

Triumph

February 2006



Special Olympics
New York

Countdown to Special Olympics New York 2006 Winter Games

Presented by P&C - Your Kind of Store, February 10 - 12

In weeks 1, 100 athletes and coaches will participate in the Special Olympics New York 2006 Winter Games presented by P&C - Your Kind of Store. The games will take place Friday, February 10th to Sunday, February 12th. The athletes have been training for months and they are ready to show off their athletic abilities to the Syracuse community.

Opening Ceremonies will be held at Driver's Village Conference Center, in Cicero, on Friday, February 10th at 8 p.m. We invite everyone to come and cheer on our athletes along with our emcee, New

York Lottery's Yolanda Vega.

The athletes will compete in seven Olympic-style events including floor hockey, floor hockey skills, figure skating, speed skating, alpine skiing, nordic skiing, and snowshoeing. Most of the competitions will take place at the Oncenter Complex on Saturday, February 11th, with alpine skiing taking place at Toggenburg Ski Center, Highland Forest hosting nordic skiing and Burnet Park hosting



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2nd Annual Peter Aquilone Floor Hockey Tournament a Success

More than 450 athletes compete

The 2nd Annual Peter Aquilone Memorial Floor Hockey Tournament on Saturday, January 14, 2006, at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in Manhattan was a successful day of competition and a fitting tribute to Peter Aquilone's memory. Last year, the tournament was named in honor of Peter Aquilone, a former employee of Special Olympics New York (SONY), who passed away unexpectedly. Peter's tremendous support and enthusiasm was a key factor in bringing the



tournament to the Javits Convention Center and in growing the tournament over the years.

This year, more than 350 athletes and coaches from the Hudson Valley, Long Island and New York City Regions participated in this event. The tournament also hosted about 100 athletes and coaches from Montgomery County, PA,

Philadelphia, PA and West Hartford, CT. Maury Leone from Merrill Lynch (one of the event sponsors) was the emcee of

Opening Ceremonies, lending his talent and enthusiasm to the start of the day. Patrice Distler spoke for the National Hockey League (NHL) and Joe Smith, a former SONY employee, spoke on behalf of Peter Aquilone. After the Parade of Athletes and the lighting of the torch, Neal J. Johnson, President and C.E.O. of SONY, declared the day's competition officially open.

Winning the gold medal in each of the team divisions were: Division 1, Philadelphia Knights; Division 2, West Hartford Lionhearts; Division 3, Northeast Westchester Knights (the team who traveled to the World Winter Games in Nagano, Japan in 2005); and Division 4, Nassau Lions. Each member of the gold medal winning teams went home with a jersey donated by the NHL. In addition,

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A Message from the President

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



As our first State Games of 2006, the Winter Games in Syracuse promises many exciting moments for our athletes, coaches, staff and volunteers, and I hope will be a measure of the many competitions and events to come throughout the year. We are lucky to be returning to Syracuse, where the Local Organizing Committee, area businesses and volunteers made last year's Winter Games such a success. This will also be the first state-wide event for many of our new staff members, and we'd like to make this experience as welcoming as possible both for them and for any new members of the SONY family.

While the State Games are often the time of year when we most intersect with each other, it is the smaller competitions held year-round and throughout the state that truly are the backbone of the organization. Through more than 400 events a year, we work to reach our goal of providing quality competitive experiences for individuals with intellectual disabilities. First and foremost, we are an athletic organization, and as such the training, practice and local competitions are essential to fulfilling our mission to provide the best possible athletic experience for our athletes.

As 2006 gets off the ground running, I would like to thank everyone who makes these events possible for our athletes, both at the larger, state-wide games like this month's Winter Games in Syracuse, and the smaller training and local competitions held year-round. We have many dedicated athletic directors, coaches and volunteers, in addition to our SONY staff that works tirelessly to provide meaningful athletic competitions. Thanks to all of their hard work, effort and dedication, we hope to make 2006 even better. ■

Winter Games *Continued from p.1*

snowshoeing. The Driver's Village Conference Center will also host the Closing Ceremonies and the Victory Dance on Saturday, February 11th at 7:30 p.m.

The new twist to this year's Winter Games is that snowshoeing will be taking place at Burnet Park. "We wanted to showcase the excellent relationship that SONY has with the City of Syracuse," said Central Region Director of Program, Jeff Mickle. "The city, through the Commissioner of Parks & Recreation Pat Driscoll, has always been very generous to our athletes. We moved snowshoeing to the city park as a way to show our appreciation to them for all that they do for our athletes."

"We are thrilled to be returning to Syracuse for the second straight year," said Special Olympics New York President and C.E.O., Neal J. Johnson. "The Syracuse community has always been one of the most supportive areas in the state and our athletes are ready to showcase their abilities. Come be apart of the Winter Games and you will be inspired."

The Special Olympics New York 2006 Winter Games presented by P&C - Your Kind of Store - and is sponsored by The New York Lottery, New York State United Teachers, Sunny 102, Carrier Corporation, National Grid, Sensis Corporation, Advance Auto Parts, Oldcastle, Syracuse Research, Peerless Insurance, Nextel Partners, Philip Morris and Inficon. ■



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Triumph is published 12 times a year by the Public Affairs Department. It salutes the athletes, volunteers, employees, Board members, local and regional programs, sponsors and donors of Special Olympics New York, Inc.

Inspire Greatness

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Crystal Ball, Olympic Gala to Feature Olympic Medalist, John Naber

Naber to Conduct Swimming Clinic

On Saturday, April 8, 2006, John Naber will be the keynote for the 15th annual Crystal Ball, Olympic Gala to be held at the Hyatt Regency Rochester. Naber won four Gold Medals and a Silver at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal. A specialist in the backstroke, Naber competed at the University of Southern California where he won 15 collegiate championships. Naber also won three Gold Medals at the 1975 Pan-American Games. In 1976, Naber became the first swimmer to break the 2-minute barrier in the 200-metre backstroke, winning the gold and setting a world record (1 min 59.19 sec) that would stand for seven years. Naber also competed for the U.S. Team that won Gold Medals in the 400-metre medley relay and the 800-metre freestyle relay. Naber received the James E. Sullivan Memorial Award as the best American amateur athlete of 1977. He is a member of the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame. Today Naber is a sports commentator for the Olympics and other key sports events. He is being sponsored by Xerox Corporation.

In addition to being the keynote speaker at the Gala, Naber will conduct a swimming clinic for Special Olympics athletes and swimmers at the School of the Holy Childhood's pool on Saturday morning.

Gala co-chairs are **Tony DiCesare** and **Cindee Gray**. Auction Chair is **Lori**

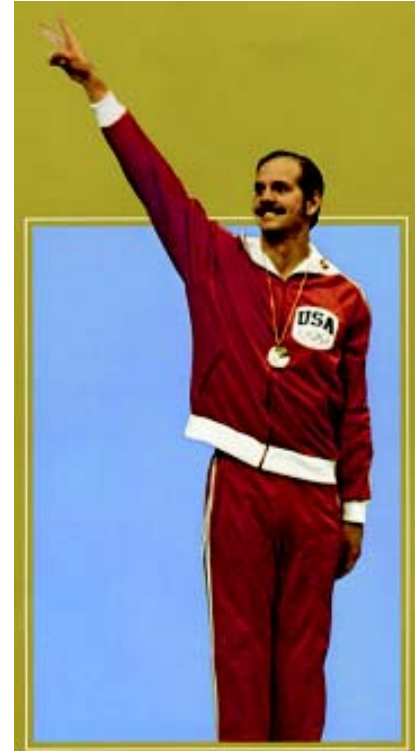


Ramsperger assisted by co-chairs **Cathy Smith** and **Tom McDonough**. New and Returning Committee Members of the gala core and auction committee are Tom Ahern, Ron Billitier, Jr., Dawn Bir, Mike Borrelli, Bill Broomfield, David Cooper, Dave Crean Donna Dedee, Joseph Di Leo, Debbie Dodge, Robin Finnerty, Julie Foster, Rose Mary Hardick, George Karrat, Carl Langsenkamp, Joanne Laudisi, Bari Lee, Sharon Levine, Peter McCrossen, Andy Meloni, Todd Plouffe, Chandra Pointer, Steve Rossi, Jim Schrader, Bruce Zicari, Gary Knaak, Pam Shufelt, LouAnn Genevieve and Laura Diehl. The Gala planning committee is currently recruiting new patrons and sponsors of the event.

Each year the gala draws 650 attendees who support the year long program of sports training and competition for 3,200 athletes in the Genesee Region. The opening theme is **Ordinary Miracles, Extraordinary Moments**. Mason Selkowitz McDermott Marketing is working on the theme presentation and the invitation.

Sometimes 3 is the band for the event...a new band to Special Olympics but a band well know in the community.

Auction items are being solicited and



the components for the Disney Raffle are coming into play. Tickets have been secured for the PGA in Chicago in August.

Presenting sponsorship is \$5,000, Event Sponsorship is \$2500 and Patron Sponsors can sign on at \$1200. The individual ticket cost is \$125. To reserve your table or ticket call the Special Olympics New York – Genesee Region office at (585) 586-7400. ■

Aquilone *Continued from p.1*

many medals for individual floor hockey skills, including shooting, passing, stick-handling and defense, were handed out during the day's competition.

A highlight for many of the athletes was the presence of the NHL Stanley Cup and former Rangers player Brian Mullen. Athletes had their photographs taken with the Stanley Cup, and Brian Mullen signed autographs. In addition, Debra Siegel of the Nassau Lions won the grand prize in the athlete-only raffle – a 2004 Eastern Conference All-Star Jersey signed by every member of the team. The NHL was a tremendous partner of this year's event, and SONY looks forward to continuing this relationship in the future.

Healthy Athletes was present in Olympic Village, and more than 70 athletes participated in the program throughout the day.

Sponsors of this year's tournament were Merrill Lynch, Mattel, Blimpie (who generously provided lunches), and the NHL. Thank you to our sponsors, volunteers, staff, the Javits Center, coaches and athletes for making the day a success. ■

SONY Athletes Bowl with the Pro's

PBA invites athletes to take part in Pro-Am event

On Saturday, December 17 Special Olympics New York athletes were knocking down pins with the best bowlers in the world. It was all part of the Professional Bowlers Association's Empire State Classic which took place at Spare Time - Clifton Park.

"We were thrilled by the opportunity," said local coach Margo Bagneschi. "Our athletes have been bowling at Spare Time for close to 20 years and through that relationship the management donated 12 spots for our athletes in the Pro-Am."

At each of the PBA tour stops, Saturdays are set aside for the Pro's to rub elbows with their fans. At this event the pros were also accompanied by a number of local celebrity sportscasters and our SONY athletes.

Dan Murphy, host of Murphy's Law on Fox Sports Radio 980, emceed the event and soon there after the pins were flying. The local athletes who took part in the event were: Todd Byron, Bob Rodgers, Josh Glover, Josiah Anderson, Kelly Ross, Cindy Samide, Kim Ricketts, John Schwartz, Karen Ludwig, Kathy Schleich, DJ Nolan and Brianne Nobis.

The athletes bowled with Pete Weber, Rick Lawrence and Brian Kretzer during the first of three sessions on the day. The Pro's and the SONY athletes became quick friends, cringing at near misses and high five-ing each other on great frames. In addition to donating the 12 spots for our athletes the 50-50 proceeds went to Special Olympics New York. "I can't thank Rob Bernhard and his wonderful staff enough," said Margo Bagneschi. "They have always been so supportive of us and our athletes."

On Sunday, Mike Wolfe won his second career Denny's PBA Tour title, defeating Chris Collins in the title match 268-214. Wolfe, who earned the \$40,000 top prize and an exemption for the 2006-07 Tour season, struck in frames 4-10 and never let Collins into the match. ■



Back row left to right: Todd Byron and Bob Rodgers.

Long row in middle, left to right: Josh Glover, Josiah Anderson, Kelly Ross, Cindy Samide, Kim Ricketts, John Schwartz, Karen Ludwig, Kathy Schleich and DJ Nolan.

Front row on right side, Brianne Nobis

Star-Filled Screening of "The Ringer" in New York City

On Monday, December 19, 2005, Special Olympics New York (SONY) hosted a preview screening of "The Ringer" at Tribeca Cinemas in Manhattan. Through the preview screening, SONY raised awareness of our mission and organization in the New York City community, as well as offering the media, board members, sponsors, athletes and friends of SONY the opportunity to view the movie prior to the general release date on December 23. The event was held in conjunction with Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI), and also included a post-screening reception catered by Tribeca Grill, a sponsor an athlete appeal, and a raffle.

In attendance to introduce the movie were SOI Chairman of the Board Timothy P. Shriver, Ph.D, the film's star Johnny Knoxville, and John Taylor, a Special Olympics athlete and one of the actors in the film. Mr. Shriver spoke of the film's efforts to break down stereotypes of individuals with intellectual disabilities. "We had to do this, because we were sick and tired of being the disability, the group, the minority, that people don't pay attention to. We're here tonight to laugh and enjoy ourselves, but also because we hope that this film can do what we have not yet been able to do, which is to bring to public

consciousness, bring to young people and bring to this society a cultural message that says enough is enough. People with intellectual disabilities deserve to be included and deserve the human dignity of everybody else, and there's no excuse for second class citizenship. That's why we chose to make this movie."

In his introduction, Johnny Knoxville said, "Working on this film had a profound impact on my life. Hopefully it will have that same effect on a lot of people this evening and others who see the film." Making a co-introduction, John Taylor said, "I hope this movie will show that people with intellectual disabilities can do anything, and we're going to show you that by watching this movie."

The movie stars Knoxville as Steve Barker, who when he finds himself running

dead last in the corporate rat race, he sinks to an all time low – he attempts to rig the Special Olympics by pretending to be intellectually challenged. But, Barker is completely out-classed by his fellow Olympians, who are not only better athletes; they're just plain better people. And they're

on to him. But rather than rat-out the rat, they join forces with him to once and for all beat Jimmy, the arrogant reigning champion of the annual games. With a work-out regime uniquely their own, they train Barker to go for the gold and, in the process, show him what's



at the heart of a true winner.

The preview screening occurred at a pivotal time, and helped to introduce not only SONY to a broader audience, but the New York City Region and Urban Initiative as well, which has just been launched at the start of 2006. ■

SONY Website Becomes More Inclusive

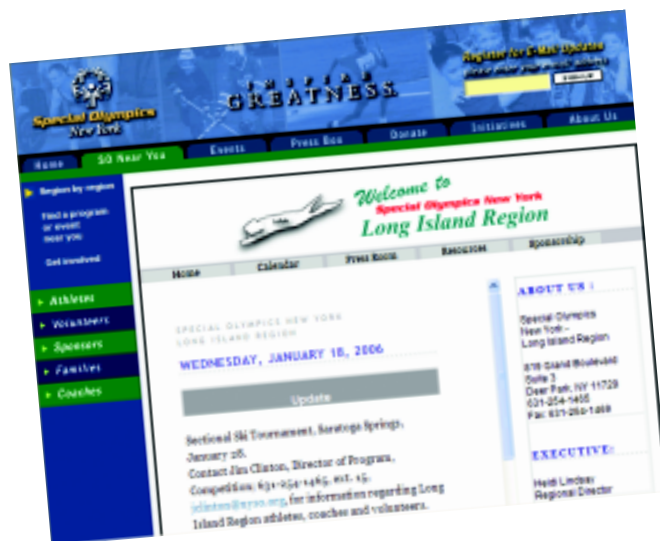
Regions taking greater role in getting the word out

As Special Olympics New York continues its regionalization process across the state, the organization has cleared a path to provide more public awareness on a regional and local level through the SONY's website; www.specialolympicsNY.org with what they refer as "regional mini-sites".

"We've added mini-sites to SONY's main web site for Long Island, Hudson Valley, New York City and soon the Central Region will be on board," said SONY Graphic Designer, Darcie Henderson. "It's very exciting to see how well this information reaches the people of New York State and beyond. I believe these efforts will help SONY to continue to cultivate more athletes, coaches, volunteers and sponsors in each region."

These regions can now target their local audience with updated information regarding program, development and public awareness events and news with a more local and regional feel.

To reach these regional mini-sites from www.specialolympicsNY.org, click the second tab; SO Near You to find your region. ■



TORCH RUN TIMES

Law Enforcement Torch Run News

Coney Island Polar Bears Pledge and Plunge a Success

The 103rd Annual New Year's Day plunge of the Coney Island Polar Bear Club went off swimmingly at 1:00 pm on the first day of 2006. Approximately 350 plungers braved the waters of the chilly Atlantic Ocean on a day with a high temperature of 42 degrees, much colder than last year's spring-like weather. In addition, there was not a dedicated train that brought participants directly to the event as there was last year, and combined with the colder weather there were less than half the number of swimmers this year. However, with the invaluable support of numerous individuals (including many who were not even plunging), this year's event still raised more than \$5,100 to support the programs and athletes of Special Olympics New York (SONY).

Christopher Porreca, LETR Liason, said "This is a great start for the LETR efforts in 2006, and thanks to everyone involved for their dedication to our athletes." Among the participants in this year's plunge were Richard Salinardi, Chairman of the Board of SONY, and a contingent of SONY athletes from Staten Island.

The day's activities also included breakfast, coffee and admission to the New York Aquarium that was included for all



participants donating at least \$10 to SONY. The New York Aquarium is also located on Coney Island. A DJ and singer serenaded fans and participants prior to the plunge, including songs written specifically for the Coney Island Polar Bears. Participants wore quite an array of attire to swim, including a fur bikini and a full Triton costume.

Louis Scarcella, President of the Coney Island Polar Bear Club, was a tremendous support in encouraging everyone to pledge to SONY. "Every day you can swim is great,

it was a beautiful day and everyone had a lot of fun. We hope we can do better next year and get more people back to this wonderful event."

Thank you to all of our generous donors, and especially to the Coney Island Polar Bears, on the second anniversary of the pledge and plunge. We look forward to growing

the event in the future. ■



Cops Serve Up Lobsters and Smiles

Fundraiser a success despite snowy weather

Thursday, December 15 and Friday, December 16, local Capital Region law enforcement officials put a spin on their “serve and protect” oath by trading in their uniforms for serving trays. The Cops and Lobsters benefit, took place at the Red Lobster restaurant on Wolf Road in Colonie.

Acting as celebrity waiters, the officers took in donations in the form of tips from restaurant diners. All proceeds benefit the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) to benefit Special Olympics New York.

The officers who helped out were: Bob Thayer of the NYS Division of Parole, Bob Fitzgerald with the Troy Police Department, Mike Smith of the NYS Division of Parole, Ed Fraley of the NYS Division of Parole, and Rodney Smith with the Capital Police.

The law enforcement officials were also accompanied by some SONY athletes, Kevin Brown, Katie Cranston-Spadafora and Dubois Hunt pitched in to make sure that everything ran smoothly.

The only thing that didn't run smoothly was the weather on Friday morning when a storm coated the Capital District Region with a thick blanket of snow, which kept the lunch crowd home. Later in the day the weather improved and the crowds picked up. “Everyone that participated in the Cops and Lobsters event had a great time and even with the slow start we had a successful fundraiser,” said Chris Porreca, LETR Liaison. “I would like to thank all of the law enforcement officers who came out in support of our athletes, the athletes who came out to help the officers and a special thanks to Red Lobster and the entire staff who helped insure another great event.” ■



Fantasy Raffle Winners Picked a Cops & Lobsters Event

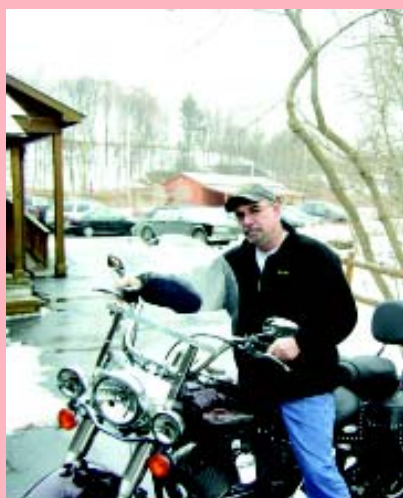
Three great prizes, three very happy winners

This year the drawing for the Fantasy Raffle was held at the Cops & Lobsters event on December 16th.

1st Place Prize: a 2005 Harley-Davidson Heritage Softail Classic

2nd Place Prize: All inclusive four night stay at the Melia Turquesa, Cancun

3rd Place Prize: 32 inch wide-screen LCD flat panel TV



The 3rd Place Prize went to Mafalda Scavo of Norwalk, Connecticut, the 2nd Place Prize went to Edward Ragan of New Hartford, New York and the 1st Place Prize went to Kevin Belden of Hudson Falls.

Kevin is a Sergeant at the Washington Correctional Facility. He buys his tickets from Duff Hildreth who works at the correctional facility with Kevin and has a son, Chad, who is an athlete with SONY. Kevin says that he's bought tickets in the past and that he never expected to win. Kevin says he buys the tickets because Duff is a great ambassador for SONY and that his excitement is contagious. “I haven't had a bike in years,” said Kevin who will now have to go back and get his license. “It is a wonderful program, it is a great job that people do, and he is happy to support the program. Of course I am a lot happier that I won something,” said Kevin. “I hope that by me winning this year we can sell even more tickets at the facility next year.” And Kevin promises to buy a ticket again next year.

“We are looking forward to another Fantasy Raffle in 2006 and want to thank everyone who was able to purchase a ticket,” said Chris Porreca, LETR Liaison. “We owe a sincere thank you to our tremendous group of Law Enforcement for selling the raffle tickets.” ■



Special Olympics New York

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*Don't forget to send your letters to the editor. Submit letters to John D'Alessandro,
Special Olympics New York, 504 Balltown Road, Schenectady, NY 12304, or e-mail them to jdalessandro@nyso.org.*

Get Ready for the 6th Annual Rochester Polar Plunge

Brave Bears to plunge on February 5



The 6th Annual Rochester Polar Plunge is set for Sunday, February 5 and everyone is invited to join in the fun. The past plungers are challenged to take the plunge again this year and bring a friend, family member, co-worker or nemesis to take the plunge with them.

February 5th, 2006

Registration starts at 9:00 am

Plunge goes off at high noon.

Ontario Beach Park, Charlotte

For more information call the Cold Line at 800-836-6976

or check out www.polarplunge.net

There will also be contests for the following: Oldest Plunger, Youngest Plunger, Best Costume, Team with most Money and Person who raises the most money. ■

SONY's mission is to provide sports training and athletic competition to individuals with intellectual disabilities, including mental retardation. Our programs are designed to offer participants continuing opportunities to enjoy sports, develop physical fitness and demonstrate courage while interacting with their families, the community and other Special Olympics athletes.