

# Triumph



Special Olympics New York • APRIL 2003

## Rockland's Hogan is a Top Irish American

*Magazine credits her involvement in Special Olympics.*

**N**ancy Hogan, a special education teacher and long-time Special Olympics coach from Rockland County, has been named one of the Top 100 Irish Americans by *Irish America* magazine.

Hogan, who has volunteered at local, sectional, state and international levels, was honored for her work on behalf of children and adults with mental retardation. Michael Flatley, creator of Riverdance and Lord of the Dance, was the Irish American of the Year.

"I'm floored. It's embarrassing, but in a good way," said Hogan. "I mean, Bob Newhart, Martin Sheen, Tim Shriver and Michael Flatley. I don't normally think of myself in the same category."

Hogan has volunteered with Special

Olympics for 17 years, and is certified locally, nationally and internationally as a competition director, sport director, coach and official.

"I love sports and I teach special education," Hogan said. "Special Olympics offers the best of both worlds. It's wonderfully fulfilling."

Walter Kopczuk, vice president of Program for Special Olympics New York, has worked closely with Hogan since 1986. He said the success of athletic training and competition relies almost entirely on the devotion of volunteers in the field.

"Nancy richly deserves any recognition she receives

that calls attention to her work on behalf of the athletes and their families," Kopczuk said. "We are very proud of the service she has provided." ■



Rob Fetter

## Tenor Tynan Lends His Support – and Voice – to Team New York

*Renowned singer, athlete and author becomes champion for the athletes.*

**F**amed Irish Tenor Dr. Ronan Tynan, Tourism Ireland's ambassador to the World Summer Games, has pledged his support to Team New York by producing a CD in honor of the athletes and agreeing to be the team's honorary coach.

The two-song CD includes "This is the Hour," an anthem Tynan wrote to honor Special Olympics athletes, and "The Mountains of Mourne," written by Percy French.

"For those who have not spent time with a Special Olympics athlete, or if you've never seen a competition, I encourage you to do so. It is one of the most inspiring things you can do," Tynan said. "I am honored that Special Olympics New York asked me to help them spread the word about these amazing athletes. It is a genuine thrill for me to be a part of the Special Olympics World Games in Ireland and in the United States."

During a recent concert at The College of St. Rose in Albany, Tynan introduced "This is the Hour" by telling his audience how inspired he was by Special Olympics athletes, and how worthy they are of support. He echoed his praise the following night at a fund-raising event in Manhattan sponsored by Prudential Financial.

"It is very clear from meeting



SONY Staff

## Wet Winter Wonderland at 2003 Winter Games

*Athletes muddle through the puddles.*

**T**here wasn't a lack of snow on the ground for the 2003 Winter Games – a problem Special Olympics New York has faced in the past. But there were a few very large puddles. Yet all events took place despite the inch of rain that fell on Saturday.

"The Alpine and Nordic Skiers really toughed it out," said Director of Competition Pete Lawrence. "They worked really

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Kimberly A. Riordan

*Manhattan and Brooklyn fought it out on the court.*

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Find up-to-date information on our official Web site, [www.specialolympicsnewyork.org](http://www.specialolympicsnewyork.org).

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# A Message from the President

Neal J. Johnson is President & CEO of Special Olympics New York, Inc.



Very often I will receive a letter from an athlete, volunteer, sponsor or family member that calls attention to the important work we do, and the impact it has on the athletes. This following letter from the Kerber family in Saratoga Springs does that and more, so I thought I needed to share it with all of you. Thank you.

Dear Neal and Staff:

First, I want to say Thank You; I am expressing the feelings of my whole family when I say that last weekend was a life changing experience. We believe in your organization and all of you are so special. You facilitate and enable the highest level of achievement for a group of people who are often left behind and forgotten. These individuals have the same need for success, achievement and praise. More importantly, you are providing them with the most valuable reward, satisfying their desire to be an active, contributing participant in the game of life.

Neal said it best when he described the Games as the priceless looks on the athletes' faces when they are winning, competing, finishing and accomplishing their goals. He went on to say that looking into the crowd, hearing cheers and seeing

the smiles and tears on the faces of mothers, fathers and families as they watched their children instilled him with an incredible feeling. I am thankful that my family and I have been able to experience the feelings Neal described; we are in great admiration of the athletes, volunteers and goals of the organization.

If you are unaware, we are one of those families that Neal mentioned. Though our daughter, Alexis, has not competed in Special Olympics, like you, we do not take the little things in life for granted. My family has learned – from Alexis tying her first shoe, kicking her first soccer ball, achieving a yellow belt in karate, or singing her first song, “I’m Little Tea Pot” – that these monumental achievements as a participant in life have brought us the most joy. Because of our experiences with Alexis, we encourage Special Olympics and its people to continue to facilitate and enable

the most precious portion of our society with a forum that rewards individuals with special needs and their families for their constant pursuit of the path of over achievement in the game of life.

Today I can tell you that a piece of my family's heart has been given to your organization, and we will never forget this moment in time; we truly come away changed by it.

Thank you for the generosity you offered to my family last weekend, and for being committed to our world's greatest assets and teachers. We are looking forward to the Summer Games in Long Island.

Best Regards,  
Sue and Greg Kerber & Family  
Saratoga Springs

## 2003 Calendar of Events

### APRIL

- 12 Section 1 Basketball/Aquatics, Fordham University, Bronx
- 27 Section 2 Basketball/Aquatics/Powerlifting, Marist College, Poughkeepsie
- 26 Section 5 Volleyball/Aquatics, Canisius College, Buffalo

### MAY

- 3 Section 3 Basketball/Aquatics, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs
- 10 Section 5 Basketball, New York Chiropractic College, Seneca Falls
- 17 Section 2 Volleyball, Mamaroneck
- 31 2003 Metro Tournament, Riverbank State Park, Manhattan
- 31 Sections 3, 4 & 5 Summer Games, University at Albany

### JUNE

- 9 Winged Foot Golf Classic, Mamaroneck
- 12-15 2003 Summer Games, Hofstra University, Hempstead
- 21 LETR Fire Truck Pull, Auburn
- 21-30 2003 SOI World Summer Games, Dublin, Ireland

\* For more details, please contact your Director of Field Services or the Special Olympics New York office.

## Triumph

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## Chi Chi Rodriguez Returns to Golf Classic

*Home of the 2006 US Open hosts day of golf once again.*

**G**olfers will once again hit the links at Winged Food Golf Club, home of the 2006 US Open, on June 9 for the 2003 Golf Classic. The tournament is presented by Toyota in partnership with Time Inc. to benefit Special Olympics New York.

The prestigious club in Mamaroneck has played host to the Golf Classic for the past 12 years. Joining Special Olympics athletes and participating golfers for a clinic will be legend Chi Chi Rodriguez who returns to the tournament after a one-year absence.

The day also includes breakfast, lunch and dinner, raffle and tournament prizes and an open driving range and swimming pool.

*Foursomes and sponsorships are still available. Please contact Chris Grieco at 212-661-3963, or at [cgrieco@nyso.org](mailto:cgrieco@nyso.org), or visit [www.specialolympicsnewyork.org](http://www.specialolympicsnewyork.org) for more information.* ■



## Return of the Million Dollar Ducks

*Third annual Duck Race set for September in NYC.*

**T**he 20,000 ducks that participate in the Million Dollar Duck Race to benefit Special Olympics New York will have to wait until September to take their annual swim in the East River. The event, which takes place at Manhattan's South Street Seaport, has been moved from June 18 to Sept. 17.

June has traditionally been a busy month for Special Olympics New York with summer sectionals, Summer Games, a golf tournament and, this year, World Games in Ireland.

"We felt that in order to give our sponsors the most value for their partnership with Special Olympics New York and to make the event as successful as possible, it was in our best interest to move the

Duck Race to Sept. 17," said Chris Grieco, director of Development and Duck Race organizer.

The Million Dollar Duck Race is a fund-raising event in which supporters "adopt" a rubber racing duck. That duck is then placed in a bin with 19,999 of his billed friends and dumped into the East River. The ducks "race" from just below the Brooklyn Bridge, underneath the South Street Seaport pier and over the finish line. The winning duck owner wins a grand prize and perhaps \$1 million.

*Check [specialolympicsnewyork.org](http://specialolympicsnewyork.org) in the coming months for more information, including how to adopt a duck. If you have any questions, please contact Grieco at 212-661-3963, or e-mail [cgrieco@nyso.org](mailto:cgrieco@nyso.org).* ■

## Met PGA Builds Partnership with Local Programs and State

**I**n the past the Met PGA, a local chapter of the PGA of America, has provided golf professionals for Special Olympics New York's Golf Classic at Winged Food Golf Club and has helped local programs secure facilities for their training.

But over the past year, the Met PGA has become exceedingly involved with helping Special Olympics provide an outstanding golfing experience for their athletes.

Last year they held two competitions at the Met PGA-owned Mosholu Golf Course in the Bronx. They are holding at least three more competitions this year as well as a training school. And their Mohansic Golf Course in Westchester will host a Golf Sectional on Oct. 4.

"They have pretty much offered us carte blanche for their courses," said

Melissa Gross, director of Program. "And they are currently working with our programs in Westchester, Bronx, Long Island and Rockland, and we're working on Ulster County."

Met PGA helps these local programs secure facilities and recruit assistant pros to help train the athletes. They have also helped to provide the proper equipment to the athletes in these programs. Special Olympics New York – Westchester/Putnam County has already honored Met PGA at one of its dinners this past fall for all of their support.

Now they are trying to involve Special Olympics in a corporate outing in which their staff will play alternate shot with the Special Olympics athletes.

"The Golf programs in the Hudson Valley and Metropolitan area have benefited



SONY Staff

*Special Olympics - Westchester/Putnam honored Max Galloway, Head Pro at Mohansic Golf Course, left, and Barry McLaughlin from the Met PGA. Debbie Dempsey made the presentation.*

considerably because of the Met PGA's involvement," Gross said. "They have been unbelievably supportive of our program and our athletes." ■

## New Partner to Ride Along With Cops & Lobsters

“Law & Orders” joins SONY’s fund-raising force.

Call it *Cops & Lobsters* with an alias. Red Lobster restaurants across New York won’t be the only places where you’ll see law enforcement officers accepting “tips” as donations to Special Olympics.

*Law & Orders*, a spin-off of Red Lobster’s popular *Cops & Lobsters* fundraiser is being rolled out at restaurants

across the state to complement the *Cops & Lobsters* initiative at Red Lobster restaurants.

*Law & Orders* does not replace the trademarked *Cops & Lobsters* events, it simply enables

officers to participate at any restaurant, including Red Lobster. Also, instead of the fund-raisers being held in the spring, which has been the tradition, they will be offered year-round.

Under the new *Cops & Lobsters/Law & Orders* program, law enforcement officers serve as wait staff, assisting the restaurant

staff by refilling drink orders, clearing dishes and assisting with most aspects of service. The “tips” the officers receive are donated directly to Special Olympics. Funds received support year-round athletic training and competition for Special Olympics athletes.

“Those of us in the Law Enforcement Torch Run are extremely excited that more restaurants will be able to take part in *Cops & Lobsters/Law & Orders*,” said Jeanne Mesick, Torch Run liaison for Special Olympics New York. “It opens up so many new ways for us to make new friends and raise the needed funds to support our mission.”

*Cops & Lobsters/Law & Orders* is a program of the Law Enforcement Torch Run to Benefit Special Olympics New York. In addition to the annual Torch Run to the



## Give a Little, Get a Lot Campaign Begins

Cingular and Special Olympics prepare for fourth year of partnership.

For the past three years, Cingular Wireless and its customers have raised nearly \$30 million to support training and competition programs throughout New York and the United States. In April, the fourth year of the promotion will begin, with the hope of raising \$10 million in the U.S.

The “Give a Little, Get a Lot” initiative invites new and existing Cingular customers to donate to Special Olympics in exchange for service and equipment discounts.

“Cingular management and staff have been outstanding in their support of Special Olympics,” said Rita Cox, director of Development for Special Olympics New York. “They have brought remarkable

public awareness to our mission, and have developed discounts that have encouraged generous donations. And the customers have really answered the call for our athletes.

Beginning April 13, Cingular customers who donate \$20 to Special Olympics will receive a free wireless phone. An aggressive nationwide advertising campaign - involving print, radio and television media outlets - will accompany the promotion.

There’s also a bonus feature: Special Olympics will receive \$5 for each cellphone that is turned in to Cingular for recycling. The promotion ends May 31.

For more information, visit [www.specialolympicsnewyork.org](http://www.specialolympicsnewyork.org).



David Drojak of Webster with Cingular mascot “Jack” at last year’s Summer Games.

Cingular Wireless

## Polar Bear Sightings Across the State

*Brave participants take the plunge for Special Olympics.*

**P**acks of Polar Bears were spotted in Rochester along Lake Ontario and at Camp Mariah in Fishkill this winter – the human kind, that is, all taking a chilly dip to benefit Special Olympics New York.

Once again, the bravest of the brave showed up to flaunt their tough skins, icy veins and hearts of gold.

The Lake Ontario Polar Plunge on Feb. 9 and the Fishkill Polar Plunge, held March 1, brought more than 300 plungers and hundreds more spectators to the shores of these two icy lakes.

The plunges are part of the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) to Benefit Special Olympics New York.

“The fact that people actually pay to do this makes it more inconceivable that they would also consider this fun,” said Jeanne Mesick, Torch Run liaison for Special Olympics New York. “How fortunate that the Law Enforcement Torch Run is the recipient of these chilly champions’ bravery and generosity.”

More than \$30,000 was raised in both



plunges. Special thanks to Sgt. Sal Gerbino of the Town of Gates Police Department for organizing the Lake Ontario Plunge, and to Officer Chris Hamel of the Town of Poughkeepsie Police, who again took the lead in Fishkill. ■



*Scenes from recent Polar Plunges: Taking the plunge; choosing a winner; the mad dash to shore; a special award; cutting through the ice; and lighting the Flame of Hope.*

## Charity Walk Added to Star-Studded Satins Fund-raiser

*Annual weekend in Saratoga Springs extended to a week.*

**T**he 13th annual Satins, Silks & Stars week to benefit Special Olympics New York will kick-off on Sunday, July 20 with the new Miles for Medals walk-a-thon in Saratoga Springs. The walk extends what is traditionally a weekend event to a full week of festivities.

Miles for Medals is a pledge walk that will take place at Saratoga Race Course. This will mark the first time a walk has been held in conjunction with the Satins, Silks & Stars event.

The glamorous weekend following

the walk, July 26 and 27, draws stars from television, stage and film to Saratoga Springs during the annual Hats Off Weekend. This year’s theme is “Hot Saratoga Nights ... Cool Sunday Mornings.”

The Silks & Satins 5K Run, which has become one of the northeast’s most popular races, begins at 8 a.m. on Saturday, July 26. The weekend continues with a Black-Tie Gala that evening at the Prime Hotel and Conference Center, and concludes on Sunday, July 27,

with an Equestrian Demonstration, Q & A With the Stars and a Gourmet Luncheon at Saratoga Race Course.



Returning as Equestrian Demonstration host and bringing many of his celebrity friends is Thom Christopher, who’s best know for his work on the daytime soap operas Guiding Light and One Life to Live.

To make reservations for any of the above events, call 518-388-0793. Visit [www.specialolympicsnewyork.org](http://www.specialolympicsnewyork.org) in the coming months for more details and how you can get involved. ■

## Around the State

### Saratoga County – Area 8

Two Swim-a-thons were held on March 1 in Saratoga County. The first was at the YMCA of Saratoga. The YMCA donated pool time and lifeguards for the event. More than 25 swimmers took part. Volunteers were on hand to register swimmers, count laps, and clean up after the event. Just under \$2,000 was raised at the event and more pledges were still to be collected by the swimmers. Lake Ridge Farm Recreation Center also held a swim-a-thon at its pool and raised more than \$30,000. Saratoga County's Special Olympics program would like to extend their thanks to the YMCA of Saratoga and Elaine Kincaid of Lake Ridge Farm.

### Fulton, Montgomery and Hamilton Counties – Area 9

Area 9 hosted a chicken and biscuit dinner at Grandma Millie's Bakery in Johnstown on Feb. 19. Tickets were \$7 and there were also desserts for sale. All proceeds went to Area 9's training and competition programs.

### Spring Games

With the Summer Games fast approaching, local programs are gearing up for them with their Area Spring Games. The Games take place throughout the state and are a great opportunity for volunteers. For a complete list of Spring Games, visit [www.specialolympicsnewyork.org](http://www.specialolympicsnewyork.org). If you are interested in volunteering, please contact your local Director of Field Services.

Section 1 (New York City)  
– Oren Yavin, 212-661-3963,  
[oyavin@nyso.org](mailto:oyavin@nyso.org)

Section 2 (Hudson Valley)  
– Bill Collins, 518-399-079,  
[bcollins@nyso.org](mailto:bcollins@nyso.org)

Section 3 (Capital District & North Country)  
– Gwen Berardi, 518-388-0791,  
[gberardi@nyso.org](mailto:gberardi@nyso.org)

Section 4 (Central New York)  
– Bernadette Donahue 315-473-3153,  
[bdonahue@nyso.org](mailto:bdonahue@nyso.org)

Section 5 (Western New York)  
– Bob Turner 585-271-5151,  
[bturmer@nyso.org](mailto:bturmer@nyso.org)

Please call, fax or e-mail your area or regional information to Doreen Hand,  
212-661-3963, Fax: 212-661-4658,  
[dhand@nyso.org](mailto:dhand@nyso.org)

## Tynan Becomes Honorary Coach

*Continued from P. 1*

Ronan that he is incredibly sincere in his support and appreciation of Special Olympics athletes," said Neal Johnson, president and chief executive officer of Special Olympics New York. "He is the perfect role model for our athletes. He has overcome many challenges in his life, but he has emerged a very positive and inspirational force. We are happy to call him friend."

Tynan, who was born in Johnstown, County Kilkenny, Ireland, only began his formal music training when he was 33. Since then his career has read like a story book: He entered the Royal Opera School in England and earned Best Male Voice honors at the International Singing Festival

in France.

In 1998, his first solo album, "My Life



SONY Staff

*World Games athlete Sean O'Rourke presents Tynan with a Team USA jacket.*

"Belongs to You" went platinum in three months. The same year he joined "The Irish Tenors," producing five albums to date.

A bilateral amputee, Tynan holds Paralympics world records in the discus, shot put and long jump. His autobiography, "Halfway Home" was published in 2001.

To purchase the CD, visit [www.specialolympicsnewyork.org](http://www.specialolympicsnewyork.org), or contact Laurie Kennedy, 585-271-5151, or e-mail [lkennedy@nyso.org](mailto:lkennedy@nyso.org).

## Wet and Wild Winter Games

*Continued from P. 1*

hard to get this far and a little rain wasn't going to stop them. They battled through it with smiles on their faces."

Nearly 1,000 athletes and coaches from across the state returned to the Nevele Grande Resort and Country Club in Ellenville Feb. 21 and 22 for the Games.

Spirits were high at the Opening Ceremonies, which included members of the World Team being led in by a bagpiper and the dance band, The Brats, performing for the athletes. But those same spirits were tested when they woke up to rain the next morning.

Competition was held in six sports on Saturday – Alpine and Nordic Skiing, Floor Hockey Team and Floor Hockey Skills, Figure Skating and Speed Skating.

Even the Figure and Speed Skaters were challenged by the weather. The roof that covered the rink had leaks that left puddles on the ice. But, like the skiers, they didn't let it stop them from demonstrating their skills in front of family, fans and volunteers. They just went around the puddles.

"All and all it was a great event," Lawrence said. "One thing we can never rely on is the weather, but we can definitely rely on the courageousness of the athletes

and the dedication of the volunteers to make it a successful weekend."

Official sponsors of the 2003 Winter Games included the New York Lottery and Cingular Wireless at the Platinum level; Ellenville National Bank at the Gold level; New York State United Teachers and Hydro Aluminum at the Bronze level; and the *Times-Herald Record* as media partner.



Rob Fetter

*Lucy Dorian from Queens competed in Figure Skating at the Nevele Ice Chalet.*

## Point of View

By Diana Bennett

National Volunteer Week is April 27 to May 3 and chances are you will see volunteers for many worthy causes being recognized for their service.

So, how do you tell volunteers how much they mean to Special Olympics?

Do you give them a "Certificate of Appreciation?" How about a coffee cup that says "Thanks – You're Appreciated?"

Or how about this idea: A rubber nose you use to set your eyeglasses on that says, "Everyone 'nose' we appreciate you." The catalog full of such chachkas describes that item this way: "When your appreciation is as plain as the nose of their face, thank your volunteers with this."

Somehow, none of these tokens of appreciation, no matter how well meaning, can do an adequate job of recognizing and thanking Special Olympics volunteers for the work they do. Simply put, without volunteers, there would be no Special Olympics. So it's up to all of us – athletes, family, staff and fellow volunteers – to make a habit of *always* taking the time to recognize and thank our volunteers.

As the director of volunteer manage-

ment, I am constantly telling friends and family that Special Olympics would not exist without volunteers. I even say it to the volunteers themselves. The statement has almost become cliché. But it really isn't. I often think of what a typical competition would be without volunteers.

Without volunteers, who would train the athletes? Who would raise the money for the uniforms? There would be no one to set up the equipment, no one to remind the athletes of the rules. Who would keep score and man the buzzer?

And there would be no one to park cars, give directions or hand out the box lunches. But that really wouldn't matter, because there would be no athletes, no competitions, no Special Olympics.

So, how can you find the words to adequately thank our Special Olympics volunteers?

Certainly, the greatest reward our volunteers receive comes from the athletes. The gift they give is allowing us to share in the excitement of competition and the thrill of achievement. However, we should all do our part to thank and recognize every

volunteer for the role they play.

Plaques and certificates are appropriate for recognizing outstanding volunteer service and they are appreciated. But let's not forget all those volunteers who help out at even just one event. They are the 'many hands' that help the events run smoothly and on time and allow coaches to better focus on the athletes and competition.

Please always remember to thank our volunteers. Not just during Volunteer Week – but throughout the entire year. As often is the case, a Special Olympics athlete I once met put it best: "No Volunteers – No Special Olympics!" So, **THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!**

*Point of View is written periodically. Diana Bennett is director of volunteer management for Special Olympics New York. To submit a column idea, call 212-661-3963, or e-mail dhand@nyso.org. ■*



## Letters

**Editor's Note:** *The following letter was written by a parent of an athlete in Long Island to Neal Johnson, president and chief executive officer.*

Dear Mr. Johnson:

This letter is to commend Special Olympics New York Long Island Region's tennis coach Ken Walker for working hard to start Unified Tennis and finally accomplishing that goal.

We are very happy.

My daughter, Mandy, is loving the connection she is making with a "typical" young tennis player and I'm sure the experience will have many, many benefits for her. But for the young high school/college student the benefits will surely go way beyond the weekly enjoyment of

playing tennis with a person with a developmental disability.

It has always been my goal to have my daughter included in our community. We have promoted inclusion and supported employment on Long Island in Washington DC. Unified Sports will show young, bright, athletic students that people with developmental disabilities are: responsible, hard workers, committed to their tasks and enthusiastic about learning.

When the students who volunteer to be part of Unified Sports grow up to be the leaders of industry and government, they will then have the

power to hire people with disabilities and they will! A virtually untapped resource will help our economy grow and millions in taxes will be saved.

So thank you Ken Walker and Jeff McCausland for Unified Tennis.

Sincerely,  
Jackie Shenkman  
Great Neck

**Editor's Note:** *The following letter was written to Peter Lawrence, director of competition.*

Dear Mr. Lawrence:

I would just like to let you know that I am the mother of Jodi Rosen (living in Hope House II in Jamaica) who has been chosen to participate in the Special Olympics in Ireland this June. I am very proud of her and her perseverance.

I currently live in Florida and was reading all about how Special Olympics are changing lives.

There was a time in my younger days when I helped out on local special events and must say it was a very satisfying time in my life. Special Olympics and their enthusiasm has certainly helped me and my daughter in a feeling of being connected and cared about.

It is through the efforts of people such as yourself that make us as special parents feel the joys where they can be recognized.

Thank you so much for listening and my God bless you and the good work done for our population.

Mrs. Sylvia Rosen  
Davie, Florida

Submit letters to Doreen Hand, Special Olympics New York., 211 East 43rd Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10017, e-mail: dhand@nyso.org.



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Mission: To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-style sports for children and adults with mental retardation, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

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