

December 2020

Guardians of the Flame of Hope,

I hope this letter finds you healthy and optimistic about new opportunities that the future holds in the New Year. This letter will focus on our overall fundraising efforts, Robin Callaway's recognition from the LETR International Executive Council, some information about the 2021 Kick-off Conference and Polar Plunges. There is no question that 2020 gave us many challenges, from social unrest in our communities or finding creative ways to continue the NC LETR mission during a pandemic. Even though this year exponentially challenged us like no other, we, the Guardians of the Flame of Hope, rose to the challenge.

With all the distractions throughout the year, the NC LETR Program was still able to raise over \$800,000.00. That number is lower than our 2019 total funds raised, but when you consider this year's challenges, you each should be proud of where we ended the year. It was critical we stayed committed to being engaged with the athletes and continued to find ways to raise funds during these difficult times. With the cancellation of training programs and games across the state, many athletes found themselves isolated without training opportunities and lacked social interactions, which created concerns for their well-being. The funds we raised helped Special Olympics North Carolina provide online social opportunities and wellness programs such as Partner Up Power-Up. Without your support, these types of outreach would have been difficult.

On December 2, 2020, NC Law Enforcement Torch Run Athlete Ambassador Robin Callaway from Mecklenburg County, was presented with the 2020 LETR International Executive Council Athlete Award. Robin Callaway is the first Special Olympics North Carolina athlete in its history to receive this award. She deserved this very prestigious award for her years of leadership on behalf of fellow athletes and her commitment to raising funds and awareness for Special Olympics North Carolina. Congratulations, Robin job well done! I cannot wait to see the other amazing things she does in the future.

As we transition into the new year, you may be wondering what the 2021 NC LETR Kick-Off Conference will look like and where it will be held. The NC LETR State Council and Special Olympics North Carolina are currently working hard to work out the details. We know that we will host mini conferences in different regions across the state to ensure compliance with the Governor's Executive Orders' on gatherings and social distancing. Hosting mini-conferences may also assist some agencies that may have restrictions on travel. Since seating will be limited due to regulations, we will also offer a virtual conference opportunity for those unable to attend in person. More details will be shared in the near future.

Who's doing a Polar Plunge? If you typically do a Polar Plunge, you should have received an email stating that due to the continued concerns of the pandemic, Special Olympics North Carolina is restricting any in-person Polar Plunges January thru March. There are a couple of different options, however, if you are interested in doing a Polar Plunge. One option is to promote a virtual polar plunge to engage participation in your community. Another option is to join the Triad Chill Polar Plunge LETR efforts at Wet N Wild in Greensboro, NC, on May 1, 2021. You could also host a plunge later in the year. If your agency chooses any of these options, please contact Aaron George (AGeorge@sonc.net).

In summary, 2020 has thrown us curveballs, knuckleballs, sliders, and a few other wild pitches, but once you look back and reflect on the issues we faced, we can be proud of what we were able to accomplish. Thank you each for the contributions you have made on behalf of the Special Olympics athletes here in North Carolina. I know 2021 will present us with some additional challenges, but like 2020 as Guardians we will rise to the challenge and overcome any obstacles placed in our path.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can assist you in any way.  
Stay Safe and Happy Holidays!

William Davis



North Carolina State University Police, Lieutenant  
NC LETR State Council Director