

April 2015

Newsletter

Special
Olympics
Iowa



YOU Can Carry the Flame of Hope in the Unified Relay Across America!



Presented by:
Bank of America

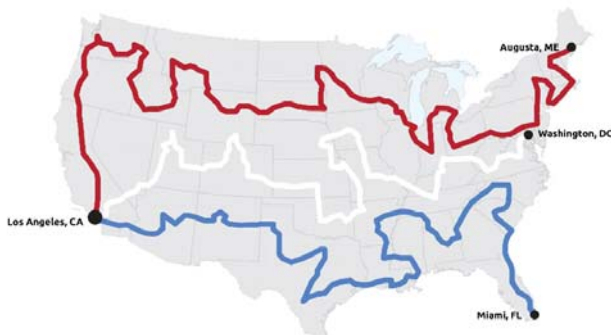
Register today for the first-ever Special Olympics Unified Relay Across America presented by Bank of America. The Unified Relay will give anyone in the country a chance to carry the Flame of Hope that will be lit in Athens, Greece, and help deliver it to Los Angeles for the Special Olympics World Games.

The relay will be in Iowa from June 12-14, covering 213 miles with overnight stays in Des Moines and Ames. More than 20,000 participants will run, walk or bike a segment of the relay as it passes through all 50 states.

Each torchbearer has the opportunity to walk, jog, run or roll a 1/2 mile segment or bicycle a 5 mile segment. A \$10 registration fee and fundraising minimum of \$1,000 is required. Team Captains will be contacted for segment assignment within 72 hours of reaching their fundraising minimum.

YOU CAN CARRY THE TORCH!

Three routes will start on the east coast and travel to Los Angeles for the 2015 Special Olympics World Games. Iowa is asking YOU to be involved! ANYONE CAN BE A TORCH BEARER!



HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

- 1 REGISTER YOURSELF OR A TEAM**
www.unifiedrelay.org
You can carry the torch yourself or bring up to 15 of your friends and coworkers.
- 2 SELECT A DATE**
The Unified Relay will be in Iowa from June 12-14, covering 213 miles.
 - June 12 Ottumwa - Prairie City - Pleasant Hill - Des Moines
 - June 13 Des Moines - Ankeny - Huxley - Ames
 - June 14 Ames - Boone - Ogden - Council Bluffs
- 3 CHOOSE A SEGMENT**
You or your team can run/walk a 1/2 mile segment or bike a 5 mile segment.
- 4 ENGAGE**
Contact your friends, family, company, coworkers and community to raise funds and join the spirit of the Unified Relay. A minimum fundraising goal of \$1,000 per regular segment per team or \$2,500 per premium segment per team. Reach \$1,500 and you get to keep your torch!

SOIA Athlete Makes His Mark as a Page to the Iowa House of Representatives

By Shelby Howard

Tyler Steinke is the most confident 17-year-old in Iowa. I'm sure that is a direct correlation of the love and encouragement of his parents, Gary and Terri Steinke. This is a family where support sits at the forefront of conversation. This was very evident when Mrs. Steinke offered to give members from Special Olympics Iowa a tour of the Iowa State Capitol Building in Des Moines during the Spread the Word to End the Word event on March 3.

However, as the tour came to a close, it was Tyler who took the reins from his mom. He has been working at the capitol since the beginning of the school year as a page to the House of Representatives. It is Tyler's job to be a runner for the representatives. Taking after his mom, who is a secretary to the Speaker of the House, Tyler works every afternoon and proved his knowledge of the building and the politicians he serves.

Not a single person walked by — representative, clerk or any other employee of the capitol — who did not acknowledge Tyler with a personal greeting, smile, and sometimes a pat on the back saying, "Good to see you, Tyler."

Tyler said any high school junior or senior can apply for the position, and it is a very competitive process to be hired. His mother's overwhelming pride was hard to overlook as Tyler so eloquently explained his duties to our group. He waits along the side of the chambers with the other pages, and when a light shines on the switchboard and the bell rings, he goes to the corresponding representative, and completes the task.

However, life was not always this comfortable and routine for the Steinke family. According to Mrs. Steinke, "When Tyler was two years old he was not uttering a sound or rolling over or making any attempt to move around as normal children would do.

"We were very concerned and took him to neurologist who did a complete evaluation and told us that it was very unlikely that Tyler would ever walk or talk," Mrs. Steinke remembered.

Doctors told the family that children with Tyler's disability were usually institutionalized in their teens.

But anyone who has met Tyler would know that this is not the case at all. Tyler and his parents faced his condition head on and aimed to live as actively as possible.



Tyler Steinke (right) with his local Representative, John Forbes of Urbandale. Tyler has been working as a page for the Iowa House of Representatives.

"We are very grateful that Tyler decided to fight and work very hard to overcome the many barriers that had been placed before him," Mrs. Steinke added. "We are especially grateful to Special Olympics Iowa for the wonderful programs and the opportunities that were provided for him to compete in athletics and to grow as a person from a social perspective. Special Olympics Iowa provided him with the opportunity to meet friends and participate in the Global Messenger program, which ultimately gave him great confidence and social skills he would have never had."

All dressed up in his uniform blazer and tie, Tyler explained how busy he is outside of his employment at the capitol and as a student at Urbandale High School. He loves the Minnesota Vikings and will be ready to spew off random facts about the team when provoked, and he has many friends at school and that he has gotten to know during his time with Special Olympics Iowa.

Tyler is easily one of the funniest people I have ever met and is always quick with a joke, but what makes him such a wonderful young man is his overwhelming sense of passion and sincerity for his friends and for Special Olympics Iowa. The reason we were at the capitol visiting Tyler was to ask members of the Iowa government to help us Spread the Word to End the Word. The "R" word is hurtful and inaccurate, and we at Special Olympics Iowa urge people to stop using it.

Tyler speaks in favor of Special Olympics athletes everywhere when he says that hearing that word hurts and we should all just stop using it. And how could a person as wonderful as Tyler Steinke not be right?

Friendship is Power at Mid-Winter Tournament

Special Olympics athletes and best friends Matt Swanson and John Turner trained together with their coach, Mike Taylor, for the Mid-Winter Tournament's powerlifting competition.

Their goal for the Mid-Winter Tournament, however, went beyond how much weight they could bench press.

"John and I are the heaviest lifters from Muscatine," said Swanson. "We were matched at 215 pounds and then went to 235 pounds and then 245 pounds without a problem."

Their final lift of 245 pounds was a personal best for each of them and they were so happy with their performance, they decided to end it in a tie.

"I was so happy to see them achieve that goal together" said Taylor. "They were planning on tying. They pushed each other throughout practice because they both wanted to wear gold. They ended up both having silver."

This is the first year Taylor has coached Special Olympics, with the opportunity coming out of the blue one day at the YMCA. He works out at the Muscatine YMCA and one day he noticed the Special Olympics athlete training. He talked to one of the coaches and started his own coaching journey at the next practice.

"I ended up coachig with Matt and John most of the time," Taylor explained. "The support they show



From L to R: SOIA athlete John Turner, coach Mike Taylor and SOIA athlete Matt Swanson at the Mid-Winter Tournament's powerlifting competition. Turner and Swanson tied in their division.

their fellow athletes, while still competing to win, is amazing."

That support, along with motivation and brotherhood are what brought the friends to enjoy powerlifting together. They plan to continue training for next year and hopefully top their personal best once more.

Iowa Law Enforcement Half Marathon Set for April 19



Come get your run on at the 2015 Iowa State Patrol Half Marathon on Sunday, April 19! Runners and walkers of all skill levels are invited to participate in the half marathon, which also includes a 10k and 5k. Whether you're running for fun or running towards a goal, everyone who participates in the Iowa Law Enforcement Half Marathon event is running for a dream — the dream of a Special Olympics Iowa athlete.

For more information and to register visit www.soioa.org/marathon.

FIT Focus: Mid-Winter Tournament Showcases FIT Program

By Carla Pakenas

This year's Mid-Winter Tournament in Iowa City was a huge success; as was the first FIT information table ever available at Iowa City West High School. The table was located in the Healthy Athletes wing as a place for athletes and parents to go to learn all about the FIT Program and how to become a participant.

Athletes could pick up a "Train @ Home" booklet that provides fun and easy at-home exercises and nutrition advice as well as a Monthly Activity log to keep track of what type of exercise they try each day.

There was also a chance to win a prize by answering a question on the display board or by demonstrating a stretch that they selected. Prizes included a jump rope, pedometer and a temporary "Get FIT" tattoo. The pedometers were a huge hit and nearly sold out!



Visit the FIT area at this year's Summer Games in Ames. Anyone interested in the program will have the chance to sign up with their coach and complete the initial assessment, giving them an idea about areas in which they would like to improve.

We look forward to getting more recognition for the FIT program at competitions so athletes and their families are able to see the benefits of participation and how fun and easy staying active and healthy outside of competitions can be.

PULL for Special Olympics Iowa!



Strong enough to pull a plane? Prove it! The Rasmussen Group and the Lohse Family Foundation present the second annual Plane Pull benefiting Special Olympics Iowa! Join us June 6 at the Des Moines International Airport and pull for a purpose.

It's a giant tug of war between you, your friends and a 120,000-pound airplane! The Plane Pull is a unique opportunity for individuals and organizations to raise money and support SOIA athletes by pulling a UPS 757. Round up 20 of your friends and coworkers, raise a minimum of \$1,000 and get ready to test your strength.

In 2014, sponsors and participants of the Plane Pull raised more than \$105,000 for Iowa athletes, giving them opportunities to participate in year-round sports, health and educational programming — and most importantly — experience joy, pride and respect.

For more information and to get registered, visit
www.soioa.org/planepull

Papa Murphy's Partners with SOIA for Mother's Day Weekend Promotion

Papa Murphy's stores throughout the state of Iowa are partnering with Special Olympics Iowa for a Mother's Day weekend deal.

The store's popular heart-shaped pizzas will be available for sale May 9-10, with \$1 from each heart-shaped pie sold being donated to SOIA. Store locations include Des Moines, Cedar Rapids and Davenport.

You can also support SOIA by purchasing a Papa Murphy's Peel-a-Deal card from our volunteers at your local store May 9-10. The \$5 cards include eight coupons that total up to a \$50 savings for you and the \$5 will be donated back to SOIA! What a great way to give to SOIA while saving yourself some cash at the same time!

Also keep an eye out for the Papa Murphy's tent in the Athlete's Village at Summer Games to purchase a Peel-a-Deal card!



Love at 425°™

Unified Cheerleading Unites Students at DeWitt Central High School

By Sarah Mauch



Unified Sports is a great way for Special Olympics athletes and athletes without intellectual disabilities to come together and create lifetime friendships with others who share the same interests. For Megan Jackson and her unified cheerleading team at DeWitt Central High School, Unified Sports has made them closer than ever and it has been an amazing experience.

Jackson, the unified cheerleading coach, started her team as an all Special Olympics Iowa athlete team, but it only took two years until they decided to form a unified team for cheer. This allowed other high school students who were interested in the opportunity to participate.

"We have always had as many or more 'buddies,' than athletes, who want to participate in our unified team," says Jackson.

Jackson says that the Unified Sports experience has been a great one for her team. It gives the Special Olympics athletes an opportunity to compete alongside their peers.

"We try to organize special activities for the athletes and buddies to attend together, such as a movie night, holiday parties, etc.," she says.

This gives both the athletes and unified partners time to socialize and get to know each other outside of Special Olympics events. They also have participated in the Polar Plunge and had unified partners, athletes, volunteers and family members take the plunge. It was a great event to see all of the team work together for a common cause!

One of Jackson's favorite memories while participating in Unified Sports was when her unified cheer team was asked to cheer at a high school assembly. The cheer team was able to perform two of their cheers. The student body was very supportive of the team, cheered them on and many students and staff made sure to tell the athletes how well they had done. Jackson says, "It was great to see such support for our team and athletes, who sometimes don't receive any recognition."

SOIA Welcomes New Individual Giving Officer



Stuart Steffy, a certified non-profit professional, joined the SOIA staff on March 10 as the new individual giving officer. He was most recently a supervisor in planned giving and fundraising management services at RuffaloCODY in Cedar Rapids, where he worked for nearly three years. Prior to that, he held positions with the American Diabetes Association and the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance.

Stuart is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa and is currently working to complete his master's degree in philanthropy and nonprofit development from St. Mary's University of Minnesota.

Stuart brings a wide range of talents to SOIA, including fundraising through phonathons, grant writing, special campaigns, individual giving and planned giving. He is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and the Eastern Iowa Planned Giving Council.

Sample Local Fine Dining While Benefiting SOIA at the Gourmet Gala May 16

Enjoy an evening of gourmet food while supporting Special Olympics Iowa! This special event will be held May 16 from 6-10 p.m. at the Seasons Marketplace at Iowa State University.

A reception begins at 6 p.m. with gourmet sampling starting at 7 p.m. A short program will be held before dessert. The chefs will select a wine to complement their offerings.

How to Host a Table

A \$1,000 contribution to Special Olympics Iowa will allow you to host a table of 6-10 guests who are interested in supporting Special Olympics Iowa. You can also sponsor a wine pairing for \$250.

For more information, contact David at orth@mchsi.com or Anne at anne@dogtownu.com or call 515-986-5520.

ALL EVENTS AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Special Olympics Iowa

2015 SUMMER GAMES

THURSDAY, MAY 21

TENNIS
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Forker Courts

CYCLING
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Iowa State Center Parking Lot

BOCCÉ
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Maple-Willow-Larch Intramural Fields

FIT PROGRAM

ASSESSMENT TESTING
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Lied Recreation Athletic Center

SOCCER
10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Lied Recreation Athletic Center

OLYMPIC FESTIVAL
Noon – 4:00 p.m.
Lied Recreation Athletic Center

OPENING CEREMONIES
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Hilton Coliseum

FRIDAY, MAY 22

BOCCÉ
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Maple-Willow-Larch Intramural Fields

TENNIS
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Forker Courts

AQUATICS
8:15 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Beyer Hall

FIT PROGRAM

ASSESSMENT TESTING
8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Lied Recreation Athletic Center

TRACK & FIELD
9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Lied Recreation Athletic Center

DEVELOPMENTAL EVENTS
10:00 a.m.
Forker Building

OLYMPIC FESTIVAL
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Lied Recreation Athletic Center

HEALTHY ATHLETES
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Forker Building

CELEBRATION DANCE
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Hilton Coliseum

CLOSING CEREMONIES

TRACK & FIELD
8:30 a.m. – Noon
Lied Recreation Athletic Center

HELP CREATE MEMORIES...BE A VOLUNTEER!
CALL 515-986-5520 OR VISIT WWW.SOIOWA.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION.
VOLUNTEER PACKETS CAN ALSO BE PICKED UP AT THE AMES CONVENTION & VISITOR'S BUREAU.

Summer Games Set for May 21-23 - Sign Up to Volunteer Today!

Summer Games are just around the corner and volunteers are needed! More than 2,500 athletes will compete in aquatics, athletics (track and field), bocce, cycling, tennis, soccer and soccer skills. Volunteers are a major part of what makes Summer Games such a great event for athletics and fans.

You can register online at www.soiowa.org or stop by the Ames Convention and Visitor's Bureau to pick up volunteer forms.

If you have questions about volunteering, please contact Michelle Haney, director of volunteers and Unified Sports, at mhaney@soiowa.org or 515-986-5520.

Special Olympics Iowa Calendar of Events

April

4	Unified Sports Day	Grinnell
7	West Central Area Aquatics & Spring Games	Indianola (2 locations)
9	North Central Area Spring Games	Fort Dodge
9	Young Athletes Play Day	Cedar Rapids
11	Area Spring Games	Marshalltown, Cedar Rapids, Eldridge
		Sioux Center, Lamoni, Mt. Pleasant
11	Challenge Day	Cedar Falls
11	Cedar Rapids Polar Plunge	Pleasant Creek
11	Iowa City Polar Plunge	Coralville Lake, Iowa City
14	Southwest Area Spring Games	Council Bluffs
16	North Area Spring Games	Spirit Lake
16	Young Athletes Play Day	Ankeny
18	Cedar Falls/Waterloo Polar Plunge	George Wyth State Park
19	Iowa Law Enforcement Half Marathon	Banner Lakes at Summerset State Park, Indianola
25	Northwest Iowa Polar Plunge	Scharnberg Park, Everly

May

7	Unified Sports Day	Drake University, Des Moines
16	Gourmet Gala (fundraiser - call to register)	Seasons Marketplace, Iowa State University, Ames
21-23	Summer Games	Iowa State University, Ames

June

6	Plane Pull	Des Moines International Airport
13	Challenge Day	Lake City

July

11	Softball Conference Tournament	Des Moines
11	Softball Skills Competition	Muscatine
18	Softball Conference Tournament	Cedar Rapids

August

8	State Softball	Ankeny
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Judy Kay Remembered as Friend of SOIA

Donations were recently made to Special Olympics Iowa in memory of Judy Kay, who passed away unexpectedly in February. The donations were made to help the causes she cared for most and worked for in her life. Judy volunteered much of her time to Special Olympics and we thank her friends and family for honoring us with this gift in her memory.

Connect With Us!

Remember to follow Special Olympics Iowa to receive important updates and stay on top of the latest events and activities.

Be Our Twitter Reporter!

Training for a competition? Volunteering at an event? Having a great time at a fundraiser? Let us know about it! Tag your tweets with @soiowa and we will retweet you!



Facebook at www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsIA

Twitter at @SOIowa

Instagram at www.instagram.com/SpecialOlympicsIA

YouTube at www.youtube.com/soiowa2



Special Olympics Iowa

551 SE Dovetail Road
PO Box 620
Grimes, Iowa 50111

www.soiowa.org
515-986-5520

Thank You to Our Partners!

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Premier Statewide Partners



Champion and Premier Statewide Partners provide a comprehensive level of support of all programs and services offered by Special Olympics Iowa (SOIA). Organizations may be recognized at these levels for financial support, in-kind donations or any combination thereof, and are recognized in many other ways. To find out more about our current partnership opportunities or for information on how to become one, visit our website at www.soiowa.org and look under Support Us, or contact the SOIA Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations Cindy Schaffer at 515-986-5520.