



For Immediate Release:

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Special Olympics PA's Philadelphia program Celebrates 40th Annual Spring Games

(Philadelphia, PA, April 17, 2017) – More than 250 Special Olympics Pennsylvania athletes from Philadelphia and the surrounding area, will meet at the William Penn Charter School, located at 3000 W. School House Lane on Saturday, April 29th, for the 40th Annual Philadelphia Spring Games. Athletes will compete in athletics (track and field), basketball, and tennis. Special Olympics Pennsylvania's Philadelphia program (SOPA Philly) is excited to be hosting their 40th Annual Spring Games. The first Philadelphia Spring Games started in 1977 and today is the biggest competition that the Philadelphia Program holds.

The 40th Annual Philadelphia Spring Games will start at the Philadelphia Museum of Art as local police officers run the Flame of Hope 3.1 miles to William Penn Charter School. The Flame of Hope will make its entrance at the 40th Annual Philadelphia Spring Games before the Opening Ceremony at 9:00 am. The Opening Ceremony will be emceed by **John Boruk** and include a parade of athletes, with a special appearance from the Mayor of Philadelphia, **Jim Kenney**. The Flame of Hope will end the Opening Ceremony as special guest, **Bernard Hopkins**, along with athletes and law enforcement light the cauldron signaling the official opening of the games.

After the Opening Ceremony, competition will begin immediately around the campus until 3:30 pm. After athletes finish their competition, they will be awarded medals and ribbons based upon the order of finish. Beyond competition, there will be a Unified Bocce experience for VIP guests, a Young Athletes open play and showcase, and an Olympic Village featuring entertainment and activities.

William Penn Charter School, PECO, Legacy Youth Tennis and Education, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Brandywine Realty Trust and the Gish Rockford Family are sponsors of this year's event. We encourage you to come celebrate the 40th Annual Philadelphia Spring Games with SOPA Philly!

For more information, contact Kristin Craven, Special Events and Marketing Manger at 610-630-9450 x252, or email at kcraven@specialolympicspa.org.

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 SOPA inspires greatness, visit our Web site at www.specialolympicspa.org.

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.

Special Olympics Pennsylvania – Philadelphia

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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.



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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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