

Triumph



Special Olympics New York • SEPTEMBER 2003

Gordon's NASCAR Victory is a Winner for Special Olympics and FDNY

When NASCAR driver Robby Gordon won the Sirius at The Glen race at Watkins Glen International Speedway on Aug. 10, he raised \$50,000 for Special Olympics and the Fire Department of New York (see related story, P. 6).

Cingular Wireless, which sponsors Gordon, had pledged \$50,000 to each organization if Gordon were able to win the Winston Cup event.

"Winning at Watkins Glen was very

special for me, but being able to help out the folks at Special Olympics made it that much more awesome for me and everyone on the Cingular Wireless team," said Gordon, who moved into the top 10 in the Winston Cup Series standings with the victory. "I became acquainted with some of the athletes earlier this year at Talladega and spent some time with them at the track. They truly are a courageous, spirited and amazing group of people. Special Olympics

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SONY Staff

Special Olympics New York athletes (left to right) Joe Iaconis, Tony Navarro and Andy Marshall enjoy the Sirius at the Glen race as NASCAR star Robby Gordon closes in on a win.

Police Captain Goes the Distance for Special Olympics

Capt. John Roland of the Mount Vernon Police Department logged a 39.3-mile Law Enforcement Torch Run leg.

When you say that someone has "gone the distance," it's often just a figure of speech meant to compliment an above-average effort. Capt. John Roland of the Mount Vernon Police Department, however, truly went the distance recently for the athletes of Special Olympics New York.

In June, Roland tackled a 39.3-mile leg of the Law Enforcement Torch Run. The commanding officer, who is responsible for the day-to-day police operations in Mount Vernon, laced up his running sneakers and ran from Yonkers to Peekskill, raising funds and awareness for Special Olympics New York.

The 2003 Torch Run featured approximately 3,000 law enforcement officials who

carried the Flame of Hope more than 1,500 miles to Hofstra University, where it was used to kick off the 2003 Special Olympics New York Summer Games.

"We had talked about it for the last two or three years: 'Jeez, do you think someone can do the whole Westchester leg?'" said Roland, who runs several marathons each year. "It was a perfect running day – overcast, cool, low humidity – so I went for it."

During the early portion of the Westchester leg of Torch Run, Roland had plenty of company. He volunteers a class of rookie police recruits to run each year. Additionally, Sgt. Marcel Olifiers ran 26 miles with Roland and Officer Javier Lugo ran 28 miles.

There also was strong community support. People along the route came out of their houses to cheer Roland on, and area television and radio stations covered his progress.

After Lugo hung up his shoes for the day, Roland had about five miles where it was just him and a support truck. With six miles to go, Lt. Joe Barca of Yonkers jumped onto the course and escorted Roland to the finish at the Peekskill train station. In all, Roland kept his legs moving forward for more than six hours.

"It was a fun day for a worthy cause," Roland said. "I developed a nice pace and I couldn't stop. I was dying for a burger and a cold drink, though." ■ JF

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Find up-to-date information on our official Web site, www.specialolympicsnewyork.org and www.soshopping.com

A Message from the President

Neal J. Johnson is President & CEO of Special Olympics New York, Inc.



In the United States there used to be no greater cultural symbol of athletic achievement and marketing success than the Wheaties box. It was Mecca, the Holy Grail and Mt. Everest all rolled into one. Adorning its cover meant

you've reached the top in sports.

When it comes to identifying the best in sports that this country has to offer, we now think of *Sports Illustrated*, too, where idols are worshipped, albeit some undeservedly.

But on page 28 of the Aug. 18 issue of *SI*, halfway down the page, you'll see someone we can all look up to – a hero to all of us – Special Olympics powerlifter Kim Richards of Johnson City, Broome County.

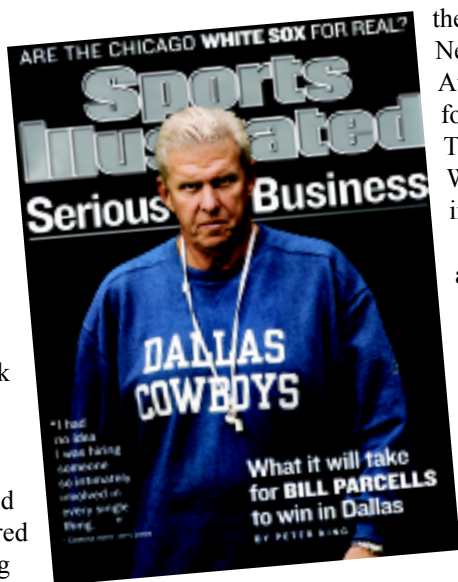
That's right, Kim, a Special Olympics New York athlete, is one of the individuals featured in "Faces in the Crowd." It's the same place where gifted amateur athletes are honored for jumping higher, running faster and, yes, lifting more weight than their competitors.

You may recognize Kim. She's gotten

Faces in the Crowd

Kim Richards, JOHNSON CITY, N.Y.
Powerlifting
 Richards, 21, won gold medals in the female deadlift, bench press and combination bench press/deadlift at the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games. She was named 2003 Special Olympics New York female athlete of the year.

quite a bit of publicity recently for being the subject in a soon-to-be-published book about women in sports, being named the Special Olympics New York Female Athlete of the Year and for being a member of Team New York at the World Summer Games in Ireland.



It's this latest accomplishment that earned Kim the "face time" in 3.1 million copies of *SI*. She won three gold medals in Ireland, competing in a sport that has traditionally been all male. She deadlifted 275 pounds in the

process. TWO-HUNDRED SEVENTY FIVE POUNDS!

As for the Wheaties box, we've been

there, too. In 1997, five athletes from across New York were featured in a tribute to all Special Olympics athletes. We continue to be so proud of Cynthia Mazur, Lee Smith, Megan O'Hara, Katlin Detsch and Ezra Canty for the ideals they represented on the Wheaties box.

We are proud of Kim, as well, for demonstrating the pure athletic spirit in all Special Olympics athletes.

Even before Special Olympics was founded in 1968, the athletic accomplishments of people with mental retardation have been trivialized. It still occurs today, as sports editors across the state dismiss our calls for coverage, intimating that we're something less than legitimate sports.

While many Special Olympics athletes won't challenge Tim Montgomery in the 100 meters, it has become clear that the mission is gaining on those who would minimize the accomplishments of our athletes. Don't believe it? Check out page 28 of *Sports Illustrated*. ■

Triumph

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Inspire Greatness

Special Olympics New York, Inc.

504 Balltown Road, Schenectady, NY 12304-2290

Phone: (518) 388-0790 Fax: (518) 388-0795 Web site: www.specialolympicsnewyork.org

TRIUMPH STAFF

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Darcie Henderson
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New York Chiropractic College to Host 2003 Fall Games

From sports to leaf-peeping, from wineries to history, Seneca Falls will offer a full slate of activities.

More than 1,000 athletes and coaches will travel to the New York Chiropractic College (NYCC) in Seneca Falls for the 2003 Special Olympics New York Fall Games, which will be held Oct. 10 to 12, right at the start of the leaf-peeping season. Athletes will compete in Bocce, Cross-Country Running, Cycling, Equestrian, Golf, Soccer and Softball.

"We already know that New York Chiropractic College is an ideal location for our competitions," said Pete Lawrence, director of competition for Special Olympics New York. "NYCC has hosted numerous Sectional competitions in the past, and the college has always provided us with great facilities and volunteers."

Located at the northern tip of Cayuga Lake, Seneca Falls is known as "The Gateway to the Finger Lakes" and as "The

Birthplace of Women's Rights."

In 1848, led by Seneca Falls native Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 300 women and men held the nation's first Women's Rights

Convention in Seneca Falls. They penned the Declaration of Sentiments, which includes the following highly recognizable line: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal ..."

"That message makes Seneca Falls a symbolic and fitting locale for the 2003 Special

Olympics New York Fall Games," said Neal Johnson, president and chief executive officer of Special Olympics New York. "Back in 1848, the people of Seneca Falls were already striving for the same thing we aim to provide our athletes with today: equality."

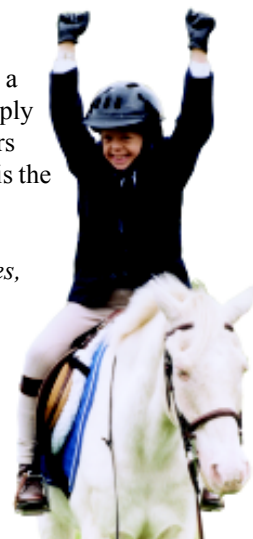
Seneca Falls is now home to the

National Women's Hall of Fame, which commemorates the struggle for women's rights.

"Seneca Falls will provide a fantastic setting for the Fall Games," Johnson said. "Our athletes, volunteers and families will certainly enjoy the competition, but there will be plenty of other things to do, as well.

Whether you're interested in history, a wine trail tour or simply taking in all the colors of fall, Seneca Falls is the place to do it."

For information about the Fall Games, including volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, call 518-388-0793. ■ JF



Duck Race Could Mean Big Bills (and Not the Kind You Pay)

Third annual Million Dollar Duck Race, presented by New York Lottery, set for Sept. 17.

Who would have thought that a little, yellow rubber duck – the kind of toy that most of us played with as kids, the floating object of Ernie's affection – could win you a million bucks?

It's true, though. For each \$5 donation you make to Special Olympics New York, a rubber racing duck will be adopted in your name and entered into the Million Dollar Duck Race, which will give you a chance to win great prizes, including \$1 million.

At 5:30 p.m. on Sept. 17, approximately 20,000 ducks will be dropped into a very big bath tub – New York's East River – and

they will race from just south of the Brooklyn Bridge to the South Street Seaport. In addition to the race, there will



**Rubber Ducky, you're the one,
You make bath time lots of fun,
Rubber Ducky, I'm awfully fond of you,
(woh woh, bee doh!)**

– Ernie of "Sesame Street's" Bert & Ernie signing "Rubber Ducky"

be family entertainment, including the Albany-based The Joe Nacco Band.

For those of you wondering how you can win one million smackeroos, it works

like this:

One out of every 3,333 ducks purchased will be marked as a million-dollar duck. If that duck's bill crosses the finish line first, its owner will be an instant millionaire. There will be prizes for the owners of other speedy ducks, as well as prizes for the top fund-raisers.

The Million Dollar Duck Race is sponsored by New York Lottery, Cingular Wireless, American Airlines, OppenheimerFunds, Merrill Lynch, New York Sports Clubs and Club Med. Media sponsors are the *Daily News*, Time Warner Cable, WABC-TV, Radio Disney and *Financial Times*.

Ducks are \$5 each. Special discounts are for available for bulk and group purchases. For more information, contact Victoria Stubrin at 212-490-1062 or vstubrin@nyso.org, or visit www.specialolympicsnewyork.org. ■ JF

Gordon's NASCAR Victory

Continued from P. 1

athletes are true athletes, and they have more heart than most professional sports personalities out there. These athletes give it their all every day despite any difficulties they may face. I am honored to have been a part of them this year. They are truly heroes."

Gordon's No. 31 car sported a special paint scheme that featured both the Special Olympics and the Fire Department of New York logos during the Sirius at The Glen race. You can purchase a limited edition of the car (1:24 scale), complete with the logos, at www.nascar.com. ■ JF

"Special Olympics athletes are true athletes, and they have more heart than most professional sports personalities out there."

— Robby Gordon

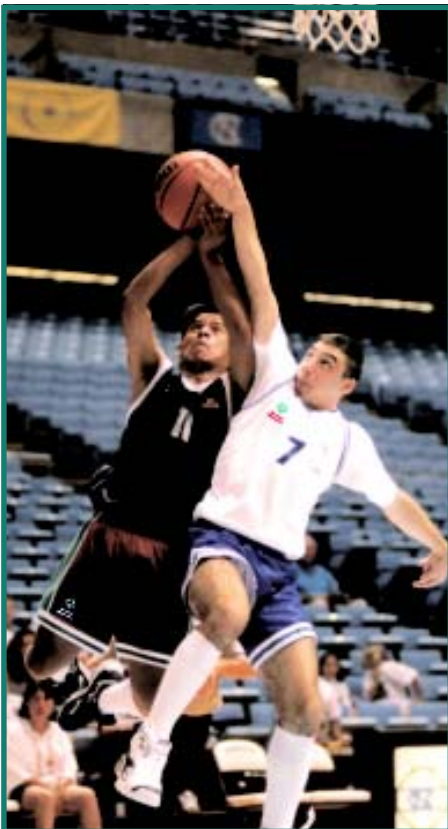


SONY Staff

Robby Gordon (front, right) poses with his No. 31 car and several Special Olympics New York athletes in Victory Lane before the Sirius at The Glen race. Gordon told the athletes he was going to win, and he did, raising \$50,000 each for Special Olympics and FDNY.

When Is a Free Throw Worth More Than One Point?

Make the Point! for Special Olympics will provide students with an opportunity to help their schools and athletes with mental retardation.



If you think free throws are worth just one point, then you should check out Make the Point! for Special Olympics.

A nationwide basketball fund-raiser, Make the Point! will provide middle school, high school and college students with a chance to score big for their schools and for the more than one million athletes with mental retardation who are served by Special Olympics.

Make the Point! works like this:

Special Olympics and the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) are currently challenging students across America to solicit donations from friends, family members and businesses based on the number of free throws they believe they can attempt in 60 seconds. Then, on Oct. 25, participating students will gather in their school gymnasiums to turn in the money they raised and to shoot their promised free throws.

Each participating school will receive 10 percent of the revenue they raise.

"Not only don't you have to be a basketball player to participate in Make the

Point! for Special Olympics, you don't even

have to make your free throws," said Rosemary Bruno, vice president for Development at Special Olympics New York. "Just by attempting them, you'll be helping to create opportunities for Special Olympics athletes."

"By partnering with Special Olympics, we believe we have the unprecedented opportunity to further infuse two of our core values – respect for self and respect for others – to high school students," said NFHS Executive Director Robert F. Kanaby. "Make the Point! for Special Olympics gives our youth a tangible way to promote good citizenship in their schools, and, most importantly, it awards students on a personal level, knowing they will truly inspire greatness in Special Olympics athletes."

You can register or get more information on Make the Point! at www.specialolympicsnewyork.org or by calling Rita Cox at 518-388-0793. ■ JF



Helping Special Olympics Has Never Been So Much Fun

New Yorkers lead the way with the Special Olympics Shop & Support Program, which allows you to assist athletes just by shopping online.

Did you know that you can do your back-to-school shopping and help Special Olympics at the same time?

It's easy. Simply point, click and shop at www.soshopping.com, the home site of the Special Olympics Shop & Support Program. When you use www.soshopping.com to purchase the pens and pencils, the jeans and cargo pants, and everything else that your child needs to succeed in the classroom, you'll be helping to create sports opportunities for the athletes served by Special Olympics New York.

Perhaps best of all, using www.soshopping.com is free for you.

When you visit www.soshopping.com for the first time, it will take you just a few minutes to sign up. After that, you can bypass the site and go directly to nearly 500 online retailers who are participating in the Special Olympics Shop & Support Program.

And when you shop at those sites – retailers such as Office Max (for the pens

and pencils) and Old Navy (for the jeans and cargo pants) are among the many on board – a percentage of each purchase is donated by the retailer to Special Olympics.

There is no extra charge to you. “The Special Olympics Shop & Support Program is a national initiative, but New Yorkers lead the way in embracing it so far,” said Rosemary Bruno, vice president of development for Special Olympics New York. “We’re aiming to raise \$25,000 this year through the Special Olympics Shop & Support Program, so we really hope that, if you haven’t already signed up, you’ll visit www.soshopping.com today. It’s an easy – and free – way for you to help our athletes.”

The Special Olympics Shop & Support Program kicked off in April. Since then, New York state has signed up four times as many users as the next most active state.



And New York state is responsible for 86 percent of the total funds raised by the top 20 states.

“New York is doing great, but we’ve got to keep shopping,” said Bruno, smiling. “Sign up at www.soshopping.com and then go online and shop. Do it for the athletes.” ■ JF

3RD ANNUAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN PLANE PULL ALBANY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT To benefit Special Olympics New York



Running Isn't All We Do.

Air National Guard to Deliver C-130 for Plane Pull

Teams of 20 will pull 115,000-pound plane for the athletes of Special Olympics New York.

Teams are needed for the third annual Law Enforcement Torch Run Plane Pull to benefit Special Olympics New York, which will take place at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 27 at Albany International Airport.

A C-130 Hercules aircraft, which weighs approximately 115,000 pounds, will be provided and flown to the Plane Pull by the 109th Airlift Wing of the Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia.

At the Plane Pull, teams of 20 will attempt to pull the plane 12 feet. Each team will get two tries and the team that covers the distance in the quickest time wins.

“We’re expecting teams from all across New York State,” said Jeanne Mesick, Law Enforcement Torch Run liaison for Special Olympics New York. “The Plane Pull is a good way to test your strength, have fun and help others.”

Last year’s Plane Pull drew more than 500 competitors and at least that many fans.

The entry fee is \$500 per team, and there will be trophies and family entertainment. You can register by contacting Jeanne Mesick at 518-388-0793. ■ JF

Around the State

Long Island

For the first time in the history of the North Fork Classic Grand Prix and horse show, organizers have selected a beneficiary. And it's Special Olympics New York.

This major, annual equestrian event, which attracts riders and fans from all over the country, took place in Riverhead, Long Island Aug. 20 to 23.

Prudential Financial, a great friend to Special Olympics athletes, sponsored the event and used the platform to honor the Special Olympics athletes in a public ceremony during the Grand Prix.

"This is absolutely wonderful," said Laurie Kennedy, director of development for Special Olympics New York. "We are so grateful to Prudential Financial for selecting us. Our athletes never pay to take part in our programs, so it's crucial to our mission that we have friends like Prudential Financial."

Special Olympics also benefited from "A Taste of the North Fork," a dinner that drew chefs from many of Long Island's premier restaurants.

Capital District

Two Ways to Yell Fore in September.

Golfers who dread the impending end of the season have two more chances to play to benefit Special Olympics New York:

- The Second Annual Law Enforcement Torch Run Golf Tournament is Sept. 8 at the Ballston Spa Country Club in Saratoga County. Registration is at 11:30 a.m., and the shotgun start is at 1 p.m. Greens fees with cart, lunch, dinner and prizes are included. For more information, call Jeanne Mesick at 518-388-0793.
- The inaugural Tee Up for Special Olympics New York Golf Tournament, sponsored by Latham-based Pacific Industries, will take place Sept. 26 at the Fairways of Halfmoon Golf Club in Mechanicville. Registration is at 8 a.m., with a shotgun start at 9 a.m. The tournament includes prizes, as well as breakfast, lunch, dinner and an awards program. Call Rebecca Rickert at 518-388-0793 by Sept. 15 for details.

Robby Gordon Gives Athletes a Day to Remember

Editor's Note: Staff member Rita Cox recently escorted three Special Olympics New York athletes to Watkins Glen for the Sirius at the Glen race, and she filed the following story upon her return.



Rita Cox

Dave Feiden



SONY Staff

At Watkins Glen's Victory Lane, the Special Olympics New York representatives who got a close look at Robby Gordon's No. 31 car included (left to right): coach Steve Marshall, athlete Andy Marshall, athlete Tony Navarro, coach Matt Abraham, athlete Joe Iaconis and staffer Rita Cox.

My favorite part of working at Special Olympics New York is the ability to share in once-in-a-lifetime experiences with the athletes. On Sunday, Aug. 10, I had a day to remember with Area 19 athletes Andy Marshall, Joe Iaconis and Tony Navarro.

We weren't sure what to expect when we arrived at Watkins Glen for the NASCAR Winston Cup race, but Cingular and Robby Gordon, the driver of their No. 31 car, proved to be the perfect hosts.

As the day progressed, the athletes' smiles kept getting bigger. First we were treated to a meet-and-greet with Robby and we had photos taken with him and the car. Then we were taken for a special behind-the-scenes tour through the garage area and the pits, where we saw all the cars up close. We even saw Andy's favorite driver, Jeff Gordon. At this point, Tony was smiling, Joe proclaimed "This is awesome!" and Andy couldn't stop saying "Oh, man!" This would have been more than enough for any race fan, but the day had only begun!

The next stop was an omen of things to come . . . Victory Lane. Members of FDNY, Robby and car owner Richard Childress joined us there for more photos with the car

and autograph signings.

As we returned to take our seats for the race, I thought the best was over. We had all had a once-in-a-lifetime experience and the athletes were thrilled. Little did any of us know what would happen next.

Robby had told us earlier in the day that he was going to win. He seemed so confident that there really was no other possible end to the day. I just chalked it up to race car-driver bravado, though.

We watched from our seats at the finish line as he took the lead with 30 laps to go and we held our breath every time a challenger was close. Andy provided the commentary for each of these final laps, counting them down and screaming with all his might as his new favorite driver took the checkered flag and raised \$50,000 for Special Olympics.

I've been to many races, but this is the one that I will always remember. For the last four years, Cingular Wireless has been very generous to Special Olympics New York. At Watkins Glen, they did even more. They gave the experience of a lifetime to Andy, Joe and Tony . . . "Oh, man!" ■

Special Olympics Looks to the Future as it Celebrates its 35th Anniversary

Milestones are important. There are plenty of 35th anniversaries out there begging to be noticed, but none are more important to us than the anniversary of what took place on July 20, 1968. That was the day nearly 1,000 athletes from the United States, Canada and France gathered at Soldier Field in Chicago and showed that a celebration of sports, opportunity and joy was going to change the world.

When Special Olympics hosted its first International Games in 1968, athletes gave their all in a stadium that included 100,000 empty seats – a reflection of the attitudes and lack of awareness of the time. Since then, Special Olympics has served enough athletes around the world to fill each of those seats 10 times over – and attracted enough volunteers to fill each 1,000 times.

In 35 years, Special Olympics has helped define an entirely new, entirely possible vision of a world community; a place defined not by who gets excluded, but who gets included; a place where differences are cause not for castigation, but celebration; a place, not coincidentally, where people of different races, nationalities, religions, genders and ages work together, not in spite of their differences, but completely indifferent to them.

Today, Special Olympics provides sports training and competition in more than 150 countries around the world, giving more than 1.2 million people with mental retardation – including 40,000 in New York state – the chance to strive. And succeed. ■ Courtesy of Special Olympics, Inc.



SONY Staff

The 70,000 people on hand to enjoy the Opening Ceremonies at the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games included (left to right) Special Olympics New York athletes Paul Asaro, Kim Richards and MaryAnne Silverstrim. The success of the World Games illustrates the progress Special Olympics has made in its 35 years.

Letters

Editor's Note: The following letter was written to Jeff Foley, director of Public Relations at Special Olympics New York.

Good Morning, Jeff,

Just finished reading your article ("Point of View") in the (July issue of) *Triumph*. I did not attend the Special Olympics, but after reading your article I too had leaky eyes.

Wonderful article and you were right on target when you stated how much "passion" these young men, women and youngsters have for each other and everyone else they come in contact with – they could certainly teach us a lesson each and every day, and I have seen adults taken back with the unexpected wisdom that has come from these remarkable children.

As a mother who had a child (now a successful young adult) who split his classes between special education and mainstream, I know firsthand the importance of guaranteeing the success of our children, regardless of disabilities, by support, determination and tapping into the education system to bring out the best in these challenged children – what they may lack in one area, they are very strong in another.

Jeff, again, great article and you have excellent perception.

My best to you in your career!

Nancy Chyko
Clifton Park

Editor's Note: The following letter was written to Jen Hazzard, sectional sports director at Special Olympics New York.

Dear Jen,

Just wanted you to know how much MaryAnne enjoyed the trip to Ireland. Special Olympics has made such a difference in her life. Yes, it was exciting and uplifting for MaryAnne to succeed in winning the silver medal in golf. However, what she treasures most are the fun-filled experiences, humorous incidents, and ordinary daily activities she shared with other athletes, coaches, and especially you. The memories and bond of friendship she's developed with you has been a great morale booster.

Thanks for everything

Sincerely,
Kathy and Nelson Silverstrim
Forestburgh

Submit letters to Jeff Foley at Special Olympics New York, 504 Balltown Road, Schenectady, NY 12304-2290 or jfoley@nyso.org.



Special Olympics New York

504 Balltown Road
Schenectady, NY 12304

www.specialolympicsnewyork.org

Comments and story suggestions can be directed to:

Special Olympics New York, Inc.
Public Relations Department,
504 Balltown Road, Schenectady, NY 12304,
Or you may call 800-836-6976.
You also may send a fax to 518-388-0795
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2003 Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

- 6 Sections 4 & 5 Softball/Bocce/Soccer NYCC, Seneca Falls
- 8 Capital District LETR Golf Tournament, Ballston Spa Country Club, Ballston Spa
- 13 Miles for Medals Walk, Belmont State Park
- 13 Sections 3 & 4 Softball/Soccer/ Bocce, Collins Park, Scotia
- 17 Million Dollar Duck Race, Manhattan
- 20 Long Island Region, Long Island Fall Classic, Cantiague Park
- 20 Long Island Region, Great Cow Harbor 10K Road Race
- 28 Soccer Jamboree, SUNY New Paltz
- TBD Sections 3, 4 & 5 Equestrian, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs

OCTOBER

- 4 Section 1 & 2 Golf, Monhansic Golf Course, Yorktown
- 10-12 2003 Fall Games, New York Chiropractic College, Seneca Falls
- 18 Section 2 Bowling (Age 22+), TBD
- 19 Long Island Region, Nassau Pops Annual Concert, Brookville
- 25 Section 3 Bowling (Age 22+), Pine Lanes, So. Glens Falls
- 25 Section 4 Bowling (Age 22+), Lake View Lanes, Fulton
- 26 Long Island Region, 18th Annual Fall Adapted Games, SUNY Stony Brook
- 29 Real Estate Auction Gala, Sheraton, Manhattan
- TBD Section 1 Bowling (Age 22+), TBD

* For more details, please contact your Director of Field Services or the Special Olympics New York office.

Mission: To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-style sports for children and adults with mental retardation, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.