



## **WHAT IS THE TORCH RUN?**

Each year, law enforcement officers from across the state raise funds and awareness for Special Olympics North Carolina by conducting the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics North Carolina. Law enforcement officials raise funds through corporate sponsorships, T-shirt and hats donations and unique fundraising events such as Cops on Top building sits, Over the Edge, golf tournaments, and Polar Plunges held throughout the year.

The Torch Run has grown consistently each year since its beginning in 1987, raising nearly 20 million since its inception through special events, corporate sponsorships private donations and donations for T-shirt and baseball caps. Officers hope to raise \$1 million annually to support sports training and competition for athletes with intellectual disabilities in North Carolina.

In addition to raising funds, the Law Enforcement Torch Run officers take part in the Torch Run relay that takes place each spring. The NC Law Enforcement Torch Run involves more than 2,500 law enforcement officials from more than 200 agencies who take part in a 2,000 mile, month-long torch relay covering 2,000 miles throughout North Carolina to pass the Special Olympics *Flame of Hope* across the state. All of the relays converge for the lighting of the cauldron during the Special Olympics North Carolina Summer Games Opening Ceremonies.

## **THE HISTORY**

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics, the largest grass-roots fundraising program benefiting Special Olympics, began in 1981 when Wichita, Kan. Police Chief Richard LaMunyon saw an urgent need to raise funds for and increase awareness of Special Olympics.

The idea for the Torch Run was to provide local law enforcement officers with an opportunity to volunteer with Special Olympics in the communities where the officers lived and worked. After three years of successful runs in Kansas, Chief LaMunyon presented his idea to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which endorsed Special Olympics as its official charity through the Torch Run. Today, all 50 states and more than 40 countries have their own versions of the Torch Run.

In North Carolina, the first torch relay was organized in 1987 when legs were run from Raleigh and Charlotte to the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill's Fetzer Field, site of the 1987 SONC Summer Games. Today, the Torch Run has grown into the most important fund raising effort for Special Olympics NC. Along with being the premier fund raising event for SONC, it is the most

visible event in Special Olympics and the event that is most identified with the Special Olympics movement.

### **About the NC Law Enforcement Torch Run**

The Law Enforcement Torch Run is an international fundraising campaign for Special Olympics. Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and competition for more than 5.7 million children and adults around the world who have intellectual disabilities. Nearly 40,000 athletes participate in Special Olympics in North Carolina, making it one of the largest Special Olympics programs in the world.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run<sup>®</sup> for Special Olympics is officially endorsed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriff's Association, the North Carolina Sheriff's Association, the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, the National Association of School Resource Officers, NC Association of School Resource Officers, NC Department of Justice and the NC Department of Public Safety.

### **About Special Olympics North Carolina**

Special Olympics North Carolina offers year-round sports training and competition for nearly 40,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities. These athletes inspire greatness through their success and provide motivation to the thousands of coaches, sports officials, local program committee members and event organizers involved in Special Olympics statewide. SONC offers Olympic-type competition in 19 sports on local and state levels. Visit Special Olympics North Carolina at [www.specialolympicsnc.com](http://www.specialolympicsnc.com). Engage with us on <http://twitter.com/SONorthCarolina>; <http://www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsNC> and <http://www.youtube.com/BeAFanSONC>