

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****CONTACT:** Kristin Craven, 610-630-9450 ext. 252, kcraven@specialolympicspa.org**SPECIAL OLYMPICS PA AND THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA TO PARTNER FOR
5TH ANNUAL UNIFIED SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP***9 Philadelphia High Schools gather to celebrate inclusion through sports*

(Philadelphia, PA, May 22, 2017) – On Tuesday, May 30th, Special Olympics Pennsylvania’s Philadelphia Program (SOPA Philly) in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools will present the fifth annual Unified Soccer Championship held at George Washington High School located at 10175 Bustleton Avenue in Philadelphia. Opening Ceremonies for the Unified Soccer Championship will kick-off at 10:00 am with event emcee and Philadelphia 76ers announcer, Marc Zumoff, followed by competition and the Championship games at approximately 12:40 pm.

The Championship matches will feature teams from 9 Philadelphia high schools from across the city including Abraham Lincoln, Universal Audenried Charter, Frankford, Furness, George Washington, High School of the Future, Martin Luther King, Sayre, and Thomas Edison. Approximately 100 athletes have been training for months in preparation for this Championship with two League Play Days to scope out the competition. The Unified Soccer Championship will display the “best of the best” of each of these schools. An Olympics Village will provide fun and entertainment for all guests with activities by Dave and Busters, Philadelphia Union, and Sambulance. Also, students from Universal Daroff Charter School will be in attendance to cheer on the inspiring sportsmanship and talents of the athletes on the field.

Special Olympics Unified Sports® is an inclusive sports program that puts athletes with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. This Unified Soccer elective course, developed in partnership between the School District of Philadelphia and Special Olympics Pennsylvania, includes a curriculum with youth leadership components, anti-bullying elements and soccer training and competition. The course provides greater access to sports for all students, with and without disabilities. Additionally, a partnership with the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) helps to provide officials for Unified events.

Spectators are welcome to cheer on the athletes and partners as they compete for the championship trophy. There is no charge to attend Special Olympics PA competitions for athletes, volunteers or spectators.

About Special Olympics Pennsylvania

Special Olympics Pennsylvania provides year-round training and competition in 21 Olympic-type sports to nearly 20,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities or closely related developmental disabilities. For more information about how you can help “Reveal the Champion Inside” thousands of Special Olympics athletes, visit www.specialolympicspa.org.

About Interscholastic Unified Sports (IUS)/Project Unify

Special Olympics Pennsylvania Interscholastic Unified Sports (IUS) is a fully-inclusive co-ed high school sports program which successfully facilitates social inclusion by bringing together a proportional number of students with and without intellectual disabilities on teams for training and competition.

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Special Olympics Pennsylvania – Philadelphia2900 Southampton Road, Philadelphia, PA 19154 **Tel** 215.671.5069 **Fax** 215.671.5033**Email** philly@specialolympicspa.org **www**.SOPAPhilly.org **Facebook.com**/SOPAPhadelphia **Twitter** @SOPAPhillyCreated by Joseph P Kennedy Jr. Foundation. Authorized and accredited by Special Olympics, Inc. for the benefit of persons with intellectual disabilities.