



For Immediate Release

Contact: Hailey Fuzak, Special Olympics Pennsylvania

Phone Number: (610) 630 - 9450

Email: hfuzak@specialolympicspa.org

**Special Olympics Pennsylvania Announces Delegation for the
2022 Special Olympics USA Games**

Local Columbia/Montour County Athlete and Coaches Selected to Compete in Orlando, Florida

July 19, 2021– Norristown, PA -- [Special Olympics Pennsylvania](#) (SOPA) is proud to announce that it will send a 162-member delegation to represent Pennsylvania at the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games, being held from June 5 – 12, 2022, in Orlando, Florida.

Team Pennsylvania will be comprised of 122 athletes, Unified partners, 34 coaches, and 6 staff. The delegation, including Columbia/Montour members listed below, will compete in 14 of the 19 Olympic-type sports offered.

Team Pennsylvania Athletes:

Maria Brandt – Athletics

Team Pennsylvania Coaches:

Melissa Brandt – Athletics – Head Coach

Laura Davis – Bocce – Assistant Coach

Note: The full roster for Team Pennsylvania can be found at specialolympicspa.org/sports-and-games/usa-games

The Special Olympics USA Games, which is hosted every four years, will mark the largest humanitarian event in Florida’s history. The event will unite more than 5,500 athletes and coaches from all 50 states and the Caribbean. Over 10,000 volunteers will fill more than 20,000 volunteer shifts during the week. It is anticipated that over 125,000 families, friends and spectators will witness inspiring athletic accomplishments in 19 Olympic-style team and individual sports and more than 30 events at world-class venues across Orlando, centered at ESPN Wide World of Sports at Walt Disney World Resort.

Spring/Summer sports athletes, Unified Partners and coaches were selected for Team Pennsylvania based on whether they won a gold medal in their division in the past three years at Summer Games, successfully participated in an overnight State level event, and if they actively participated in at least one *Commit to Fit* activity during the pandemic. *Commit to Fit* activities include at-home sports specific training; in-person sports specific training, and participation in the Fitness Heptathlon (seven different fitness exercises) and the Stride or Move Fitness Challenges (distance and exercise based activities) as an individual and/or unified pair.

Team Pennsylvania coaches had to go through an application process where they selected the sport that they wished to coach and were then interviewed by Team Pennsylvania staff before being chosen from a pool of over 30 applicants.



More than 50 athletes have been selected to represent Team Pennsylvania in athletics, basketball, equestrian, golf, gymnastics, softball, swimming and tennis. Additional Team Pennsylvania selections will take place throughout the summer and after SOPA's Fall Festival competition in November.

"We are extremely proud of all of the athletes who have been selected to represent Team Pennsylvania at the 2022 USA Games," said Mike Ermer, Team PA Head of Delegation. "We know how hard these athletes have worked to receive the chance to compete nationally and display their remarkable abilities to the world. We are excited to see all that they accomplish and can't wait to celebrate their dedication and perseverance."

About the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games

The 2022 Special Olympics USA Games is scheduled for June 5-12, 2022 in Orlando, Florida. Jersey Mike's Subs is the Presenting Partner and hosted by Disney. During this magical week, more than 5,500 athletes and coaches from all 50 states and the Caribbean will travel to Florida to unite in one of the country's most cherished sporting events. The USA Games is hosted once every four years and showcases 19 Olympic-style team and individual sports and 30 events throughout the week including forums and VIP receptions. Website: www.2022usagames.org

About Special Olympics Pennsylvania

Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) provides year-round training and competition in 21 Olympic-type sports to approximately 16,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities or closely related developmental disabilities. For 50 years, SOPA and its 54 local programs have used the power of sports to transform the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and unite everyone by fostering community and building a more acceptable and civil society. Through its Athlete Leadership Programs, athletes assume meaningful leadership roles and influence change within the Special Olympics movement. SOPA also addresses major health challenges facing its athletes through its Healthy Athletes program that offers free health screenings and provides healthy lifestyle education. Additionally, SOPA strives to create a unified world by promoting inclusion, uniting communities, and changing attitudes. Through Unified Sports, SOPA brings together individuals with and without intellectual disabilities as equal teammates in training and competition, which promotes respect and acceptance, and facilitates meaningful relationships between people of all abilities. For more information about how you can join "The Inclusion Revolution," visit www.specialolympicspa.org.

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