

Triumph

May 2004



Special Olympics
New York

Inspired (and Inspiring) Westchester Youngster Sponsors Basketball Team for Summer Games

Max Linder donating \$3,000 to Special Olympics New York.

Athletes from the Westchester Basketball team will have one very special fan cheering for them during SONY's 2004 Summer Games: a 12-year-old who is essentially sponsoring the entire team with a \$3,000 gift.

Max Linder is making his Bar Mitzvah this summer and he will donate his gifts to SONY. His only request is that the contribution goes towards his local Special Olympics Basketball team. In addition, his family is donating sports equipment to SONY instead of spending money on flowers and decorations.

"It was a very generous gesture of Max to share the benefits of his good fortune with us," said Jerry Peters, Executive

Director of SONY's Westchester and Putnam Counties, who met Linder at a Floor Hockey competition. "He is a very nice young man who had an incredible connection with our athletes."

It was that competition that hooked Linder. "Just to see the looks on their faces was wonderful," said Linder, who participates in soccer, basketball, baseball and tennis. "They may have to work harder than others but they can still excel at sports, and that's wonderful."

Linder isn't alone in his youthful generosity. Throughout New York State, young adults and children regularly donate their time to volunteer at Special Olympics events.



Max Linder is helping to send the Westchester Basketball team to SONY's 2004 Summer Games.

"Donating to a cause like this and seeing what your money goes towards makes you want to be a better person,"

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USA Powerlifting Gives SONY Athletes a Lift

Special Olympics athletes compete in integrated March Madness Open.

More than barbells were moved at the recent March Madness Bench & Deadlift Open, which was hosted by Sullivan County Community College.

"I got chills," said Bill Collins, a Director of Program at SONY and one of the lifting competition's organizers.

The reason for his reaction? The March Madness Open featured USA Powerlifting athletes and Special Olympics athletes competing side-by-side, which made it one of the first integrated Power Lifting events in New York State.

"Integration is the essence of Special Olympics," Collins said. "Eunice Kennedy



SONY athletes such as Jermaine Edie, pictured here, moved weights and people at the March Madness Bench & Deadlift Open, which featured SONY and USA Powerlifting competitors lifting side by side.

SONY Volunteer / Lisa Figueroa

Shriver started Special Olympics in 1968 because she saw that people with mental retardation weren't being recognized for their capabilities. She would be proud of an event like the March Madness Open. It put Special Olympics athletes on an equal footing with the rest of the athletic community. This event shows how far we've come with Eunice's mission."

Sullivan County Community College provided a cost-free facility for the competition, as well as student volunteers and free lunches for the athletes. USA Powerlifting, meanwhile, raised the money needed for

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Find up-to-date information on our official Web site, www.specialolympicsNY.org, and visit www.soshopping.com



A Message from the President

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

Too often, society focuses on what people with mental retardation *cannot* do.

Special Olympics exists to change that emphasis, to get people to look at what youngsters and adults with mental retardation *can* do.

Here's just a few of the things Special Olympics athletes can do: They can run and jump. They can lift weights. They can compete.

Simply put, they can impress you, the same as any other athlete, if given the chance. Just ask the people who were at the March Madness Bench & Deadlift Open.

At this integrated event, SONY's athletes competed side-by-side with USA Powerlifting athletes. USA Powerlifting's drug-free athletes and our drug-free athletes used the same benches and bars at Sullivan County Community College; they exhibited the same determination and joy; and they drew cheers from the same set of spectators.

With each pound a Special Olympics athlete lifted, they tore down another barrier. Every bench press or deadlift achieved showed exactly what people with mental retardation can do.

Here are a few more things Special

Olympics athletes can do: They can deliver a speech. They can stand tall among society's finest members. They can shine in the spotlight.

Just ask anyone who had the pleasure of listening to Global Messenger Rodney Hankins at the 2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games Benefit Gala in New York City.

Hankins, who served as master of ceremonies, shared the stage with notables such as Hideki Matsui of the New York Yankees, renowned artist LeRoy Neiman and Special Olympics own Tim Shriver.

As Hankins addressed the audience, he reached underneath the podium and pulled out a Yankees hat, which he donned with a

smile. Needless to say, the applause was immediate and intense.

Even newsman Walter Cronkite, who was part of the festivities, couldn't have been any smoother. I mean, what better way could there be to win over a New York City crowd?

Clearly, the walls that separate people with mental retardation from the rest of the world are being lowered. It's not just the Special Olympics organization that's lowering those walls, though.

Often, it's simply our athletes – people like Rodney or our Power Lifters – showing the world what they can do. ■

“The walls that separate people with mental retardation are being lowered.”

SONY Hires New VP of Public Affairs

John D'Alessandro has joined SONY's staff as Vice President, Public Affairs. He replaces Jim Smith.

D'Alessandro has spent the last decade as Principal of WordSmith Communications. With WordSmith, D'Alessandro oversaw the management of corporate public affairs and project development efforts for organizations such as National Power Services, Orion Development Corporation and the New York State Restaurant Association. He has also provided public affairs counsel for the Law Enforcement Officers Union, the Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority and numerous real estate and energy development entities. Prior to establishing his own consulting firm, D'Alessandro served as Director of Public Affairs for Inter-Power Development Corporation and as Senior Public/Regulatory Affairs Officer for the New York Power Authority.

D'Alessandro is a Siena College graduate and resides in the Town of Halfmoon. He is a member of the Center for Economic Growth's Semiconductor Task Force and has served on the Saratoga County Industrial Development Authority, Town of Halfmoon Planning Board and Comprehensive Plan Committee. As SONY's Vice President of Public Affairs, he will coordinate SONY's statewide community, media and government relations efforts. ■ JF

Triumph

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Triumph is published 12 times a year by the Public Relations Department. It salutes the athletes, volunteers, employees, Board members, local and regional programs, sponsors and donors of Special Olympics New York, Inc.

Inspire Greatness

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Sabres and BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York Score for Special Olympics

The National Hockey League's Buffalo Sabres and BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York recently teamed up for "Special Olympics Night" at Buffalo's HSBC Arena.

BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York donated 100 tickets to SONY for Buffalo's March 26 home game against the Pittsburgh Penguins.

"Special Olympics Night with the Sabres is just one way that BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York supports the mission and health of Special Olympics New York's athletes," said Stephen Jepson, Chief Operating Officer of BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York. "Through our statewide sponsorship of SONY's 'Healthy Athletes' program, thousands of Special Olympics athletes receive free dental, hearing and vision screenings and services each year. This award-winning program is the largest of its kind in the world, and it's just another way that we are always working to keep New York healthy."

The Sabres also held a silent auction to

benefit SONY with fans being able to bid on autographed memorabilia. In addition, there was a presentation between periods, during which a message from Sabres center Chris Drury appeared on the HSBC Arena's Jumbotron.

Drury, who had a goal and an assist against the Penguins, applauded the heart and ability regularly displayed by SONY's athletes. Drury plans to work with SONY's athletes in the future.

"Special Olympics is a group that I am very proud to be associated with," Drury said. "These athletes have been able to overcome great difficulties to excel in their individual sports and in their everyday lives. I look forward to a long-lasting association between myself and Special Olympics."

In a perfect ending to a perfect night, the 100 SONY athletes, volunteers, coaches and family members donned their Sabres caps and joined the sold-out crowd cheering the Sabres on to a 5-1 route of Pittsburgh. ■ JF



SONY Staff / Jeff Foley

Chris Drury of the Buffalo Sabres (No. 23) wins a face-off against the Pittsburgh Penguins on Special Olympics Night, for which BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York donated 100 tickets to SONY's athletes.



Metro Tourney Garners NYC Support

Holding an event in the heart of New York City can seem like a daunting task for a not-for-profit organization that relies very heavily on sponsor support. But SONY's annual York Metro Tournament is lucky to have a core group of corporations that return each year to lend both manpower and financial support.

"We've been very lucky to have some top-notch financial institutions on our side throughout the 15 years of Metro Tournament," said Chris Grieco, a Director of Development at SONY. "Corporations like American Express, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Merrill Lynch, Oppenheimer Funds and Goldman Sachs have stepped up year after year to help us make this an event a success for the athletes."

This year's Metro Tournament takes place June 5 at Riverbank State Park in Manhattan, and most of the volunteer slots are already filled with eager employees from the top sponsors, which include Goldman Sachs and ABC/Disney. Sponsors also have the opportunity to provide an interactive booth for SONY's athletes in Olympic Village.

"We try to provide our corporate volunteers with the best experience possible, which is really quite easy since they're going to spend the day interacting with our athletes," Grieco said.

For more information on becoming a Metro Tournament sponsor, contact Chris Grieco at 212-661-5217 or cgrieco@nyso.org. ■ DH

Golf Classic Returns to Winged Foot; Chi Chi Returns to Golf Classic

Annual event, presented by Toyota in partnership with Time Inc., set for June 14.



Chi Chi Rodriguez will run a demonstration at Winged Foot.

All proceeds from the June 14 Classic will benefit the 40,000 athletes with mental retardation who are served by SONY. This year's tournament will mark the 14th time the prestigious Winged Foot Golf Club has hosted the event. In addition to conducting a clinic, Rodriguez will once again pose for pictures with participants and mingle with SONY athletes.

Participants in SONY's 14th Annual Golf Classic, presented by Toyota and Time Inc., are in for several treats. First, they'll get to attend a demonstration run by eight-time PGA Tour champion Chi Chi Rodriguez. They'll also get to play a round of golf at Mamaroneck's Winged Foot Golf Club, home of the 2006 U.S. Open.

Rodriguez, who has captured 22 Champions Tour titles, can relate to how hard SONY's athletes work to succeed in life. He grew up helping his father tend to sugar cane fields in Puerto Rico, and he gravitated to golf by hitting tin cans with a guava tree stick.

"If I made it, anybody can do it," he says. "I think I can be a good role model because people can look at me and say, 'Look, he's a small guy, he was very poor and he worked hard and made it.'"

Golf Classic participants will enjoy breakfast, lunch and dinner, as well as raffle and tournament prizes. There also will be an open driving range and an open swimming pool.

Foursomes and sponsorships are still available. For more information, please visit www.specialolympicsNY.org or contact Victoria Stubrin at 212-661-5217.

■ JF

Max Linder

Continued from P.1

Linder said. "It's inspiring."

It doesn't take \$3,000 to get involved with the Summer Games. Sponsoring an athlete for the Games costs just \$250, and that includes training, uniforms, travel and housing. In return, the sponsor receives their athlete's information and schedule, and is invited to cheer them on at the games.

"The future of Special Olympics New York is in good hands if the youth of today is any indication of what's to come," said Neal J. Johnson, SONY's President and Chief Executive Officer. "They are not only generous, but they're also enthusiastic about our mission and our athletes."

To sponsor an athlete or to get more information on SONY's 2004 Summer Games, visit www.specialolympicsNY.org or call 800-836-6976. ■ DH

Crystal Ball, Olympic Gala Making Dreams Come True

Olympic gold medalist Bart Conner conducts clinic for Special Olympics athletes.

The Genesee Region's recent "Crystal Ball, Olympic Gala" helped make dreams come true for more than 3,200 SONY athletes. Nearly 600 guests attended the 13th annual event, raising a record \$105,000.

The stage was set for a grand evening as corporate advisory member Laura Saxby Lynch welcomed attendees and introduced SONY's newly formed Genesee Region. Keynote speaker Bart Conner, an Olympic gold medalist in gymnastics, conducted a clinic for Special Olympics gymnasts at the Gymnastics Training Center of Rochester prior to the gala. Athletes received pointers on floor exercises, the balance beam, parallel bars and various gymnastics routines.


Conner, a Special Olympics International board member, has done many clinics for Special Olympics athletes. He also has carried the Flame of Hope, presented the Special Olympics flag and judged many Special Olympics World Games. He and his wife, Nadia Comaneci, own a gym in Oklahoma and have traveled worldwide to assist Special Olympics in increasing the number of participating athletes. This year marked Conner's second appearance at the gala. He is sponsored by the Team Xerox Olympian program.

Next year's event is scheduled for April 2, 2005 at the Hyatt Regency Rochester. ■

This story was provided by Marian Turner, Director of Development and Public Relations for SONY's Genesee Region.

Point of View

By Chief Michael Benson, Erie County Sheriffs Office,
and Sgt. Kevin Arnone, Attica Correctional Facility and Law Enforcement Torch Run Co-Director

 The International Law Enforcement Torch Run Conference has been awarded to New York for 2006.

Once a year, members of the national and international Law Enforcement Torch Run communities gather at a conference to network, share ideas, and discuss fundraising and awareness strategies all with the same thing in mind: the athletes of Special Olympics. This conference brings together 1,000-plus law enforcement representatives from across the country and the world for four days of learning, getting to know each other and setting a course of action to make the LETR the success that it is.

Running this conference is no easy feat. It takes countless hours of work, numerous volunteers, the support of the host cities and championship-style teamwork. Previous sites have included Nashville, Wichita, Honolulu and San Francisco. The 2004 conference is being held in Arlington, V.A., and the 2005 conference is scheduled to be held in Minneapolis, M.N.

We are so pleased and proud to announce that, thanks to a lot of hard work

and dedication by New York's LETR supporters, the 2006 conference was awarded to Buffalo. This will not be an easy task, but the next few years will prove very exciting for all the members of our LETR family.

Educational sessions at the conference will focus on grassroots fundraising ideas and strategies, recruiting new agencies and volunteers, sponsorship, public relations and marketing the message of the Special Olympics movement.

With 85,000 officers participating, the 2003 Torch Run program raised \$19 million worldwide. The Torch Run is now up and running in all 50 states, 12 Canadian provinces and territories and 35 foreign countries. This goes to prove that the opportunities are limitless.

LETR supporters from nearly all 50 states and several foreign countries are expected to attend the conference. We will need many hands to make light work for this major undertaking. This will mark the first time New York has hosted the conference and the excitement is already building.

“We are so pleased and proud to announce that, thanks to a lot of hard work and dedication by New York's LETR supporters, the 2006 conference was awarded to Buffalo.”

If you would like more information regarding the conference, or if you'd like your agency take an active role, we'd love to hear from you. We can be reached through Jeanne Mesick at 800-836-6976.

See you in 2006!

Point of View is written periodically. To submit a Point of View idea, contact Jeff Foley at 800-836-6976 or jfoley@nyso.org. ■

Listen my friends
and you will hear
the quacks of the ducks
as the day draws near.

None by land; all by sea,
the number you adopt
is really the key!

MILLION DOLLAR DUCK RACE FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEWYORK
AUGUST 24, 2004

www.specialolympicsNY.org

Integrated Power Lifting

Continued from P. 1

SONY's athletes to join its organization and participate in the event. USA Powerlifting, which is the leading Powerlifting organization in the United States, also created a division for Special Olympics athletes.

According to Collins, the March Madness Open served as an eye-opener for some of the USA Powerlifting athletes: "One of our athletes has no use of his legs and he had to be strapped onto the bench, but he still lifted over 200 pounds," Collins said. "Like so many of our athletes, he showed just how much heart and ability he has. Some of the USA Powerlifting competitors were so impressed that they asked about becoming coaches." ■ JF

TORCH RUN TIMES

Law Enforcement Torch Run News

We Are the Torch Run – The Mighty, Mighty Torch Run

“We are the Torch Run – the mighty, mighty Torch Run. Why do we do it? We do it for the athletes.”

I remember the first time I heard those words. It was when I attended my first Torch Run and that was the officers’ cadence. It was an incredible sight and an equally thrilling sound. And this just about sums it all up in a manner of speaking.

What started nearly 23 years ago in Wichita, Kansas with then-Chief Richard LaMunyon and six co-officers has now grown into more than 85,000 law enforcement officers around the world carrying the Flame of Hope across 35 nations in an effort to raise awareness and funds for Special Olympics. The Torch Run was quickly adopted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, who are now recognized as the founding law enforcement organization of the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics.

Our Law Enforcement Torch Run T-shirts promote that *Running Isn’t All We Do*, which is an appropriate statement given the many successful fund-raising and awareness campaigns that are held throughout the year. While the actual Torch Run is the culminating event, extensive planning has been underway for many months for the more than 20 Torch Run legs that will take place throughout New York.

A key to the success of the actual Torch Run is that runners and spectators alike play a crucial role in making it a success. The Torch Run is now in its 18th year in New York and the need for fans to come out and cheer on the officers is as important as ever.



Of course, we also need those in the law enforcement community, fondly known as the *Guardians of the Flame*, to participate in their local legs.

These legs will serve as a prelude to the Final Leg, which will take place at the Opening Ceremonies of SONY’s 2004 Summer Games on June 17 in Long Island. There is no moment more exhilarating than when the Flame of Hope enters Hofstra University’s arena amidst the athletes and their families, and the coaches and representatives of law enforcement agencies from across the State.

Please check our calendar of events to find out which areas have scheduled Torch Run legs and check our Web site (www.specialolympicsNY.org) for updates. If you would like to participate as a runner in the 2004 Torch Run, or if you’d like to join us for the Final Leg on Long Island, please contact Jeanne Mesick or Chris Porreca at 800-836-6976.

See you on the Run! ■ JM

Up Against the Column Hats Off

When I accepted the position of Law Enforcement

Torch Run Liaison to SONY three years ago, I was not unfamiliar with the law enforcement community. I have two brothers who are respected law enforcement officials

and I am deeply proud of them and motivated by the example they set in our community. Being familiar with the brotherhood and bonds that are inherent among you, I feel a great sense of loss when tragedy strikes.

Here in my own local area, exactly two months apart, two neighboring police departments have endured the ultimate loss.

Lieutenant John F. Finn of the Albany Police Department died on February 12, 2004, as a result of gunshot wounds he sustained on December 23, 2003, while pursuing an armed robbery suspect.

Then, on April 11, 2004, 30-year-old Patrol Officer Eric Verteramo of the Schenectady Police Department died from injuries sustained while rushing to the scene of a motorcycle accident in his own Bellevue neighborhood. He lost control of his cruiser and slammed into a utility pole

Sometimes things that we think shouldn’t significantly impact us suddenly make us think differently. I did not know either of these officers, but judging from the outpouring of support, respect and camaraderie that has been extended by and to the Albany and Schenectady police departments, I can tell that they were both “tried and true men in blue.”



Continued to P. 7

Swing on Over to Union Vale for LETR Golf Classic

Get out your golf clubs and dust off your swing! The annual Law Enforcement Torch Run Golf Classic, presented by AXA Advisors, is scheduled to take place May 24 at the Links at Union Vale.

“We’re thrilled to have AXA Advisors as our presenting sponsor,” said Jeanne Mesick, LETR liaison for SONY. “This tournament should provide an early-season measuring stick for golfers. The Links at Union Vale is reminiscent of courses found in Ireland. So, in the spirit of the Emerald Isle, ‘Cead mile failte (100,000 welcomes) to all our golfers and sponsors.’”

Sponsorships and foursomes are still available. For more information, contact Jeanne Mesick or Chris Porreca at 800-836-6976. ■ CP

For Your Viewing Pleasure

As promised in the last issue, here are some pictures of the new Law Enforcement Torch Run products. This is just a small sampling of what we have to offer for 2004. For more products and pictures, visit www.mytvp.com/letr.



All It Takes Is a Ducky and a Dream

One of New York's largest and most active Kiwanis Clubs has selected SONY as one of the charity recipients of its 14th Annual Million Dollar Duck Race. The race is held by the Glens Falls Kiwanis Club and is one of many fund-raising activities conducted statewide under the banner of the Law Enforcement Torch Run program.

The race will take place on Saturday, July 31, as part of the Kiwanis Kids Day at Haviland's Cove Park in Glens Falls. The fun-filled family day begins at 11 a.m. and the ducks are set to quack at the starting gate at exactly 12:31 p.m.

"This is a great opportunity to increase the success of the Law Enforcement Torch Run and draw attention to the impact that an organization such as Special Olympics New York can have in our community," said Glens Falls Police Chief Rick Carey, who also is Co-Chair of the Law Enforcement Torch Run and a long-time Glens Falls Kiwanis member. "It's a great opportunity to come out and enjoy a family day while having fun watching something you don't normally get a chance to see: thousands of rubber ducks racing down Haviland's Cove."

Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place and there will be 25 other random prize packages. The grand prize winner will receive \$2,004 and a chance to take home the million dollar prize. One duck out of every 3,333 sold will be randomly selected as a million dollar duck.

Ducks can be purchased for \$5 each by contacting Jeanne Mesick or Chris Porreca at 800-836-6976.

Let's get quacking and sell those ducks! ■ JM

Pull a Fire Truck, Help Special Olympics

May 22 Fire Truck Pull will benefit SONY's athletes.

The sirens and lights may not be needed, but a fire truck will definitely be moving on May 22. That's the date of the Third Annual Western New York Fire Truck Pull.

The Fire Truck Pull will take place at Lancaster's Twin District Fire Department with teams of 10 attempting to move a 46,000-pound fire truck 20 feet. Each team will get two tries and the team that covers the distance in the quickest time wins. There is a \$500 entry fee per team.

All proceeds from the Law Enforcement Torch Run event will benefit SONY's athletes.

"While the fire truck won't be moving at its top speed," said Chris Porreca, an Associate Director of Development at SONY, "the people who will be competing will be generating maximum horsepower. The participants have huge hearts and Special Olympics New York's athletes greatly appreciate the effort."

For more information, contact Chris Porreca at 800-836-6976 or cporreca@nyso.org. ■ CP

Up Against the Column

Continued from P. 6

Although this month's column takes on a truly somber matter, there are three things I want people to take away from these words.

First, to the Albany and Schenectady police departments, and to all the departments and agencies across the state, on behalf of everyone at SONY, we extend our deepest gratitude for the jobs you do every day and our heartfelt sympathy on the loss of your brother-

officers.

Secondly, if everyone who reads this could simply experience the admiration and respect our athletes have for the "Guardians of the Flame," we all might learn something, including how important it is to express our appreciation and respect for them.

When we lose someone we love unexpectedly, through tragedy or circumstance, the pain and hurt often

seems unbearable. During those darkest hours we should look upward and see that the sky is a brilliant blue and know that better days will come. Remember to let those whom we care about the most know exactly how important they are to us. Never leave things unsaid. ■

Jeanne Mesick



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Picture of the Month

Michael Burg (left), SONY's 2004 Male Athlete of the Year, examines his Hideki Matsui - autographed ball during a recent fund-raising dinner at Christie's in Manhattan.



SONY Staff / Doreen Hand

Matsui (right), who stars for the New York Yankees, was the subject of a LeRoy Neiman painting that was auctioned off to raise money for the 2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Nagano, Japan. Other SONY athletes taking part in the festivities at Christie's included Jennifer Wong, Craig Ludin, Mary Pannese and Debra Ellis. Rodney Hankins, a SONY athlete from Brooklyn and an international Global Messenger, served as emcee.

2004 Calendar of Events

MAY

- 1 Section 5 Basketball, Volleyball and Aquatics, Canisus
- 14 Roller Skating - Horizon FX
- 15 Aquatics – *Genesee Region*, Letchworth Central
- 17 Swing with the Legends Golf Tournament
- 22 Volleyball – *Genesee Region*, Chemung
- 22 3rd Annual Western New York
Fire Truck Pull at The Twin District Fire Department
- 29 Spike's Hike – *Genesee Region*, Frontier Field

JUNE

- 5 Section 3 & 4 Summer Games, Albany
- 5 Metro Tournament, Manhattan
- 13 Miles for Medals – *Long Island Region* Hofstra University, Hempstead
- 14 Winged Foot Golf Classic, Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaroneck
- 17 Law Enforcement Torch Run – *Long Island Region*
- 17-20 Summer Games, Hofstra

* For more details, please contact Special Olympics New York office.

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.