

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **AREA M VOLUNTEER HERBERT H. PACKER III INDUCTED INTO SPECIAL OLYMPICS PENNSYLVANIA HALL OF FAME**

(Norristown, PA, August 29, 2019) – Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) recently inducted four new members (two athletes and two volunteers) into its Hall of Fame as members of the Class of 2019. Among the inductees was Herbert H. Packer III, an Area M (Dauphin, Perry, Cumberland and Northern York Counties) volunteer who has been participating in Special Olympics for more than 31 years. The Hall of Fame induction ceremony was held during SOPA's annual Leadership Conference Banquet at the Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center in State College, PA on Saturday, August 17, 2019.

Following a career playing professional basketball throughout Europe, Packer began his journey with Special Olympics PA as a volunteer in 1988 and became Area M's head basketball coach in 1989. Since then, he never looked back. He became the state's basketball Sports Director in 1997, started multiple fundraisers for Area M, became a member of the SOPA State Basketball Committee (2000) and also founded the Area M Fall Classic, which now welcomes more than 800 athletes from across the state.

The difference Packer has made in the lives of athletes in his community and throughout the state is immeasurable. He has no children in the program but that has not stopped him from being a dedicated and loyal volunteer. He has helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for his local program and has spent much of his own money to support the athletes, even printing a newsletter to keep athletes and volunteers informed about what was happening.

As his role expanded over time, Packer has worked tirelessly to grow the basketball program throughout the state and took great pride in streamlining the basketball assessments so that all athletes could be evaluated fairly. He has inspired many athletes to realize their potential and many volunteers to join his cause. In 2004 he was awarded the SOPA Volunteer Commitment Award as a "Triple Whistle" Coach and is truly invaluable to his community.

"I've been working with this volunteer in various basketball venues for over 20 years, and his dedication to the game, the competition, and the athletes is unquestionable," said Chris M. Charney, Venue Coordinator for 3v3 Basketball. "He is part of the reason I decided to get more involved in SOPA by joining the Summer Games Committee. He has mentored me on tournament structure, team evaluation, and facilities management. It has been a tremendous advantage to have him available as a resource during the course of my Special Olympics trajectory."

#### **About The Hall of Fame Awards**

The Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) Hall of Fame awards honors athletes and volunteers who have made outstanding contributions both on and off the field of competition. This prestigious event is held during our annual Leadership Conference and Banquet in State College, PA. Learn more at <https://specialolympicspa.org/events/hall-of-fame>

**About Special Olympics Pennsylvania**

Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) 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 to be a fan, visit our website at [www.specialolympicspa.org](http://www.specialolympicspa.org).

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