



For Immediate Release:

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SAINT FRANCIS UNIVERSITY TO HOST SPECIAL OLYMPICS PA CENTRAL SPRING SECTIONAL

(Loretto, PA, April 18, 2019) – Saint Francis University will host Special Olympics Pennsylvania’s (SOPA) Central Spring Sectional on April 28, 2019 on its campus located at 117 Evergreen Drive in Loretto, PA. The Spring Games will host approximately 359 athletes and 149 coaches from 15 counties in Central Pennsylvania. Athletes will compete in basketball, track and field, swimming and tennis.

The Central Spring Sectional will kick-off with Opening Ceremonies held in the University’s DeGol Arena from 9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Competitions will begin at 9:45 a.m. and run until 4:15 p.m. All competitions will take place at Saint Francis University with the exception of athletics and tennis which will be held in Ebensburg, PA. Athletics competitions will take place at Central Cambria High School, located at 204 Schoolhouse Road, and Tennis competitions will be held at the Ebensburg Tennis Center, located at 257 Lakeview Road. Olympic-style award ceremonies for individual and team events will be ongoing throughout the day.

This event is a joint effort between the University and SOPA, and is managed by students under the guidance of staff advisors. Over 400 Saint Francis University students will be volunteering during the event, many of them members of various Red Flash NCAA Division I teams, and the Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy Departments. This is the 31st consecutive year that the Spring Sectional has been hosted by the University.

“Special Olympics holds a special place in the hearts of everyone involved,” said event director Cecelia Pisano, a junior majoring in accounting and finance at Saint Francis University, “This event gives the opportunity for athletes throughout Pennsylvania to compete in the sports they are passionate about. There will be no shortage of excitement shown by the faces of athletes lighting up and by the sheer number of volunteers and supporters cheering them on. I can speak for all when I say we are proud to be part of this joint community project showcasing the Special Olympics



athletes. Being a part of something that brings joy to so many people is a humbling and life changing experience.”

“Special Olympics is near and dear to my heart, and I love seeing the participants filled with joy the whole day,” said Alexa Schmidhamer, a sophomore majoring in early childhood and special education. “I couldn’t wait to become more involved this year and bring such an amazing event to campus once again. The participants and volunteers look forward to this day for many months, if not the whole year. I am grateful to be a part of such a fun day.”

“This community partnership is truly a mutually beneficial one...for our students, for SOPA and for the Special Olympics athletes,” said Lisa Georgiana, Director of the Center for Service & Learning and co-advisor to the event. “Our student leadership team has been working collaboratively with SOPA to plan the event. It is a true team effort. Everyone WINS.”

Counties that will be represented by Special Olympics Pennsylvania delegations include: Adams, Area M (Dauphin, Perry, Cumberland, and Northern York), Bedford, Blair, Bradford/Sullivan, Cambria, Centre, Clearfield, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Lycoming, Mifflin/Juniata, Somerset, Tioga, and York.

Special thanks are extended to Sheetz, Inc. for the sponsorship of event lunches; Parkhurst Dining donating cookies and water; Central Cambria High School, and Ebensburg Tennis Center.

Sectional events require volunteers to serve as officials, athlete escorts, award presenters, and in various other ways. Members of the Saint Francis University community who would like to volunteer on the day of the event should email cep108@francis.edu by April 25th. This is a CES event, and freshmen will receive credit for one hour of service. Those interested in volunteering within the community can register online at www.specialolympicspa.org. For information about the sectional, please contact Teresa Amaturro, Central Competition Director, at 610-630-9450, ext. 238, or tamaturro@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. For more information about how you can join the “Inclusion Revolution,” visit our web site at www.specialolympicspa.org.