

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:  
Bridget Carleton  
(603) 969-9572  
bridgetc@sonh.org



## CHIEF ROBERT CORMIER OF TILTON POLICE DEPARTMENT TO CARRY THE FLAME OF HOPE FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES LOS ANGELES 2015 FINAL LEG

### *Flame serves as beacon of inspiration to thousands during the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg in California*

July 11, 2015 —On May 14<sup>th</sup>, the Flame of Hope, the official torch for the Special Olympics World Games Los Angeles 2015, was lit at the Sacred Site of Pnyx, opposite the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, formally beginning its journey to the World Games. In keeping with Olympic tradition and custom dating back to the Ancient Greeks, the torch will be lit by the sun's rays, and will remain lit until the end of the Games on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Chief Robert Cormier of Tilton will serve as a Guardian of the Flame of Hope and participate in the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg, the last journey of the flame throughout the state of California. Cormier has been selected by the Law Enforcement Torch Run and Special Olympics New Hampshire to be one of the 126 Final Leg Team members. Law enforcement personnel are selected for this honor by their local Torch Run and Special Olympics program for their dedication and commitment to the Special Olympics movement.

After the official lighting, the flame began its journey through all 50 states and the District of Columbia as a part of the historic Special Olympics Unified Relay Across America presented by Bank of America. At the conclusion of the Unified Relay, the Flame of Hope was handed over to the 2015 Los Angeles Final Leg Team, where it will travel beginning on Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup> to more than 125 cities and towns throughout California, honoring the spirit of the Special Olympics global movement and delivering a message of hope to communities where people with intellectual disabilities continue to fight for acceptance and inclusion. At each stop, the flame will be carried by teams of law enforcement personnel and Special Olympics athletes representing 48 states and 23 countries around the world, on a course allowing thousands of spectators to witness its important journey.

"The Flame of Hope's journey is symbolic of our global mission to deliver inspiration and hope to Special Olympics athletes and their families, break down barriers to equality that still exist, and create awareness for social change worldwide," said Janet Froetscher CEO of Special Olympics, who participated in the official lighting ceremony in Greece on May 14<sup>th</sup>. "We are fortunate to be able to deliver the flame and everything it stands for – hope, courage, opportunity, inspiration and equality – to our athletes because of the experience and expertise of our partners in law enforcement throughout the world."

The Flame of Hope will complete its journey on July 25<sup>th</sup> when the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg team carries it into the Opening Ceremony of the 2015 World Games, and it ignites the cauldron at the historic Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, site of the 1932 and 1984 Olympics Opening Ceremony. The public will be able to see daily photographs, videos and read reports of the Flame of Hope's journey online at: [letr.finalleg.org](http://letr.finalleg.org)

### **ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Special Olympics New Hampshire (SONH) is an accredited program of Special Olympics International (SOI) and is part of an international global movement that changes lives by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities, promoting acceptance for all, and fostering communities of understanding and respect worldwide. To learn more, visit [www.sonh.org](http://www.sonh.org).

## **ABOUT THE 2015 LOS ANGELES LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN FINAL LEG**

The Final Leg tradition is for law enforcement officers, representing their country, state and Torch Run Program, to act as "Guardians of the Flame" and carry the Special Olympics Torch and "Flame of Hope" to the Opening Ceremonies of the Special Olympics World Games. This Torch Run event is called the Final Leg because it represents the culmination of Torch Run events that have occurred previously throughout the World. The Torch Run Final Leg is not only a salute to the athletes from around the World who will compete in the Special Olympics World Games, but also an honor for the participating law enforcement officers who comprise the Torch Run Final Leg Team. The Olympic flame symbolizes the light of spirit, knowledge and life. With identical power and majesty, the Special Olympics "Flame of Hope," in the entrusted care of the law enforcement community, symbolizes the courage and celebration of diversity that the Special Olympics movement represents. The 2015 Final Leg will precede the Special Olympics World Games held in Los Angeles, California. The Flame Arrival Ceremony is scheduled for the state capitol in Sacramento, California on Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup>. The flame will then travel throughout the state before reaching the Opening Ceremony in Los Angeles on July 25<sup>th</sup>. The mission of the Final Leg is to create awareness and excitement for Special Olympics, support and attendance of the World Games, and involve, inspire and motivate runners to increase their level of commitment to Special Olympics when they return to their local Programs. The Final Leg Team (126 members strong) is comprised of law enforcement runners, Special Olympics athletes, and Logistics Team members from 48 states and 23 countries around the world representing 79 Torch Run programs. Final Leg runners were chosen for their dedication and commitment to the Law Enforcement Torch Run and Special Olympics by their respective Torch Run Programs throughout the world. For more information on the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg for the 2015 World Games, please contact Final Leg Committee Chairman and Team Captain John Newnan at [final.leg@gmail.com](mailto:final.leg@gmail.com)

## **ABOUT THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN (LETR)**

The LETR began 33 years ago with founder Wichita Police Chief Richard LaMunyon, and five law enforcement officers carrying the torch for the Special Olympics Kansas Summer Games in Wichita. The LETR has since evolved to a volunteer partnership with Special Olympics to champion acceptance and inclusion. It has become a worldwide community of law enforcement officers rallying to support Special Olympics, the impetus for millions of new friendships around the world, and a series of events including Torch Runs, Polar Plunge fundraisers, and Tip-A-Cop® events. The LETR is the largest grassroots fundraiser for Special Olympics with more than 100,000 law enforcement participants around the world. It was announced at the 2014 LETR conference that the LETR has raised a cumulative sum of a half a billion dollars since its inception in 1981 and more than \$50.3 million in 2013 for Special Olympics athletes.

## **ABOUT THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES LOS ANGELES 2015**

With 7,000 athletes and 3,000 coaches representing 177 countries, along with 30,000 volunteers and an anticipated 500,000 spectators, the 2015 Special Olympics World Games - being staged in Los Angeles July 25 - August 2, 2015 - will be the largest sports and humanitarian event anywhere in the world in 2015, and the single biggest event in Los Angeles since the 1984 Olympic Games. The 2015 Special Olympics World Games, with the unparalleled spirit, enthusiasm, teamwork, joy and displays of courage and skill that are hallmarks of all Special Olympics events, will feature 25 Olympic-style sports in venues throughout the Los Angeles region. The Opening Ceremony, to be held July 25, 2015 in the historic Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, site of the 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games, is expected to attract 80,000 spectators. On April 30, 2014, LA2015 and ESPN announced a global programming deal that will see ESPN bring coverage of World Games to millions of fans around the world. Honorary Chairs of the Games are President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, with Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and California Governor Jerry Brown serving as Honorary Hosts. Current Founding Champions and sponsors include The Coca-Cola Company, Mattel, Deloitte, Toyota, Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente, OUE Skyspace Los Angeles, Davis Elen Advertising, Microsoft, Toys"R"Us, Google, UPS, AEG, David Geffen, Kate Capshaw and Steven Spielberg, The Walt Disney Company, Panda Express, and Knights of Columbus. LA2015, the Games Organizing Committee, is a recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. For more information on the 2015 Special Olympics World Games, including volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, visit [www.LA2015.org](http://www.LA2015.org) and on social with #ReachUpLA on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

###