and the warmth from the people in each city that welcomes us will stay in my heart forever. All of the officers made me feel one with the rest of the Team and I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart."**

# Final Leg Athlete Profiles

## GREECE

### Panagiotis Tourountzis



Panagiotis is a 27-year-old young man who comes from a big family. He lives in Thessaloniki with his older brother, Theodoros. He is a student in a Center of Special Education, in the Department of Geotechnical Services and Wine Production. He is very fond of sports and he is training in athletics, cycling and bowling. He has participated in many Regional and National Special Olympics Games. He is an independent person; he uses public transportation and takes care of himself and his home. He is a very kind, polite and social young man who likes spending time with his family and friends.

**"This event was the best experience ever! I liked that I visited so many places which I didn't know before and had a great time. I met so many police officers and they are now my friends. I joked with them even though we did not speak the same language. They really cared about me!"**

## HONG KONG

### Wai Yip Tam (Sam)



Sam has taken part in swimming in many Special Olympics competitions such as the 1999 Special Olympics World Summer Games. Currently he is working as an Administrative Assistant in Watson's Athletic Club. With the exposure provided by Special Olympics, Sam has participated in many Athletic Leadership Programs (ALPs) including the Global Youth Summit and Global Athlete Congress since 2003. He was also chosen as 2007-2009 Special Olympics International Global Messenger. In the future, he will actively contribute his substantial experience in promoting local ALPs, aiming to train more athletes for their promotion of the Special Olympics movement and their contribution to the society.

**"These three weeks have been a great journey in my life. I believe that all people like me, with intellectual disabilities, can complete these tasks and that we are the same as everyone else in the world. The Final Leg is not the end of a journey, but it is the beginning!"**



# Final Leg Athlete Profiles

## MARYLAND, USA

### Adam Hays



Adam actively participates in numerous Special Olympics - Maryland (SOMD) sports including cycling, soccer, downhill skiing and floor hockey. A graduate of Frederick Community College, he has been involved with Special Olympics for nearly 15 years and has been running in the Torch Run Relay since 2003. He is the first and only athlete to be named a Torch Run Ambassador for SOMD. Currently, Adam works as an administrative assistant at SOMD's headquarters. He can also be seen at various fundraisers, including the MSP Polar Bear Plunge, where he participates as a 'Super Plunger.'

**"I had a wonderful time in Greece. The fantastic memories, all the gifts, and the friendships will last forever. I will always remember this opportunity and have more passion about the LETR than ever. I also came up with a new acronym for LETR: 'Let's Eat, Then Run!'"**

## NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

### Joshua Frost



Joshua Frost is a Special Olympics - Australia athlete in the Sydney West, New South Wales Region. Joshua participates in three sports: athletics, bocce and tenpin bowling. His previous achievements include receiving two gold medals, a silver medal and a bronze medal in athletics at the National Games 2006, along with two silver medals and a gold medal in Bocce at the National Games 2010. Since receiving his ALPs training in 2009, Joshua has given multiple speeches regarding Special Olympics - Australia at the Goulburn Police Academy and Merrylands Rotary club to name a few. Joshua has been working at McDonald's for the last ten years and is very passionate about the Parramatta Eels Rugby League Team.

**"When I started this trip I knew no one, but now I have lots of new friends and enjoyed the time bonding with them. We are now a unified family and not just a team. This was an experience and adventure that I will never forget!"**



# Final Leg Athlete Profiles

## NORTH CAROLINA, USA

### Zach Commander

Zach Commander, 39, of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, has been involved in Special Olympics since he was 12-years-old. He has participated in many sports over the years but currently is active in alpine skiing, basketball, soccer and volleyball. Zach became a Sargent Shriver Global Messenger in 1993. He is the athlete representative on the NC Law Enforcement Torch Run® Committee. Zach has worked for Applebee's Restaurant in Elizabeth City for 14 years. He has three children ages 18, 12 and 5. One of his proudest Special Olympics moments was when he and his son won gold medals on the same volleyball team at the state-level 2008 Special Olympics NC Summer Games.



**"The Final Leg has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience for me. Being a competing athlete is great, but I love being a Torch Runner! I have formed a special bond with athletes and officers from all over the world. One thing that really stands out is the reception that we, the athletes, received from the Greek people. And the Greek food was great!"**

## ONTARIO, CANADA

### Stephanie Smith

Stephanie Smith has been an active athlete for 15 years. She participates in many sports such as alpine skiing, snowshoeing, softball, floor hockey, 5-pin bowling, figure skating, track & field, and swimming. She has won many medals in numerous competitions. Stephanie has always been determined to participate in as many community-based Torch Runs as possible and also likes to help out with the Junior/Youth All-Sport Program. Her family is very supportive of her involvement in sports and with Special Olympics. Stephanie's favorite Torch Run memory is receiving the 2009 Rob Plunkett Memorial Award. Her proudest achievement - winning 3 medals at the 2010 National Summer Games.



**"This Torch Run has meant a lot to me because I have met all kinds of different people who have been inspired by my speech. I feel accepted by all the Torch Run Team members. It's been an amazing experience for me that I won't soon forget. I have felt great by all the love and caring that people have given me on this trip."**

# Final Leg Athlete Profiles

## PARAGUAY

### Luis Medina



Luis Medina has participated in Special Olympics since he was eight years old. His parents, Luis Aguilera Allende and Aidee Medina de Aguilera are his biggest fans! For the past 15 years Luis has participated in a variety of sports including basketball, swimming, athletics, tennis, artistic gymnastics and volleyball. Additionally, he participates in the different events of the Athlete Leadership Programs. In 2007, Luis participated in the World Games in Shanghai, China, in artistic gymnastics. In Paraguay, Luis had the honor to be a part of the ceremony of the lighting of the cauldron in 2009 and as runner in the Torch Run of 2009 and 2010.

**"I ran with Route 2 throughout Western Greece. We received warm welcomes at all the cities we visited. I have made my dream come true, the dream that I would carry the Flame of Hope for the World Games!"**

## WISCONSIN, USA

### Carolyn Voelker



Carolyn Voelker lives in Thorp, Wisconsin, and has been involved in Special Olympics for 20 years. She competes in the sports of bowling, cross-country skiing, athletics, and bocce, and a member of the Athletic Leadership Programs. She has successfully participated in three World Games. She is an avid runner and is able to train independently. She is currently employed at a Child Care Center and Preschool and enjoys her time working with the young children. She has a special ability of connecting with them as well as being able to communicate with people of all ages. She comes from a large family and looks forward to spending time with them. Carolyn loves spreading the message of Special Olympics to everyone she meets!

**"During the Final Leg, I became more confident and independent than ever before. I felt so happy and excited to be a part of one big team. I never knew this was possible and it is an experience I will never forget!"**

## Europe/Eurasia Legacy and Development Torch Run Conference

By Jeremy Adams, Western European Regional Coordinator

Malta was the venue for the 2nd Europe/Eurasia Legacy and Development Torch Run Conference, which was held on September 2-3, 2011.

Delegates, both police officers and Special Olympics staff from Estonia, Latvia, Gibraltar, Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Belgium, Hungary, Czech Republic, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, Poland, Netherlands, Cyprus, USA and Malta gathered on the beautiful Mediterranean Island of Malta for the Torch Run conference, which was supported by the European Union and the LETR Executive Council.

The conference was coordinated by the European/Eurasia Torch Run Advisory Council, which is co-chaired by SOEE/SO Ireland volunteer, Claire Kennedy, and Western European Regional Coordinator, Jeremy Adams.

The conference was an opportunity to promote, introduce or enhance a Torch Run program to a number of countries. A number of presentations offered advice on how to do just this.

Kennedy, Adams and their fellow Advisory Council colleagues were delighted with the conference and the feedback received from the delegates. Advisory Council member Jacek Hachulski was encouraged with the expression of interest from a number of countries including Estonia, Latvia and Hungary and he and other Advisory Council members will travel to Latvia to offer support to a number of Eastern European countries in establishing a Torch Run program.

Kennedy and Adams added that they were delighted to see so many countries represented, including representatives from the LETR Executive Council, Bill Bufford and Mike Teem, who shared their experiences with colleagues.

Special thanks goes to Special Olympics Malta, who really laid on a great conference venue and hospitality, as well as involving a number of Malta Special Olympics athletes.



The conference was closed with a Torch Run involving delegates and a Special Olympics Malta athletes delegation, using the Torch that was presented to Special Olympics Malta/Maltese Police by the Advisory Council.

Look for more Torch Run programs being involved during 2012!

Thank you Malta for a great experience!





## 9th Annual Oklahoma Cops on Doughnut Shops “A Sweet Success”

By Jennifer Lightle, Special Olympics Oklahoma



Mounted Patrol at CODS

Law Enforcement agencies across Oklahoma participated in an old fashioned stake-out at the Krispy Kreme Doughnut Shops in Oklahoma City and Tulsa this past June. Flashing lights, squad cars and officers drew attention to a good cause...the annual **Cops on Doughnut Shops** fundraiser. The event raised some serious *dough* for Special Olympics Oklahoma. More than twenty-five law enforcement agencies from around Oklahoma participated in this one-day event. Krispy Kreme Doughnuts provided incentives such as free

doughnuts, coffee and T-shirts for donations to Special Olympics Oklahoma.

This event has turned into a full day of fun for the entire family. Activities included displays of patrol cars, motorcycles, armored vehicles, Mobile Command Centers, mounted patrols, Beat the Heat police cars, rollover simulators, police robots and many other cool law enforcement gadgets. Kids walked away with coloring books, trading cards, stickers, tattoos and balloons.



Multi Agencies of Oklahoma LETR  
Working Together at CODS 2011

## Final Leg

By Jennifer Lightle, Special Olympics Oklahoma

Oklahoma LETR was excited to have our very own Lieutenant Charles Avery, Oklahoma County Sheriff Office, and Sergeant Shawn Byrne, Oklahoma City Police Department, represent Oklahoma in the Final Leg for the Special Olympics World Summer Games, Athens 2011. Avery was a runner and Byrne was a photographer in this year's Final Leg. This was Lieutenant Avery's first



Sergeant Shawn Byrne, Oklahoma City Police  
Department (Photographer- Final Leg, Greece)

Final Leg experience. "I had no idea the impact that officers personally had on the athletes. Even more of a surprise to me was the affect the athletes had on the officers," Avery 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 carrying the Special Olympics Torch and Flame of Hope™ to the Opening Ceremonies of the Special Olympics World Summer Games.



Lieutenant Charles Avery, Oklahoma  
County Sheriff Office (Final Leg, Greece)  
hugging an athlete on the route



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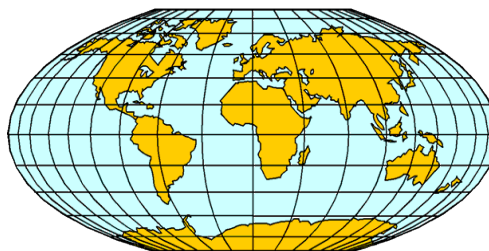
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