



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS CARRY THE TORCH FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS ILLINOIS**

**NORMAL, Ill.** – Beginning June 2nd, law enforcement throughout Illinois will carry the “Flame of Hope” nearly 1,500 miles, running through hundreds of communities via 23 different legs (routes). The Flame of Hope will ultimately be delivered to Bloomington-Normal for the Opening Ceremony of the Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games on June 7.

On Friday, June 7, legs of the run, from all over the state will converge in Normal. That evening, during the Opening Ceremony of the Special Olympics Illinois State Summer Games, officers from every leg of the Torch Run will enter Illinois State University’s Hancock Stadium with torches lit to, therefore, hand off the “Flame of Hope” to Special Olympics athletes. When the cauldron is lit and the games declared open, more than 4,000 athletes will continue three days of competition and celebration.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® is the single largest year-round fundraising vehicle benefiting Special Olympics Illinois. The annual intrastate relay and its various fundraising projects have two goals: to raise money and to gain awareness for the athletes who participate in Special Olympics Illinois. The Law Enforcement Torch Run® has raised more than \$51 million over 33 years while increasing awareness of Special Olympics Illinois athletes and their accomplishments.

**Presenting Sponsors for the 2019 Illinois Law Enforcement Torch Run:** Dunkin’ and Shop ’n Save

**Gold Medal Sponsors:** Illinois Knights of Columbus and Blue Cross Blue Shield

**Silver Medal Sponsors:** Buffalo Wild Wings, Chicago Blackhawks, and Texas Roadhouse

**Bronze Medal Sponsors:** Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, Illinois Sheriffs’ Association, Kane County Chiefs of Police Association, Advance Auto Parts, Coca-Cola, Morreale Meat, and US Foods

“Thanks to the Law Enforcement Torch Run® and its corporate sponsors, Special Olympics Illinois is better able to improve athlete experience reach more athletes and offer more year-round training and competition opportunities. Special Olympics Illinois athletes are able to participate in the program free of charge thanks to sponsors like the Law Enforcement Torch Run®,” says Dave Breen, Special Olympics Illinois President and CEO.

In addition to receiving donations that support their run, officers raise funds in various ways throughout the year, including Polar Plunges, a Cop on Rooftop event with Dunkin’ Donuts, Plane Pulls at O’Hare International Airport and SIU Airport, Truck Convoys, raffles, bike rides, golf tournaments and more.

Special Olympics Illinois is a not-for-profit organization offering year-round training and competition in 18 sports for more than 23,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities and over 17,000 Young Athletes ages 2-7 with and without intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics transforms the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, allowing them to realize their full potential in sports and in life. Special Olympics programs enhance physical fitness, motor skills, self-confidence, social skills and encourage family and community support. If you are interested in learning more about Special Olympics Illinois, volunteering or providing financial support to help make Special Olympics programs possible, contact your local Special Olympics agency, call 800-394-0562 or visit our website at [www.soill.org](http://www.soill.org). Follow Special Olympics Illinois on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

For more information, leg routes, and kick-offs please visit: <https://www.soill.org/intrastate-relay-information/>

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**Special Olympics Illinois**

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*Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation for the benefit of persons with intellectual disabilities*