



For Immediate Release

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Over 60,000 Rubber Ducks Will Splash into the Chicago River Aug. 8 for Special Olympics Illinois

CHICAGO, IL. – Over 60,000 rubber ducks will drop off the Wabash Bridge into the Chicago River at 1 p.m. August 8, 2019! The 14th Annual Chicago Ducky Derby to benefit Special Olympics Illinois enthralls people of all ages who watch the ducks “race” to the finish line.

Ducks are available for adoption for \$5 online at www.chicagoduckyderby.com and in person on race day, August 8, beginning at 7 a.m. at 401 N. Michigan Avenue. Sales close prior to Splashdown at 12:30 p.m. The Family Festival begins at 10 a.m. in Pioneer Plaza and features roaming entertainment, prizes, face painting and the Ducky Derby mascot Splash. The festival will have live entertainment performed by 7th Heaven, a Chicago- based rock band who’s charted #1 on Midwest Billboard Charts three times.

Top viewing locations for the ducky drop include AMA Plaza, State Street Bridge or the Vietnam Memorial Park and Riverwalk. The Hemispheres, a soul and R&B band will entertain the crowd from the AMA Plaza at the time of the duck drop.

Last year’s event sold out with 60,000 ducks adopted and raised more than \$420,000 for Special Olympics Illinois. This year, Special Olympics Illinois aims to sell 63,000 rubber ducks.

Special Olympics Illinois athlete and 2019 Duck Derby Ambassador, Maria Meyer will be at the finish line to hold up the winning duck.

Maria is a free-spirited 20-year-old from Hinsdale, Illinois where she lives with her parents, siblings, and German Shepherd, Ozzie. She graduated from Hinsdale Central High School in 2017 where she was a four-year member of the Special Olympics basketball team as well as the track and field team. Maria was also a varsity cheerleader. She is currently a student at the Hinsdale South Transition Center and hopes to attend college in the fall of 2021. Maria loves to play sports, sing and is involved in the performing arts. She has medaled in the Special Olympics State Summer Games for the past eight years. Maria also qualified for the 2018 Special Olympics USA Games last year in Seattle, Washington where she medaled in the swim competition. An aspiring thespian, Maria is a member of the ensemble of A.B.L.E., a performing arts group that provides opportunities to individuals with developmental differences. In her spare time, Maria loves to travel. She has visited 38 of our 50 states and 16 foreign countries. Maria is honored to be the Ducky Derby Ambassador.

The grand prize is a brand new 2019 Chevy Equinox courtesy of the Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana Chevy Dealers. Other prizes include a \$2,500 cash prize, an all-inclusive Apple Vacation, a Chicago weekend getaway, and Chicagoland Speedway tickets.

The success of the annual Ducky Derby depends on two hundred sales teams – both corporate teams and independent groups – who devote the summer to selling duck adoptions and spreading the word about the benefits of Special Olympics. Join the conversation using #ChiDuckyDerby on social media.



On race day, all media should contact Alexandra McMillin via 312-502-7954 or amcmillin@soill.org.

2019 Chicago Ducky Derby Sponsors

- **Presenting Sponsor:** Jewel Osco
- **Platinum Sponsors:** Fresh Farms and the Sugar Factory Restaurant
- **Gold Sponsor:** The Chicago Federation of Labor
- **Bronze Sponsors:** Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and United Airlines
- **Festival Sponsors:** Dunkin', Hollister and Two Men & a Truck
- **Event Sponsors:** Clark Street Sports, Great Lakes Coca-Cola, JLL, The Wrigley Building, JLL, Wendella Boats and Zeller Realty Group
- **Prize Sponsors:** Apple Vacations, Chicagoland and Northwestern Indiana Chevy Dealers, Chicagoland Speedway, and Magnificent Mile Association
- **Media Sponsors:** Fox 32 Chicago, iHeart Media, and The Chicago Sun-Times

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. Follow Special Olympics Illinois on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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