

# Triumph



Special Olympics New York • FEBRUARY - MARCH 2003

## Brown and Gerbino to Run Flame Through Europe

*Torch Run will pass through 15 nations.*

While Team New York is preparing to take part in the World Summer Games in Ireland in June, two members of the delegation – one athlete and one volunteer – will be somewhere in Europe, escorting the Flame of Hope to its final destination – the Opening Ceremonies.

Kevin Brown, an athlete from Albany with an outstanding record of achievement in Special Olympics, and Sgt. Sal Gerbino of the Town of Gates Police Department in Monroe County, will run in the Law Enforcement Torch Run to the World Games.

Their journey with the Flames of Hope will begin at a June 5 ceremony in Athens, Greece. Three separate legs will set out through Europe, then converge in Brussels, Belgium, before running as one through the countryside to London, Belfast, then Dublin for the Opening Ceremonies at Croke Park in Dublin.

Brown and Gerbino will be part of a group of 144 athletes and law enforcement volunteers from around the world who will participate in the run

through 15 nations.

"I'm awestruck. When officers run into a stadium at Summer Games or another state game, I don't think the athletes realize that they're getting us just as excited," Gerbino said. "I can't fathom what it will be like at the World Games. It is a perception beyond my ability right now. I'm supposed to be there for the athletes, but the athletes are going to be carrying me."

Brown, who works for the FBI in Albany, is one of those athletes. In nearly three decades of involvement, Brown, a prototypical athlete who is also a Global Messenger, has earned medals in local, sectional, state and international competitions.

He trains year-round in either Volleyball, Basketball, Nordic Skiing, Bowling, Softball or Track & Field. With support from his coaches, he's become a tax-paying, home-owning contributor to his community, and has made many, many friends along the way. Throughout his life, when he could

have easily extended his hand for help, he has, instead, offered it to others.



SONY Staff

*Kevin Brown, seen here with the Flame of Hope at the Winter Games, will take part in the Torch Run to the World Summer Games in June.*



Gerbino has carried the Special Olympics Flame of Hope, literally and

*Continued on P. 4*

## March is Mental Retardation Awareness Month

Special Olympics New York would like to honor our athletes and their families, as well as the many other children and adults with mental retardation whom we consider our extended family.

March is Mental Retardation Awareness Month, created to call attention to the conditions that affect upwards of seven million Americans.

Every day, people with mental retardation and their families face challenges that most of us take for granted. From childhood to old age, everyday tasks such as seeking employment, driving a car, and caring for oneself can pose significant challenges for individuals with mental retardation.

We believe that nowhere is the spirit and pride of this population more exemplary than in Special Olympics, where athletes use our programs as a springboard for greatness in life. To those who inspire, from those whom they inspire, thank you. ■

## What's INSIDE

3 Mets Make Pitch 3 Gold Medalist to Attend Gala 6 New Office for Long Island

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

# A Message from the President

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



In just a few short months, 28 athletes and six coaches from across New York will take off for the Emerald Isle to be part of an international celebration of sport and spirit.

The Special Olympics World Summer Games will bring together 7,000 athletes, 28,000 family members and 3,000 coaches from 160 nations.

In New York, we've begun an effort to raise the funds necessary to cover the stateside costs of sending Team New York to the World Summer Games.

Ireland's General Organizing Committee, which is recruiting sponsors worldwide, is covering the rest.

Our sponsors here in New York would join Cingular Wireless, Columbia sports-wear and Kiwanis International in an elite and generous brotherhood of corporate and civic sponsors.

What these sponsors are helping to provide to our delegation is the chance to experience Special Olympics at its highest

and most inspiring level.

Many of us know the charge we get from attending a local, regional or state competition. We also know the thrill we get by simply watching an athlete train. When we see them improve with every shot, stroke or throw, and when we see the joy and confidence they demonstrate as a result of their accomplishments, we are seeing the mission and the vision of Special Olympics at work.

These moments are brought to us by the devotion of our coaches, the myth-shattering courage of our athletes and our sponsors, who understand and appreciate the impact they are having on our athletes and their families, but will never fully understand how much we all appreciate them.

So far, many people have come forward with a helping hand, like Paddy McCarthy and Tony Quinn from Irish Connections magazine. They're running a

full-page ad on behalf of our athletes.

Martin Kelly, president of the state chapter of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, along with Jack Irwin from the governor's office, are helping us reach out to the Irish-American community. Peter Clynch from Staten Island is raffling the use of his home in Ireland to help send the team to the Games.

We always say that sponsors help make dreams come true for our athletes. In this case, when you see that your support is allowing our athletes to compete in front of the world, when you see the magical moment when 7,000 beaming athletes parade into Opening Ceremonies, or when you see their adrenaline-charged effort in competition, or witness their shining pride when they accept their medals, the dream that comes true just may be your own. ■



## 2003 Calendar of Events

### MARCH

- 1 Fishkill Polar Plunge, Fishkill
- 8 Sections 3 & 4 Bowling (Age 21-) Clifton Park Bowl, Clifton Park
- 22 Section 4 Aquatics & Basketball SUNY Oswego

### 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

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

## Triumph

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## Making a Pitch for Special Olympics

*Mets player and skipper star with athletes in TV public service announcement.*



SONY Staff

*Athlete Craig Ludin and pitcher John Franco.*



*From left, Franco, Tedjada, Acosta, Ludin and Howe on the PSA set.*

Veteran Mets pitcher John Franco and first-year manager Art Howe joined Special Olympics New York athletes in a television public service announcement (PSA) designed to promote the Summer Games, which are at Hofstra University in June.

Global Messenger Craig Ludin from Dix Hills, Long Island, and athletes Roberys Tedjada and Keyla Acosta of Westchester County, appeared in the 30-second spot, which highlights the need for fans at the Summer Games.

Franco, in his 14th year with the Mets, and Howe, who joined the Mets after seven years as manager of the Oakland A's, lent their time and talent to the PSA, urging New Yorkers to fill the seats of Hofstra Arena at Opening Ceremonies on June 12.

Both Franco and Howe are supporters of Special Olympics (Franco has starred in public service announcements for New York in the past and Howe has chaired an annual gala for Special Olympics Northern California).

The PSA will be distributed in April to television stations in Metropolitan New York and Long Island. ■



Joann Young

## "Colgate" Smiles

Six Special Olympics athletes competed at the Colgate Women's Games Feb. 8 at Madison Square Garden. The meet, the nation's largest amateur track series, is open to girls from elementary school through college.

Special Olympics athletes performed in a track demonstration. Debbie Ellis, Elisa Fruscianti and Mary Pannese from Staten Island, top from left, were among the athletes who competed. Athletes Michelle Athenas, Sandra Forde and Meredith Shear from Long Island also participated. ■

## Champion to Appear in Monroe's Crystal Ball

*Speed skater Derek Parra to highlight 12<sup>th</sup> annual gala.*

The Rochester area will shine with gold in March as Olympic athletes celebrate the Crystal Ball, Olympic Gala – a salute to Special Olympics Monroe County.

The 12th annual event, set for Saturday, March 29, at the Hyatt Regency Rochester will feature Derek Parra, the 2002 Olympic gold medalist in long track speed skating.

The Crystal Ball – a dinner dance and auction – is the largest fund-raiser for Monroe County Special Olympics, attracting more than 600 attendees each year.

At the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Parra set a world record by winning a gold medal in the 1,500M race. He also earned a silver medal in the 5,000M.

Joining Parra at the Gala will be media celebrities from the Rochester radio and television market.

Among the event highlights is the raffle to Disney World, which includes four tickets, airfare and lodging. Other auction items include tickets to the "Regis and Kelly" show in Manhattan, a trip to Florida, tickets to the 2003 PGA golf tournament at Oak Hill, a pool table and hot tub from Northeastern Pools, dinner for eight by Jerry Vorrasi of Restaurant 2 Vine and autographed sports memorabilia.

"The purpose of the Crystal Ball, Olympic Gala is to raise money for the 1,800 athletes participating year-round in the local athletic program," said Marian Turner, executive director, Special Olympics New York – Monroe County. "This is Monroe County's 33rd year of providing sports training and competition.

To reserve a table, or for more information, contact the Monroe County office at 585-586-7400. ■



Photo provided

## New York Athlete Gets a Sneak Peak at Ireland

Global Messenger Rodney Hankins promotes worldwide Support an Athlete program.



**R**odney Hankins, an International Global Messenger from Brooklyn, visited Dublin in January to help launch the World Summer Games Support an Athlete program. Hankins traveled with sponsors, Irish dignitaries and other Special Olympics athletes, delivering a speech at the kick-off banquet and

conducting television interviews to promote the program. Above, he stops on a Dublin street with fellow athletes and international soccer star Roy Keane of Manchester United (front row).

Hankins' duties as a Global Messenger will take him back to Ireland for the World Games in June, where he will be a



guest at a variety of functions designed to call attention to the mission of Special Olympics.

The Support an Athlete program allows companies, individuals and organizations the opportunity to "Share the Feeling" of the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games.

A similar sponsorship program has been launched in New York to help offset the stateside costs for New York athletes to attend the World Games. Athletes pay nothing to participate in Special Olympics, so the funds raised in New York will support such things as training, travel, housing and uniforms.

To sponsor a member of Team New York, please contact Laurie Kennedy, director of Development, 585-271-5151, or e-mail [lkennedy@nyso.org](mailto:lkennedy@nyso.org).

## Flame of Hope

Continued from P. 1

through his many actions. As a member of the Torch Run State Committee in New York, Gerbino has organized local Torch Run legs, conducted Polar Plunges and



Torch Run Routes

as the flame's glow lights up a darkened stadium or arena. And he has heard the deafening cheers as the Flame of Hope touches the Special Olympics Cauldron to start the games.

Now multiply the experience by a

Plane Pulls, and has helped provide the vision for the LETR's success in New York.

He has felt the exhilaration

few thousand people, a brighter cauldron and the decibels created by 7,000 athletes and a stadium full of that holds 80,000 people.

When you ask Kevin about his career highlights, he won't mention the awards for Area and state-wide Athlete of the Year. Instead, he recalls his

team victory in Nordic Skiing at the 2001 World Winter Games, or the 1999 Summer Games in Albany, where he carried the Flame of Hope on behalf of his fellow athletes. The latter proud moment may lose its place to the moment he will experience in June, when he takes part in the final leg of



the Torch Run to the World Summer Games in Dublin. While he's only run in smaller legs in New York, he has no doubt he'll find

**"I can't fathom what it will be like at the World Games. It is a perception beyond my ability right now."**

**-Sgt. Sal Gerbino**

the stamina to perform well in Ireland. "I want to prove that I can run as far as the officers can," Kevin said, as if he's got something left to prove. ■

## A "Big" Time Sporting Event

*Games will be the largest event ever held in Ireland.*

To appreciate the significance of the Special Olympics World Summer Games, consider the following:

- Nearly 7,000 athletes from more than 160 nations will take part.
- Upwards of 3,000 coaches and officials will volunteer.
- More than 28,000 family members will witness everything from the spectacular Opening Ceremonies through 10 days of competition.
- More than 170 communities will open their doors to the world as part of a cultural exchange known as the Host Town Program.

■ The World Summer Games will be the largest event Ireland has ever hosted and the largest sporting event in the world this year.

"I don't think many people understand the magnitude of the Special Olympics World Summer Games," said Neal J. Johnson, president and chief executive officer of Special Olympics New York. "The spotlight that will shine on our athletes will hopefully be a beacon of hope, acceptance and tolerance for the entire world to see."

The World Summer Games will offer competition in eighteen official summer sports and three demonstration sports at various venues throughout Dublin, the greater Dublin area and in Belfast. ■

## Croke Park



Croke Park, the stadium which has staged some of Ireland's most high-profile events, including the Gaelic Games, American football, Australian Rules football, a Muhammed Ali fight and concerts featuring artists such as Neil Diamond, Tina Turner and Garth Brooks, is the prestigious venue for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the World Summer Games. The ultra-modern stadium, located in the heart of Dublin, seats 80,000 spectators. ■

## Team NY Welcomed at Winter Games



Rob Fetter

Members of Team New York were introduced during the Opening Ceremonies of the state Winter Games, held in Ellenville in February.

The team, which includes 28 athletes and six coaches, will receive a giant send-off party during the Summer Games at Hofstra University in June.

The World Summer Games begin with a Host Town Program on June 16. Opening Ceremonies are June 21. The Games end June 29. ■



## Team New York is on the Web

Updates on Team New York can now be found at [specialolympicsnewyork.org](http://specialolympicsnewyork.org).

Simply click on the home page and follow the prompts to bios and photos of Team New York. Read about each of the 28 athletes and six coaches who will represent New York and the United States at the World Summer Games.

For additional information about the Games, visit [www.2003specialolympics.com](http://www.2003specialolympics.com), the official Website of the Games, or visit the official site for Team USA, [www.specialolympicsteamusa.org](http://www.specialolympicsteamusa.org). ■

## The Goals of the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games

- To ensure the athletes will be the center of the Games.
- To stage a truly global and quality event that will allow all athletes to compete and participate at a fair and challenging level and where all athletes will have a reasonable opportunity to succeed.
- To promote the Games in such a way that everyone will feel they have contributed and that they belong.
- To encourage family participation.
- To showcase the cultural heritage of Ireland and Europe.
- To ensure that everyone involved approaches the event with a sense of enthusiasm, dignity and respect.

## Around the State

### Ulster County – Area 6

The Hudson Valley Insurance Professionals hosted a bowl-a-thon on March 1 at the Catskill Hoe Bowl Lanes. The cost was \$5 a person and bowlers were asked to solicit sponsors for pledges. All funds raised for the bowl-a-thon will go to Ulster County's program.



### Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties – Area 15

Anthony's Fine Wines and Spirits held its third annual wine-tasting event to benefit local Special Olympics programs. More than 150 wines from around the world were available. The previous two wine-tastings have raised nearly \$2,500 for Special Olympics.

### Oswego County – Area 29

The 16<sup>th</sup> annual Softball in the Snow to benefit Area 29 took place Feb. 15 at Leighton School and Oswego High School. Last year's event raised more than \$3,000.

### Manhattan – Area 33

Manhattan's Floor Hockey team, The Flames, traveled across the Hudson to New Jersey to participate in Special Olympics New Jersey's Floor Hockey league. The Flames played two exhibition games against the South Jersey Flyers.



### Long Island

Regional Director Jeff McCausland, left, met with U.S. Rep. Steve Israel (D-Bayshore) last month to discuss possible funding and grant opportunities. Congressman Israel has been very supportive of the Long Island program and said he plans to get other local members of Congress involved.



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

## Long Island Receives \$40,000 Annually for New Office from Primary Health Care Plus

A commitment of \$40,000 annually was made to Special Olympics New York – Long Island by Primary Health Care Plus, a comprehensive diagnostic and medical treatment facility in Franklin Square.

The donation will offset the cost of a new office for Special Olympics in the recently created region.

With the merging of the Nassau and Suffolk programs, a central office was a necessity. The new regional headquarters will be in the United Way building at 819 Grand Boulevard in Deer Park.

"I am pleased that my company is able to donate to such a worthy charity," said Primary Health Care Plus Co-President Stephan Schector, a sports enthusiast and community leader. Schector has also become a key member of the Long Island Executive Advisory Committee.



Regional Director Jeff McCausland and athlete Craig Ludin presented Stephan Schector, left, with an Islanders Jersey.

Photo provided

"My goal is to help Special Olympics further its mission of providing year-round sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with mental retardation throughout Long Island."

The region plans to officially open the doors to its new office by early spring, just in time for the Long Island Spring Games.

"It is always wonderful and heart-warming to see members of Long Island's corporate community joining together with

local charities to help make Long Island a better place," said Jeff McCausland, regional director. "On behalf of our athletes, I would like to thank Mr. Schector and Primary Health Care Plus for their donation, which will help make the new headquarters possible and allow more funding to revert back to program initiatives for our athletes." ■

## Sectional Winter Games Warmed Athletes Up for the Big Event

More than 100 athletes and coaches participated in the 2003 Sectional Winter Games on Sunday, Feb. 9, in Saratoga Springs and Glens Falls.

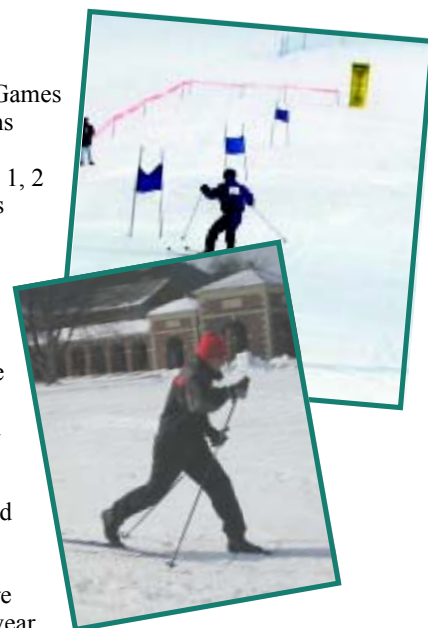
The event gave the athletes from Sections 1, 2 and 3 an opportunity to compete just two weeks before the state Winter Games.

"Every athlete was determined to go for the gold," said Jennifer Whipple, sectional sports director. "After practicing in the freezing temperatures weeks before the event, each of them accomplished their own personal goals the day of the event."

Nordic athletes competed at Saratoga Spa State Park while Alpine athletes went to nearby West Mountain. State Farm, a sponsor of the event, provided volunteers for Nordic Skiing and hot chocolate and water for the athletes and all volunteers.

The Sectional Winter Games is one of more than 20 sectionals taking place throughout the year.

Look for highlights and photos from the state Winter Games in next month's Triumph. ■



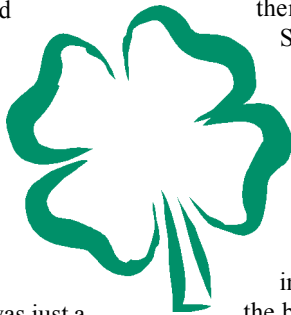
Photos by SONY Staff

## Point of View

By Laurie Kennedy

In January I joined our own International Global Messenger, Rodney Hankins, as he ventured to Dublin, Ireland, to partake in the kickoff festivities for the World Summer Games Sponsor an Athlete initiative. He was joined by athletes from China, South Africa, Australia and Ireland. The Irish people are all so very excited to have the Games come to Ireland and be the first country outside of the U.S. to host the World Summer Games, taking place June 21 to 29 in Dublin.

The Games were promoted everywhere we went, with the logo appearing on trucks and buses, elevator doors and store windows. Even the mannequins in the windows wore sashes proclaiming the arrival of the Games in June. Rodney and his fellow athletes were treated like jet-setting international celebrities. This was just a taste of the enthusiasm and celebration that awaits Team New York in June.



What makes the athlete experience incredible is that not only will our athletes represent Special Olympics New York and our great state, but each will represent our country as members of Team USA. To march into an arena like Croke Park, where Opening Ceremonies will be held, before thousands upon thousands of roaring fans from all over the world, with "USA" on your back is something we all dream of.

Back here in the United States, Irish Americans are very proud of the support their homeland is lending to Special Olympics and the Games. Several Irish New Yorkers are actively helping us raise the awareness and funds necessary to send Team New York to the Games, and for that we are truly grateful.

There is still time to get involved and play your part in the biggest sporting and cultural event this year. The motto of the Games is "Share the Feeling," and you too can be

part of our team of supporters. Sport a commemorative Claddagh pin (see information below), attend the Ancient Order of Hibernians dinner dance in honor of Team New York on April 6 on Staten Island, or sell Special Olympics shamrocks in your neighborhood store, restaurant, school or pub. Or simply make a donation on behalf of Team New York. All funds raised pay for athlete training camps, uniforms and transportation.

And don't forget to cheer the team on at Special Olympics New York events from now until June.

*Point of View is written periodically. Laurie Kennedy is director of Development for Special Olympics New York. To submit a column idea, call 212-661-3963, or e-mail [dhand@nyso.org](mailto:dhand@nyso.org).*



## Support Team NY!

*Purchase a Claddagh pin, send our athletes to Ireland.*

Be a part of the action as the Special Olympics Flame of Hope makes its way to Dublin this June for the 2003 World Summer Games.

Help make it possible for the athletes of Special Olympics New York to compete by purchasing a pin.

Then wear it in support as our athletes get ready to go for the gold in Ireland.

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



### Claddagh

The Claddagh Ring is truly an endearing symbol of Irish culture and sentiment. There are many stories about the Claddagh ring. Claddagh itself refers to a small fishing village just near Galway city. The Claddagh ring is thought to have originated in this area. The ring has a design of a heart being encircled by a pair of delicate hands with a crown above the heart. In earlier times this design was the symbol of the "Fishing Kings of Claddagh" meaning 'in love and friendship let us reign'. In the 17th century the symbol was first depicted on a ring which became the fashionable exchange of friends or lovers. In marriage the heart was worn towards the wrist otherwise towards the fingertips.

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## Special Olympics New York

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### Keep Dreams Alive for Special Olympics New York

**M**&M'S Brand Chocolate Candies and Special Olympics is in the midst of a promotion that enables customers to help athletes in many ways.

You can "Keep Wrappers to Keep Dreams Alive" by sending in empty, specially marked wrappers to M&M's Brand/Special Olympics Keep Wrappers to Keep Dreams Alive, PO Box 5074, Blair, NE, 68009-5074. Wrappers must be received by October 31. M&M's will donate \$.50 for each wrapper received\* to Special Olympics.

Or, if you "Find All Gold" candies in your M&M's package, you and the Special Olympics program in your state will each win \$50,000.

Visit [www.specialolympicsnewyork.org](http://www.specialolympicsnewyork.org) for details. ■

\*Up to \$750,000, minimum of \$500,000.



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.