



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS: Wenona Sutton, 610-630-9450, ext. 219, wsutton@specialolympicspa.org
Nicole Jones, 610-630-9450, ext. 231, njones@specialolympicspa.org

OVER 2,000 ATHLETES & 750 COACHES TO COMPETE AT SPECIAL OLYMPICS PA'S 49TH ANNUAL SUMMER GAMES AT PENN STATE UNIVERSITY, MAY 31 – JUNE 2 *HUNDREDS OF VOLUNTEER POSITIONS STILL NEED TO BE FILLED*

(NORRISTOWN, PA, May 23, 2018) – Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) will hold its 49th Annual Summer Games at Penn State University in University Park, PA, from Thursday, May 31 to Saturday, June 2, 2018. This event is the largest statewide competition bringing more than 2,000 athletes and 750 coaches. Competition in aquatics, athletics, basketball, bowling, equestrian sports, golf, gymnastics, softball and tennis will highlight the three day event. Weeks of hard work and dedication in training will be rewarded as athletes are cheered on and supported during competition by more than 1,000 enthusiastic volunteers.

The Summer Games committee is currently seeking volunteers to serve in specific roles including: general event volunteers to assist with athlete arrival, luggage assistance and equipment tear down. Volunteers are also needed for sports specific roles including, but not limited to, score keepers, runners, timers, lane monitors, announcers, judges and more. A full list of volunteer jobs and the volunteer registration process can be found on the [SOPA website](#).

Preliminary Summer Games competition will begin on Thursday, May 31, followed by the traditional fanfare of Opening Ceremonies at Pegula Ice Arena, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Opening Ceremonies will be emceed by Kellie Goodman Shaffer, President and CEO of the Bedford County Chamber of Commerce, and Lebanon County athlete Bobbi Jo Rhen. It will end with the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron by the Flame of Hope carried by participants of the eighth annual ["Be a Fan" Torch Run](#). The Torch Run is a 3-day, 150 mile run from Pittsburgh to Penn State University. Over 400 members of law enforcement representing more than 50 teams from across the state will participate by carrying the torch from home plate at PNC Park in Pittsburgh on May 29th to Pegula Ice Arena in State College to celebrate and kickoff the 49th Annual Summer Games.

On Friday, June 1, competitions begin as early as 8:00 a.m. at nine venues in individual skills, individual events, relay and team events. The day will conclude with a Family Ice Cream Social, Sports Fest and Victory Dance on Bigler Field from 7 – 9:30 p.m. Senator Bob Casey will also be attending the Games on Friday, June 1st. Casey will visit the track & field competitions and Healthy Athletes venues. Final competitions and awards are scheduled to take place at each venue between 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 2nd.

The complete [Summer Games event schedule](#) is available via the SOPA website. Summer Games will also host Healthy Athletes programs in Pollock Commons where health promotion, fun fitness, eye, ear, dental, and podiatry health screenings will be offered. Our Healthy Athletes program provides health services and education to Special Olympics athletes free of charge, and is changing the way health systems interact with

Special Olympics Pennsylvania

2570 Blvd. of the Generals, Ste. 124, Norristown, PA, 19403 **Tel** + 610- 630-9450 **Toll Free** + 800-235-9058 **Fax** + 610-630- 9456

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people with intellectual disabilities. The program has now made Special Olympics the largest public health organization for people with intellectual disabilities in the world.

Additionally, a total of 50 athletes and 16 coaches that will be representing “Team PA” at the [2018 Special Olympics USA Games](#) in Seattle, Washington from July 1-6, 2018, will be attending Summer Games as a delegation.

This year marks the 31th consecutive year that Penn State University will host Summer Games, and the 26th successive year that Sheetz, Inc. has served as a state-wide corporate partner. Aerotek, Walmart, Sam’s Club and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are other premier sponsors of this year’s event. Likewise, StateCollege.com, Centre Daily Times, WTAJ, and Forever Media/Majic 99 will serve as key Summer Games media partners.

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.

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