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2014 PHILADELPHIA SPRING GAMES TO FEATURE MORE THAN 250 ATHLETES, NEW YOUNG ATHLETES PROGRAM, AND UNIFIED SPORTS BASKETBALL GAME

(Norristown, PA, April 23, 2014) – More than 250 Special Olympics Pennsylvania athletes, 100 volunteers and 50 coaches from Philadelphia and the surrounding area will take over the William Penn Charter School, located at 3000 W. Schoolhouse Lane, on Saturday, April 26th for the 36th Annual Spring Games Competition. Athletes will compete in basketball, track and field, tennis, and participate in a Unified Basketball Game.

This year's Games will feature the Young Athletes program which teaches sports skills to children between the ages of 2-7 with intellectual disabilities. In addition, shortly after Opening Ceremonies at approximately 10:15 a.m., spectators can experience this year's Unified Basketball game, a game where members of the community including local dignitaries and intercollegiate athletes play on the court alongside Special Olympics athletes for some friendly competition. The Unified Soccer program exists thanks to a partnership between Special Olympics and the City of Philadelphia School District.

"Unified Sports® and Project UNIFY® provide platforms for the community to understand and value their peers with intellectual disabilities and empower and activate them to create opportunities for sport, friendship and advocacy," said Barbara Chavous, Director of Special Olympics Pennsylvania – Philadelphia.

The 2014 Spring Games will kick off with local members of Law Enforcement running with the Flame of Hope from the Art Museum to Penn Charter School. The Torch is expected to arrive at 8:45 a.m. prior to Opening Ceremonies at 9 a.m. The Ceremonies will include a parade of athletes, special guest speakers, and the lighting of the caldron with Games immediately following and taking place until 3:30 p.m.

Beyond the competitions, the 2014 Spring Games will feature a family-friendly Olympic Town that will provide entertainment for all. Members of the community are invited to join the festivities with their friends and family to experience the joy that sports provide Special Olympic Pennsylvania athletes.

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.

(more)

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Created by Joseph P Kennedy Jr. Foundation. Authorized and accredited by Special Olympics, Inc. for the benefit of persons with intellectual disabilities.



About Unified Sports

Unified Sports® combines approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics Athletes and athletes without intellectual disabilities (called Partners) on sports teams for training and competition. Age and ability matching of athletes and partners is defined on a sport-by-sport basis. The concept of combining athletes with intellectual disabilities and those without was first introduced in the mid-1980s to provide another level of challenge for higher ability athletes and to promote equality and inclusion.

About Young Athletes

Young Athletes™ is a unique sport and play program for children with intellectual disabilities. The focus is on fun activities that are important to mental and physical growth. Children ages 2 to 7 enjoy games and activities that develop motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Young Athletes is an early introduction to sports and to the world of Special Olympics. Parents say their children in Young Athletes also develop better social skills. The confidence boost makes it easier for them to play and talk with other children on the playground and elsewhere.

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