

Summer Edition

The Guardian

The Newsletter of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® Executive Council



Presented by:
Bank of America



Special Olympics
WORLD GAMES
LOS ANGELES 2015

Inside this issue:

<i>Chairman's Corner</i>	3
<i>Law Enforcement Torch Run 2015 International Conference</i>	4
<i>New County Fire Services go over the top for Special Olympics</i>	5, 6
<i>From Howard County, Maryland to Faraway Places Around the World, the Flame of Hope Continues to Burn Brightly</i>	7, 8
<i>Hawaii Law Enforcement Take the Plunge</i>	9, 10
<i>In Memorium</i>	11
<i>Law Enforcement Torch Run Connecting People in Lithuania</i>	12, 13
<i>Law Enforcement Torch Run Worldwide Success</i>	14

Chairman's Corner

Welcome to the 2015 summer edition of the Guardian Newsletter. Torch Runners around the world continue to strive toward greater excellence as only they can. Record Polar Plunge® activities in many areas of the world have paved the way to a summer that is no less filled with excitement and unique opportunities.

The Unified Relay Across America (URAA) will unite citizenry, athletes, and law enforcement in an unprecedented initiative to raise awareness for Special Olympics. Although focused within the United States, the URAA will send a message of unification and support throughout the world for those with intellectual disabilities. Starting on the East Coast and traveling through all fifty states, the URAA will converge on Los Angeles, California and hand off the Flame of Hope to the LETR Final Leg Team on July 10, 2015. The Team of Unified Law Enforcement Officers will then complete the journey as they run through California communities for nearly two weeks before delivering the Flame of Hope to the Opening Ceremony of the 2015 World Summer Special Olympic Games back in Los Angeles.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has made the URAA and Final Leg come to fruition, as well as those all around the world who continue to carry the Flame of Hope into the hearts of so many.

Also, don't forget to find your way to the Bahamas in October for the LETR International conference where we will celebrate these great successes and so much more!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ricka Smith", enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN
2015 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**
Atlantis Resort, Paradise Island, Bahamas



The Royal Bahamas Police Force and Special Olympics Bahamas is proud to host the 2015 Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) International Conference. Join us in celebrating the 34th year of Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics. Approximately 1,500 law enforcement officers from all corners of the globe will join together in the Bahamas to experience one of the world's most fascinating islands.

The 2015 Conference will be held, October 1 - 3, at the Atlantis Resort, Paradise Island, which is one of the most beautiful islands in the Bahamas. The iconic Royal Towers are most reflective of the myth of Atlantis featuring grand architecture, artwork and design. The Beach Towers deliver a true Caribbean feel in a laid back environment and the Coral Towers which are centrally located features relaxed accommodations in a tropically casual atmosphere. Take advantage of the colorful atmosphere and enjoy the numerous amenities such as the Dolphin Cay, Water Park, Water Adventures, Marine Habitat, Golf, Spa, Entertainment and other activities. All while enjoying the blues and spirituals which are musical traditions of the Bahamas and is woven deeply into the fabric of daily life. Experience all of this while networking, sharing and learning from other Torch Run programs and law enforcement officers from around the world.

Just over the bridge from Paradise Island is the city of Nassau, which is the capital and the largest city of the Bahamas. Here you will experience great food, music and one of the most culturally and historically-rich destinations.

Bahamas LETR Director, Acting Superintendent Dellareece Ferguson of the Royal Bahamas Police Force, stated "Bahamians love meeting new people and making friends. We are ready for you to come and enjoy what we have to offer. The conference is loaded with information, sessions and networking opportunities to enhance your Torch Run program".

With attendees expected from various countries, the LETR International Conference encourages all attendees to mingle, share and learn from one another to improve their local Torch Run programs. The Conference will build public awareness and continue to change the lives of people with intellectual disabilities through Special Olympics.

Check out the 2015 International Law Enforcement Torch Run Conference website for up-to-date information on transportation, Saturday unified events, concurrent sessions, general sessions and a lot more at www.lettr.org.



**ROYAL BAHAMAS
POLICE FORCE**
Working Together For A Safer Bahamas

ALWAYS DIAL 919 IN EMERGENCIES

New Castle County Fire Services go over the top for Special Olympics

By: Jon Buzby, Special Olympics Delaware

The New Castle County fire companies have been involved in a variety of roles with Special Olympics Delaware for more than 40 years. In addition to providing static displays at events, volunteer firefighters and ambulance crews have jumped into the frigid Atlantic Ocean in February as Polar Bears. They've put together teams to participate in Dodgeball Madness and the Plane Pull®, and have entered vehicles in the Truck Convoy. In addition, Aetna Hose, Hook and Ladder Company and its members have hosted the annual Reindeer Run since its inception nine years ago. It's a win-win relationship according to Christiana Fire Chief, Rich Perillo.

"Growth within ourselves will be made possible by simply partnering with such a great entity," said Perillo, who is also involved with Delaware Law Enforcement for Special Olympics as an officer with New Castle City Police Department. "The 'Raising Awareness while Raising Money' motto that has been spread with SODE is one that has embodied a similar mission with our service. We are seeing a greater benefit than ever imagined with the improvement and display of our 'label' as a Fire Service. Our memberships have regained, or in other cases, become introduced to an atmosphere of the pride and honor it takes to be successful . . . and success in providing an improvement to the quality of life of our citizens and visitors is paramount to our service."

On May 14, several firefighters rappelled down the side of the 300 Delaware Avenue Building as part of the fifth annual Over the Edge event. Firefighters have volunteered at the event in the past and a few have gone "Over" individually, but this is the first year the companies made it an organized effort to have multiple emergency and rescue volunteers rappelling.

"Several fire companies joined us in supporting SODE," said Wally Poppe, president of the New Castle County Volunteer Firefighters Association. "We have had a great turnout at our committee meetings from members of the fire service and ladies auxiliary who assisted us on the day of the event."

And their effort didn't end when they landed at the bottom of the building. The entire New Castle County Fire Service collectively became a sponsor of the event, joining TD Bank and Brandywine Realty Trust as presenting sponsors.



Rich Perillo—Harnessed for his "Over the Edge" rappel 17 stories down a building.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

“The Over the Edge event is described as: ‘Extreme Adventure . . . Extreme Community Impact,’” Perillo said. “There truly couldn’t be any better way to describe the service of Public Safety and Protection, which is provided by the dedicated members of the NCC Fire Service. There are very few things someone can do where courage and fear begin pumping through their veins at once. As public servants, we find ourselves aching for this very juice to provide our invaluable service, which can be compared to no other.”

All 21 individual New Castle County Fire Companies along with the Fire Chiefs, Fire Police, Firefighters and Ladies Auxiliary associations that make up the New Castle County Fire Service contributed to the sponsorship.

“This is really an unprecedented effort in terms of organizing several different groups that fall under one umbrella to sponsor an event,” said Lisa Smith, director of special events for Special Olympics Delaware. “What started out as having a handful of volunteer firefighters assisting at the Over the Edge event has turned into a countywide effort among all 21 companies to drum up support for Special Olympics. We can’t thank the men and women from the fire departments enough for their efforts and support. And not just at this one event this year, but all of the events they have been involved in over the years.”

There might not be any static truck displays at Over the Edge, but the presence of the men and women from the New Castle County Fire Service who were on hand as volunteers and edgers signified not only the continuation of a relationship that has spanned decades, but the beginning of one at an entirely different level that will hopefully flourish for years to come.

“Our plan is too continue to support and co-sponsor Over the Edge and to also increase our participation in other events during the year,” Poppe said.

From Howard County, Maryland to Faraway Places Around the World, the Flame of Hope Continues to Burn Brightly

By: John Newnan, Int'l LETR Executive Council Region II Coordinator



Serge Wotchou participating in the Howard County leg of the Maryland LETR on June 5, 2014, prior to his deployment overseas.

In June of 2014 during our annual Law Enforcement Torch Run® in Howard County, Maryland, Detective Serge Wotchou of the Howard County Police, approached me and told me that he was being activated and deployed overseas in the military and that he would like to get his unit involved in the Law Enforcement Torch Run. Wotchou serves as a Criminal Investigator in his military life, and he thought that this would be a perfect opportunity for his unit to engage in a worthwhile project for a great cause that is the charity of choice for law enforcement worldwide.

As a member of the International Law Enforcement Torch Run Executive Council, I was keenly aware of a military initiative that we were currently working on and quickly put Wotchou in contact with Chief Antonio Williams who is coordinating that effort on our Council. Williams is a retired Army First Sergeant and was a military police officer for 22 years who currently serves at the civilian Chief of Police for the U.S. Army Garrison in Hawaii.

Williams quickly connected with Wotchou and plans were made to assist

him with organizing a Torch Run at Al Udeid Air Base, which is a military base west of Doha, Qatar where Wotchou was being deployed. Williams arranged to have a torch donated as well as rounding up Torch Run t-shirts from around the world that would be utilized for the Torch Run on Al Udeid Air Base, a symbol of support from our worldwide law enforcement community for our troops. Upon arrival, Wotchou quickly went to work planning the Torch Run event, interrupted periodically by some missions in "unknown" places.

As all good planning goes, there was a minor quirk. Someone else had planned a run for the same day called the "Never Quit" run. This run is a very popular run



Serge proudly standing behind the Special Olympics Flame of Hope at their Torch Run on Al Udeid Air base on April 4, 2015.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

with some major sponsors. Woctchou's team pondered whether they should change the day of the Torch Run or maintain the date that they had already scheduled five months prior, April 4. After careful thought and consideration, the Torch Run date remained the same.

Woctchou had flyers printed out and distributed but he didn't really know what the turnout was going to be as he was setting up for the event at 5:00 a.m. on April 4. He had heard some rumblings that the Torch Run was too early and the second event, the "Never Quit" run, was scheduled for 9:00 a.m. that same day, and he was worried.

By 5:45 a.m. Woctchou's worries were gone as there were over 120 very excited and enthusiastic Torch Runners ready to take part in the event! Woctchou and his team handed out t-shirts, signed autographs on the t-shirts and talked about Special Olympics and supporting the great cause.

Woctchou's Deputy Director, Colonel Grinnell, lit the Torch held by Chief Master Sergeant Roberson of the 379th EFS. The run went well and everyone had a great time! Very importantly, through Woctchou's efforts, over 120 more people knew about the Law Enforcement Torch Run and our united efforts around the world to support Special Olympics and became new fans and supporters. In addition to all of this, Woctchou raised \$835.15 for Special Olympics in his efforts!

The Law Enforcement Torch Run is now becoming a yearly event at Al Udeid Air Base with the support of the command there. Woctchou passed the torch to the 379th EFSS as they have a permanent



Howard County Executive Allan Kittleman (left) and Chief Gary Gardner (right) welcoming Serge back home at the Howard County Leg of the Maryland LETR on June 4, 2015.

presence on Al Udeid Air Base and will ensure the legacy of the Torch Run lives on at the base.

On June 5, 2015, just a day after stepping off of a plane from his deployment, Detective Serge Woctchou, surprising everyone, made it his first priority to participate in the Howard County Leg of the Law Enforcement Torch Run.

THANK YOU Detective Serge Woctchou for your service to our country, to the police department and the citizens of Howard County, Maryland and to our citizens around the world with intellectual disabilities who are able to benefit from the life enhancing programs of Special Olympics because of efforts like yours!

Hawaii Law Enforcement Take the Plunge

By: Crystal Yamasaki, Special Olympics Hawaii

Each year hundreds of local law enforcement support Special Olympics athletes year-round. And for many, it's really so much more than "just a run."

Just one example of this is the three law enforcement officers who took the plunge for Special Olympics – literally. While Hawaii's weather may never drop below a balmy 60 degrees, on May 28, 2015, hundreds of residents were freezing for a reason at Special Olympics Hawaii's annual Polar Plunge® fundraiser.

This year's Special Olympics Hawai'i Polar Bear Plunge was held on March 28 and drew more than a hundred participants who each raised a minimum of \$100 to take the Polar Plunge and slide down Oahu's largest inflatable water slide into a pool of ice water. About a dozen daring participants registered as "Super Plungers." Each raised a minimum of \$1,000 and took the plunge 12 times within a 12-hour period. Among these Super Plungers were three law enforcement officers, Antonio Williams, Pete Cruz and Kurt Kendro who each raised \$3,860, \$2,500 and \$1,325 respectively.

Thanks to their efforts, this year's Polar Plunge was one of the most successful in the event's history, raising more than \$50,000 to go towards Special Olympics Hawaii's costs.

"Law Enforcement Torch Run is more than just an annual race, it is one of our largest and longest supporters of Special Olympics Hawaii," said Melissa Blake, director of Torch Run development. "Our relationship with the LETR is truly special to our organization and to each of our athletes who have been personally touched by the support and special relationships they share with our law enforcement."



(Continued on page 10)

Since 2008, the Polar Plunge has helped raise \$256,789 for local athletes.

Special Olympics unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports every day in Hawai'i. Through work in sports, health education and community building, Special Olympics is addressing inactivity, injustice, intolerance and social isolation by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities, which leads to a more welcoming and inclusive society.

Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Hawai'i Special Olympics movement has grown from a handful of athletes to more than 3,900 participants across the state. With the support of more than 7,500 coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics is able to deliver nine Olympic-type sports and more than 40 competitions throughout the year. There is never a fee for any athlete or family to participate in Special Olympics programs. For more information visit www.specialolympicshawaii.org.

(Photos courtesy of Special Olympics Hawaii)

Oklahoma Polar Plunge® 2015

By: Jennifer Lightle, Special Olympics Oklahoma

The polar vortex might have chilled the nation to the bone this past winter, but Oklahomans think real cold is running into a freezing body of water – maybe wearing a costume, maybe wearing just a swimsuit – submerging themselves in completely and then racing back out again with a brand new layer of icicles. Some might call that insanity. For the past 13 years, however, Special Olympics Oklahoma has called it the Polar Plunge.

What started with one plunge has now grown to 15 locations across the state.

For those more sensitive to insanely cold temperatures, there is also the Too Chicken

to Plunge option, where people can raise the \$75 minimum and take advantage of everything the event offers without having to brave the freezing water. The polar plunges in Oklahoma had over 1,301 plungers fling themselves into freezing water to raise a cool \$245,000 in 2015.



Tulsa Polar Plunge—Tulsa County Sheriff's Office won best costume!

IN MEMORIUM



Chief Floyd Simpson, Corpus Christi PD
Law Enforcement Torch Run Texas



Chief Chris Vinson, Highland Park PD
Law Enforcement Torch Run Texas



William "Winnie" Spence (1927-2015)
(Courtesy of Dan Cook/Cape Gazette)

William "Winnie" Spence (1927-2015)

Winnie created and then served in the role as Delaware's Torch Master from 1994 – 2014.

Winnie strongly felt that law enforcement officers should be running with a lit torch at all times. He wanted each officer to understand the importance of carrying the Special Olympics Flame of Hope. With multiple torches, Winnie proceeded to greet each torch runner every 2 miles with a freshly lit torch. He did that for 160 miles of the run each year, every year, for 21 years, until his recent passing at age 88.

In tribute to his efforts, Delaware has named their annual Torch-Runner of the Year award as the William "Winnie" Spence Torch Runner of the Year.

Law Enforcement Torch Run® is Connecting People in Lithuania

By: Vaiva Abramaviciute, Special Olympics Lithuania

On the 21st of May a small Lithuania city called Kazlu Ruda was surrounded by Special Olympics athletes and law enforcement agents. City streets were closed because of this special event, the Law Enforcement Torch Run, which connected not only special athletes, police officers and special agents, but also citizens of Kazlu Ruda.

Picture nr 1. Opening ceremony.

“This is a big honor to be the person running with the torch and spreading the news to everybody about the existence of Special Olympics,” says Police officer Gediminas.



Picture nr 2. Torch run in the streets of Kazlu Ruda city.

On the day of the event, the weather was rainy, but the streets were surrounded by local people who were showing their support by applauding and waving. In the closed Kazlu Ruda street more than 100 people were walking and running after the torch. The emotions of the run are memorable and very important for everybody who are involved in Special Olympics and also for everybody to hear about us.



This run was like an opening ceremony for the Lithuanian Special Olympics athletic championship, which inspired athletes to reach the best goals not only in the competitions, but also in their daily life.

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

“I am happy that Special Olympics is letting me to grow up in sport. In this way I am increasing my sport results. Also, it gives me the opportunity to see a world traveling to the competitions. I am trying to be involved in all the ways that Special Olympics is giving me; that’s why I was that athlete who ran with the torch leading police officers,” says athlete Rimvydas.

Picture nr 3. Special Olympics athletes who were running after the torch.



Law Enforcement Torch Run® Worldwide Success

By: Mark Musso, Special Olympics Missouri

The LETR continues to be the number one funding source for Special Olympics programs worldwide generating over \$500 million (US \$) since its inception. This is an incredible accomplishment thanks to the efforts of thousands of law enforcement officers. As we celebrate this milestone, it is helpful to review recent trends in the LETR.

The following statistics represent year/year comparison (2013-2012). As Programs complete their reporting for 2014, a similar analysis will be conducted. If your Program hasn't submitted your 2014 Survey, please do so immediately to ensure the recognition your law enforcement officers deserve.

Gross Overall Annual Increase = 9%

US Programs with Year/Year Increase = 67%

Canadian Provinces with Year/Year Increase = 42%

National Programs with Year/Year Increase = 56%

Total Overall Expense Percent = 22%

Expense Percent Range per Program = 0-47%

These stats prove that worldwide our efforts are exceptionally efficient with an average expense of 22%; resulting in 78% of all funds raised going directly to program services for Special Olympics athletes. Any special events that return over 70% to the program are considered well run.

Should we sustain a 9% growth rate, our worldwide total could be \$77 million by 2018, the year we celebrate Special Olympics' 50th anniversary.

Our collective efforts to keep expenses below 22% while growing our gross revenues will provide much needed funds to provide Special Olympics programming for 4 million Athletes worldwide. All these numbers prove the LETR is the largest grass-roots funding source for Special Olympics worldwide and all Law Enforcement should be commended for their collective efforts. From all Special Olympics Programs—THANK YOU!!!

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

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IACP Appointee

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Law Enforcement At-Large

Antonio Williams

Hawaii, LETR

Law Enforcement At-Large

Kurt Kendro

Hawaii, LETR

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Mike Peretti (chair)

Northern California, LETR

Special Olympics Athlete Appointee

Sam Tam

Special Olympics Hong Kong

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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

Richard Sheldon

Minnesota, 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 Casallenda

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, Do-
minica, Antigua, St. Lucia, St. Kitts &
Nevis, Puerto Rico, Grand Cayman,
Bahamas, Grenada, Trinidad & Toba-
go, Guadeloupe, Martinique, US Virgin
Islands, St. Maarten, Bonaire, Curacao,
Aruba, Haiti, Belize, Guyana, Montser-
rat, Suriname)

Bill Buford (Ret.)

Arkansas, LETR

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Oceania

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Region XV

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