

Winter Edition 2015

The Guardian

The Newsletter of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® Executive Council



**Law Enforcement Torch Run Conference
Atlantis, Nassau Bahamas**

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Cover Photo by Andrea Kramer

Chairman's Corner

Torch Runners,

As we bring 2015 to a close, we once again must look back upon a historic year and take pride in our achievements. Our movement is stronger than ever, and the support we provide those with intellectual disabilities and our Special Olympics programs remain unwavered.

This year, we executed a run across America, uniting a nation behind our cause and brought new energy to the Caribbean region, topping off the initiative with an unprecedented conference. We brought on new partners in Europe and extended our service through promoting success without fundraising, methods to further engage your Special Olympics program.

This has been a year of rebirth and with it brought many new faces to the Executive Council with seven new Torch Runners taking a seat at the leadership table. I look forward to working with them and each of you as we forge into 2016. Let us continue to serve with purpose and passion. Let us not lose focus of our mission. But this holiday season, take a moment to give thanks for each other, for what we do as Torch Runners makes a difference and is what Policing is all about.



Lieutenant Mike Peretti (Ret.)
Chair, Law Enforcement Torch Run
Executive Council

2015 Los Angeles Final Leg



An Outstanding Success By: John Newnan, Final Leg Team Captain

Over the course of 14 days, 3 routes, 119 ceremonies, 4,648 collective miles traveled, 157 collective miles run, untold awareness was created for Special Olympics, and a tremendous amount of excitement was generated for the 2015 Los Angeles World Games.

As a Final Leg Team, we were 124 members strong representing 48 U.S. states, 6 Canadian Provinces, 4 Australian states, and 23 other countries. Our Final Leg Team also represents a total of 96 different law enforcement agencies and 14 Special Olympics programs.



We were honored and excited to have six “new” countries represented on the Final Leg; Korea, Switzerland, Iceland, Bahamas, Trinidad & Tobago, St. Kitts & Nevis, and back after a considerable absence; Barbados, Italy, Netherlands and Jamaica.



Over two years of planning went into this Final Leg event, from our great California committee, our Council Committee and many others on the periphery; we were finally ready to come together as a Team.

We gathered together on July 12th at our Team welcome dinner in Sacramento as strangers from distant places around the globe, but all united in this one common cause. This cause transcends any differences in our cultures, our languages and even our policing methods. This cause has such amazing power that 14 days later in addition to a

very successful mission, memories and friendships were created that will surely last a lifetime.

There were so many highlights of the Final Leg event that I don't know where to begin. From an amazing kick-off at the state capitol in Sacramento with Governor Brown and Lt. Governor Newsome, to a run across the Golden Gate Bridge, working our way through wine country, down the coast, all the way to San Diego, through the desert, the hills and the valleys, thousands upon thousands of people heard our call; We are the Torch Run, the MIGHTY, MIGHTY Torch Run. Through this team's efforts there is no doubt, that today, there



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are many more fans and supporters of Special Olympics in California and around the world!

The motivation and inspiration for all of the Team's efforts on the Final Leg can be summed up in ten words; Daniella, Josh, Nigel, William, Brett, Jazmine, Dale, Josh, Cody and Jonathan, the 10 amazing Special Olympics athletes from around the world who led us every step of the way. To witness the

transformation in each and every one of them and that of the law enforcement members of the team as everyone bonded and became family was simply amazing!

Over the years, I have seen the Final Leg experience leave an indelible mark in the lives of hundreds of Final Leg team members. There are memories and friendship created that will surely last a lifetime. In fact, many describe the Final Leg experience

as life changing. The emotions and feelings of a Final Leg are so strong that there's an old Final Leg cliché, "if you haven't lived it, you can't explain it."



I'm sure each and every one of you have been affected positively in some way, shape or form by your Torch Run experiences just as the members of the Final leg Team have been in this event. The Torch Run and Special Olympics truly change the lives of individuals who become involved. Not just the athletes, but the Torch Runners, the coaches and the fans! My challenge to our Final Leg team members is for them to



share their experiences with anyone who will listen. Try to explain the Final Leg, the emotions, the inspiration, the motivation we received from the athletes, and the personal impact it had on them. By sharing these experiences we can make a difference by creating more fans and supporters for the movement!

Please visit the Final Leg website at www.lettr-finalleg.org to see photographs and videos of the 2015 Los Angeles Final Leg Torch run.

Be on the lookout for information on the 2017 Austria Final Leg being held March 8 to March 20, 2017. Planning is well underway for this event and we will be soliciting nominations for athletes and selection of officers from Torch Run programs around the world after the beginning of the year.

*Special Offering ...
With you in mind!*



We have special offers to explore
The Islands Of The Bahamas after the LETR Conference!

Contact Travel Associates for more details or to book at:

1-800-748-3302 or
boston@travelassociates.us



Event Information

The 2015 International Law Enforcement Torch run for Special Olympics Conference was held at the world famous Atlantis Resort, Paradise Island, Bahamas from September 30th - October 4th. Over 1200 LETR delegates and guests were treated to a wonderful experience, including but not limited to the hospitality and cuisine of the Bahamian people. The Bahamas Sports tourism Association were a Platinum Sponsor and they have extended a LETR/Special Olympics offering that ANYONE in our organization may avail if interested.

Featured Properties

Abaco Beach Resort & Marina



FROM \$220 per night*

Pelican Bay Resort



FROM \$124 per night

Flamingo Bay at Taino Beach Resort



FROM \$83 per night

More Event Information

Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) began in 1981 when Wichita, Kansas (USA), Police Chief Richard LaMunyon saw an urgent need to increase awareness of Special Olympics. Chief LaMunyon also saw it as an ideal way to involve local law enforcement personnel with the Special Olympics community. Thirty years later, that flicker has become a roaring flame of stability for Special Olympic Athletes worldwide. Since its inception in 1981, LETR has raised over 500 million dollars Worldwide in Support of Special Olympics Ontario.

*Restrictions apply call or email Travel Associates for details

The logo features a stylized white flame at the top. Below it is a circular emblem with a central figure and radiating lines. To the right of the emblem, the words "SPECIAL OLYMPICS" are stacked vertically. Below that, "UNIFIED RELAY" is written in a very large, bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom, "ACROSS AMERICA" is written in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font.

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EVENT
SNAPSHOT

**Largest
single
fundraising
event**

in Special Olympics history

\$4.2 million

Gross Revenue

\$1.75 million

Public donations

10,350 Participants

18,616 Donors

46 days (May 27 – July 10)

20,492 miles traveled

SPECIAL
OLYMPICS
**UNIFIED
RELAY**
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3

Kick-Off Celebrations

The Flame was lit in Athens, Greece and delivered to the United States via plane by Relay Promotional Partner, UPS.

The Welcoming Ceremony took place on May 26, 2015 in Washington, D.C. with simultaneous ceremonies in Augusta, Maine and Miami, Florida.



Flame Arrival in DC from Athens



Augusta, ME



Miami, FL



Washington, DC

Unprecedented Media Coverage

- ❖ The Flame of Hope garnered 3 billion media impressions
- ❖ Nearly 800 million social media impressions, by way of 45,000 posts by 17,000 users using #UnifiedRelay and #PassTheFlame
- ❖ 2.3 billion traditional media impressions
- ❖ 932 broadcast media stories – 603 unique
- ❖ 1,141 print media stories – 240 unique



Official Media Partners



4 Special Olympics







2015 SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD SUMMER GAMES

14 Special Olympics

WORLD GAMES ACTIVATION OPENING CEREMONY

The Opening Ceremony, directed by Emmy Award winner Debbie Allen and produced by FiveCurrents, was held in a sold-out Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum with 62,000 people in attendance, including family members and fans in the stands cheering on our athletes. First Lady Michelle Obama officially opened the Games, praising our athletes for their courage and determination, noting they were an example to the millions of people watching the Opening Ceremony in their living rooms.

On the eve of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ESPN helped promote inclusion in its programming by integrating Special Olympics athletes alongside celebrity talent throughout the evening. The three-hour live broadcast hosted by Robin Roberts, SportsCenter anchors Kevin Negandhi and Lindsay Czarniak along with Special Olympics Global Messenger Dustin Plunkett, included a line-up of stars including Stevie Wonder, Avril Lavigne, Nicole Scherzinger, O.A.R., Cody Simpson, J Balvin, Becky G, Cassadee Pope, 'Reach Up LA' theme song creator Siedah Garrett and appearances by Jimmy Kimmel, Eva Longoria, Ed Harris, Lauren Potter, Michael Phelps, Colin Farrell, Damian Lillard, Jamaal Charles, and Greg Louganis.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES LA 2015



The Special Olympics World Games were the largest sports and humanitarian event in 2015, with 6,500 athletes, 2,000 coaches, 10,000 volunteers and more than 500,000 spectators in attendance. Athletes competed in 25 Olympic-style sports at 27 venues, comprising 290 separate events.

Media coverage of the 2015 Special Olympics World Games, international and domestic, reached a historical height of awareness for the movement, reaching billions of people worldwide and generating over 20 billion media impressions through multiple mediums. Through our exclusive host broadcast partnership with ESPN, we were able to broadcast Opening Ceremony live to millions of viewers in the US and through ESPN networks and syndication, reaching more than 170 countries worldwide. More than 20.16 million people in the United States watched some part of ESPN's coverage, which included 38 hours of television coverage on ESPN, ESPN2, ABC and ESPN Deportes.

Having ESPN as the host broadcaster and the World Games staged in the U.S., it was critical that Special Olympics use these opportunities to change attitudes about people with intellectual disabilities and garner as much awareness and brand understanding as possible. Hundreds, if not thousands of hours went into researching the best stories, mapping the coverage, organizing interviews, and educating ESPN staff, as well as other members of the media registered to cover the World Games.

In addition, the World Games offered an opportunity to mobilize America to come together to celebrate differences and become unified in the spirit of respect and inclusion as they welcome Special Olympics athletes from throughout the world.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES LA 2015



Highlights of Opening Ceremony included First Lady Michelle Obama officially opening the Games and many inspiring memories including Jamaal Charles, a running back for the Kansas City Chiefs who revealed his personal story of overcoming adversity through sports and that he was once a Special Olympics athlete. In addition to the three-hour Opening Ceremony, ESPN coverage included a first-ever, daily, 30-minute prime-time World Games show featuring highlights, stories, interviews and "Up Close and Personal" profiles of the athletes. After public pleas for more coverage, these ESPN half hour shows were eventually expanded to full, one hour programs. In addition to the remarkable coverage that emanated from ESPN's headquarters, Rockin Roberts Production produced a one hour special leading up to the Games that aired 3 times. ESPN's features unit, along with Maria Shriver, produced a 30 for 30 special "Brave in the Attempt" on Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the origins of Special Olympics.

At the 2015 World Games, two types of Special Olympics Unified Sports programs were held: **Unified Sports competitions** and **Unified Sports Experiences**. Over the course of the World Games, over 1,300 people participate in 16 Unified Sports Experiences. These participants included Special Olympics athletes, professional athletes/former Olympians, corporate sponsors, celebrities, honored guests, coaches, volunteers, and fans. The 2015 World Games had more sports (25) and competitions (12,000) than any previous World Games. Additionally, 20% of events were Unified, which is the largest percentage of Unified in World Games history, with the offering of the first-ever Unified Triathlon and a Unified Half Marathon allowing the general public to participate.





Bank of America, thank you for your partnership. Without your tireless support these events would not have been possible!



Law Enforcement Torch Run Conference Atlantis, Nassau Bahamas

By: Rodney Seurer, LETR Director, Minnesota



Over a year ago Bahamas Law Enforcement Torch Run 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.”

From the moment you stepped off the airplane, you experienced the warmth and the love of the Bahamian people. Greeted by members of the Royal Bahamas Police Force coupled with the police escort to the Atlantis, Nassau, one knew that we were in for a remarkable and memorable event.

That wasn't all that the Royal Bahamas Police Force Commissioner Ellison Greenslade had planned for the attendees. To start the conference off, we experienced the hospitality with the liveliness and largest Bahamas Junkanoo celebration. Greeted by the most colorful costumes, music and a lively welcome, we danced to our hearts content and ate some of the most delicious Bahamian foods.



The conference was also highlighted by the Special Olympics Bahamas athletes who were our guest MC's throughout the conference. Their motivation, stories and heartwarming personalities enriched our souls and minds to continue the LETR/SO movement, so that other athletes may have a chance in life and showcase their abilities.

Motivation, Inspiration and Education continued throughout the conference with our breakout sessions. We appreciate those presenters for planning, organizing and presenting some of the most educational and inspirational breakout sessions.

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Prime Minister Perry Christie

We were all honored by the presence and the heartfelt speech of Bahamas' Prime Minister Perry Christie. Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to make an appearance at our conference.

The unified events and the Torch Run have always been one of the many pillars that support our conference and our mission. From the Atlantis Amazing Race (which was

dominated by the Minnesota contingency; "Bacon Bits") to the unified beach soccer to the Law Enforcement Torch Run. These events were able to raise funds and awareness for the Special Olympics Bahamas program, which provided funding for over 500 athletes to continue the growth of the program throughout the islands. You should all be proud of yourselves for your gracious support and commitment.

During the conference Hurricane Joaquin made land fall in the southern most islands of the Bahamas. Our prayers and thoughts go out to the families of those who resided in harm's way. We all know that the Royal Bahamas Police Force were not only taking care of the community during this natural disaster, they were also making sure that the conference attendees were well taken care of. On behalf of over 1,100 attendees, a HUGE THANKS to the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Bahamas Special Olympics and the community for a wonderful experience that we will never forget.



Bacon Bits Photo provided by Lynn Cronquist, MN LETR

Law Enforcement Torch Run



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The conference was also highlighted by the program awards, the Carion award, Athlete award and the Hall of Fame award.

The Executive Council Athlete Award - The recipient of this year's Executive Council Athlete Award from Tulsa, Oklahoma, Amy Wollmershauser, was recognized for her many contributions to the success of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® including having appeared in many local NBC, CBS, ABC, and FOX news programs to promote various LETR and Special Olympic events.

The John Carion "Unsung" Hero Award - Alan Keane, New South Wales; Shawn Byrne, Oklahoma; and David Ramer, Arizona were each recognized as individuals who have exhibited a substantive contribution to the Torch Run and Special Olympics in spirit, dedication and enthusiasm in an effective and unheralded fashion.



Richard LaMunyon Hall of Fame Award - Shown here with Chief Richard LaMunyon are 2015 Hall of Fame Inductees Joe Carlone, Connecticut and Richard Fernandez, Southern California (not pictured Costas Avgousti, Cyprus). Each were recognized for their exceptional leadership, commitment and dedication to excel our mission to new levels.

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Torch Exchange – The Torch has been passed to Arizona. We look forward to seeing you at the LETR International Conference held at the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel in Phoenix, Arizona USA September 15 - 17, 2016. Go to the official LETR website www.lettr.org for all the details. Position your cursor over the Links button on the main page and from the drop down menu click on the LETR International Conference website button.



Please go to www.lettr.org to view conference photos and videos and to receive all of your LETR updates.



Royal Bahamas Pop Band played throughout the conference during our General Sessions.

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outside the box !



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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

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Oklahoma, LETR

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GUAM

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Nevada, LETR

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Region IX

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Region X

Eastern Europe/Eurasia

Jacek Hachulski

Poland, LETR

Region XI

Canada

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

Rick Lucy

Region XII

East Asia

Vacant

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-
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