



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS PA – PHILADELPHIA TO HOLD MEDICAL FESTIVAL AT DREXEL UNIVERSITY’S ARMORY FACILITY FOR MORE THAN 400 PARTICIPANTS

(Norristown, PA, March 26, 2014) – Special Olympics Pennsylvania’s (SOPA) Philadelphia program will offer free physical examinations to more than 400 athletes as well as partners who train with our athletes in Unified Sports at Drexel University’s Armory Facility on 33rd Street between Market and Arch, on Thursday, March 27, 2014 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. as part of its second Medical Festival (MedFest). Medical personnel from throughout the city of Philadelphia will provide full screening services including height/weight, body mass index, blood pressure, vision, orthopedic exams, electrocardiography and physical exams (abdominal, heart and lungs).

The schools expected to participate are: Abraham Lincoln High School, Charles Audenreid Junior High School, Frankford High School, High School of the Future, Martha Washington Elementary School, Martin Luther King High School, Mastery Charter- Gratz Campus, Northeast High School, Penrose Elementary School, Swenson Arts and Technology High School, Thomas Edison High School, Walter D. Palmer Leadership & Learning Partners Charter School and George Washington High School. Each school currently participates in Project UNIFY®, an education-based project that uses the sports and education programs of Special Olympics to activate young people across the U.S in order to promote school communities where all young people are agents of change – fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities.

The goals associated with MedFest are to offer free sports physicals and other health screening services to people with intellectual disabilities; recruit new athletes to Special Olympics; foster new partnerships between Special Olympics and the community; and provide health care providers with training and specialized experience in the examination and assessment of people with intellectual disabilities. In many cases, life-threatening conditions have been found and subsequently treated thanks to MedFest.

“Project UNIFY® provides platforms for all youth to understand and value their peers with intellectual disabilities and empower and activate youth to create opportunities for sport, friendship and advocacy.” said Barbara Chavous, Director Special Olympics Pennsylvania – Philadelphia. “It was a pleasure to work with District officials to conduct our first large-scale MedFest as a key part of our growing partnerships with the School District of Philadelphia.”

Participating MedFest High School students consist of Special Olympics Athletes and Partners (60% are children with disabilities and 40% are part of the general student population). The participating elementary and middle school students represent 75% with disabilities and 25% from the general population.

High Schools were selected through a School District selection process whereas other students (partners) were chosen based on an elective course curriculum that has been introduced this year within these selected schools. The general population students have made the choice to participate as partners within the Special Olympics program. The SOPA athletes are in Special Education Classes. For more information about the MedFest or Project UNIFY®, please contact Barbara Chavous, Director Special Olympics Pennsylvania – Philadelphia at 215.671.5063 or bchavous@specialolympicspa.org.

About Special Olympics Pennsylvania

Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) provides year-round training and competition in 22 Olympic-type sports to more than 20,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities or closely related developmental disabilities. For more information, visit our web site at www.specialolympicspa.org.

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