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Contact: Hailey Fuzak, (908) 239- 2294, hfuzak@specialolympicspa.org

**EIGHT SPECIAL OLYMPICS PENNSYLVANIA ATHLETE LEADERS EARN
DEGREES FROM ATHLETE LEADERSHIP UNIVERSITY**

(Norristown, PA, September 16, 2020) – Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) will honor eight athlete leaders who received a degree in Communication, Governance, Health and/or Sport upon their successful completion of Athlete Leadership University, a training program offered three times a year to further their knowledge base and provide certification. The athletes will be honored during SOPA’s annual Leadership Awards & Athlete Graduation, which will be celebrated virtually on Wednesday, September 16th and premiere on SOPA’s [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) channels at 7 p.m.

Pursuing a degree through Athlete Leadership University is the same as pursuing one at any other university. First, an athlete declares a major and enrolls into an introductory course. After taking the introductory course, the athlete then receives a certificate of course completion. Following the completion of an introductory practicum, advanced coursework and a graduate practicum, the athlete is then eligible to receive their degree.

[Athlete Leadership programs](#) empower athletes to become leaders in their local community, engage in public speaking roles at local events, educate teammates about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, relay important information from their local programs to the state office and beyond. SOPA is incredibly proud of all of the hard work and dedication demonstrated by these athletes toward earning their degrees.

A LIST OF THE CLASS OF 2020 IS AS FOLLOWS:

- **Ashley Bressler**, Columbia/Montour, Athlete Representative
- **Winnie Downey**, Delaware, Athlete Representative
- **Anthony Glose**, Lehigh, Athletes as Coaches
- **Andrew Mayer**, Washington/Greene, Athlete Representative and Athletes as Coaches
- **Elizabeth Porter**, Bradford/Sullivan, Athlete Representative
- **Kristine Progin**, Lebanon, Global Messenger
- **Ernest Roundtree**, Monroe, Athletes as Coaches
- **Kelly Unangst**, Delaware, Global Messenger

In addition to recognizing the Athlete Leadership University Class of 2020, the virtual celebration will honor Leadership Award recipients in categories such as Male & Female Athlete of the Year, Coach of the Year, Program of the Year, and many more. These awardees were chosen by a statewide panel of business and community leaders representing both the private and nonprofit sectors. Nominations were submitted from local Special Olympics programs throughout Pennsylvania.

About Special Olympics Pennsylvania

Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) provides year-round training and competition in 21 Olympic-type sports to more than 20,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities or closely related developmental disabilities. For more information about how you can join “The Inclusion Revolution,” visit www.specialolympicspa.org.

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