



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CITY OFFICIALS PARTNER WITH SPECIAL OLYMPICS PA TO HOST PHILADELPHIA “CITIES OF INCLUSION” SUMMIT**

*Mayor Kenney and Special Olympics Chief Inspiration Officer Loretta Claiborne to Attend*

**(NORRISTOWN, PA, DECEMBER 5, 2018)** – On Tuesday, December 11, 2018, a first of its kind “Cities of Inclusion” Summit will bring together city officials, corporate leaders, foundations and other funders, nonprofit organizations, and various other community leaders to jointly create a vision for Philadelphia as an inclusive city. An inclusive city is an urban community offering attitudes that value everyone and social inclusion that ensures people of all abilities are involved in their communities, able to effectively pursue opportunities and contribute, safely express themselves, and exercise their rights. These cities provide access and opportunities for everyone to take part in employment, education, sports and health and to access community services. Many cities that are moving towards greater inclusion are focused on meeting the needs of those with physical disabilities and not necessarily taking into account those of people with intellectual disabilities. Through “Inclusive Cities,” Special Olympics is increasing awareness of people with intellectual disability in urban settings and recommending actions to promote more inclusiveness in city planning, programs and services. Co-hosted by Derek Green, Councilman At-Large and Chair of the Committee on Disabilities and Charles Horton, Executive Director for the Mayor’s Commission on People with Disabilities, the summit will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Red Zone Lounge at Lincoln Financial Field, located at 1 Lincoln Financial Field Way in Philadelphia, PA.

Several other cities (Seattle, Chicago, Abu Dhabi) and some countries (Panama and the Dominican Republic) are working with Special Olympics International on becoming more inclusive. However, Philadelphia is the first city to convene a city-wide summit to collaborate and agree on implementation plans for creating a shared vision of inclusion in the city. As part of their global efforts, Special Olympics International has also offered Pennsylvania the unique opportunity to be recognized as the first “state of inclusion” by securing commitments from multiple cities to be more inclusive for people with intellectual disabilities. While SOPA is still in the early stages of identifying all of the participating cities and working with them to develop their Inclusion Plans, the state’s two largest cities, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, are already onboard.

“Special Olympics Pennsylvania is proud to be a pioneer in a movement for global change. Through the transformative and inclusive power of sports, we help people with intellectual disabilities develop essential life skills and lead healthier lifestyles and thereby become more productive and accepted members of their communities,” said Matt Aaron, SOPA’s President & CEO. “As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, we are leading the ‘Inclusion Revolution’ to engage, empower, and transform our communities to ensure full inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities.”

Each city recognized as a “City of Inclusion” is expected to commit to creating a city-specific Inclusion Plan with detailed objectives spanning multiple areas including inclusive health, inclusive sports and

#### **Special Olympics Pennsylvania**

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inclusive learning. Inclusive cities have the potential to make our communities better places to live and more welcoming for everyone.

We are expecting more than 100 stakeholders, partners and potential funders to attend the summit. The Philadelphia Cities of Inclusion Summit will begin at 10 a.m. with opening remarks by special guests to include Mayor Jim Kenney and other dignitaries. In addition, there will be a featured lunch time keynote speech from Loretta Claiborne, SOPA athlete and Special Olympics International's Chief Inspiration Officer. The rest of the Summit will consist of working sessions centered around five focus areas: health, housing, education, employment, and access to information & services. The event concludes at 4 p.m. The Philadelphia Cities of Inclusion Summit is made possible with generous support from the R. K. Mellon Family Foundation and Philadelphia Eagles Care.

### ***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](http://www.specialolympicspa.org).

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