

# Triumph

June 2004



Special Olympics  
New York

## Gold Medals Translate to Golden Dreams for Special Olympics Athletes

*SONY announces team for 2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games.*

**F**or some lucky athletes, a first-place finish at SONY's 2004 Winter Games is worth more than a gold medal. For a fortunate few, victory at February's statewide Winter Games translates into a trip to Japan to compete in the 2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games.

"Following the rules outlined by Special Olympics, Inc., we put the names of all the SONY Winter Games gold medal winners – in sports that we were given slots for – into a drawing," said Pete Lawrence, SONY's Director of Competition. "We then randomly pulled out names; these are the

people who will represent Special Olympics New York at the World Winter Games. This is a great opportunity for our athletes to show the world what New Yorkers and people with mental retardation are capable of."

Gold medalists Deborah Dempsey (Alpine Skiing) of the Hudson Valley Region, Donna Grillotti (Nordic Skiing) of the Long Island Region and Daniel Ritzenburg (Alpine Skiing) of the Capital District Region were each selected as



Spencer Tullis

members of Team U.S.A./New York. Along with the Hudson Valley Region's Floor Hockey team (Troy Ackerly, Rich Bouman, Keith Caminiti, Anna Charitou, Rick Dammann, William Danko, Gregory DiRoma, Richard Hunt, Marilyn "Mousy" Lewis, Max

*Continued P.4*

## Summer Games: View from a Sponsor

**O**ppenheimerFunds is pleased to make a difference in the New York metro community through our partnership with Special Olympics New York. As a regional sponsor of Special Olympics for the past four years, we have participated in events ranging from the Metro

Tournament to the Summer Games to the Million Dollar Duck Race. We have observed firsthand the incredible impact that Special Olympics has on the athletes it serves, and we are proud to be part of this effort.

We are also proud of our employee

volunteers, who give so much – and gain even more.

John Flynn, of our Sales division, recently reflected: "It was a great experience to see all the athletes at the Metro Tournament compete and show support for one another. The sportsmanship I wit-

nessed was just impressive."

Elisa Cenni, also of our Sales area, noted: "Volun-

teering with Special Olympics proves an incredible way to share the excitement of the athletes participating. It's wonderful to just be present."

The upcoming Summer Games will



surely build upon the great momentum from the recent Metro Tournament. We'll once again support the athletes during their competitions and cheer with their families and friends as they accomplish their goals. We wish the athletes luck and look forward to another exciting sports exhibition filled with fun and laughter. ■

*This story was provided by Summer Games gold-level sponsor OppenheimerFunds.*



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# A Message from the President

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



**Y**ou might think the best seat at a sporting event is the one closest to the action. That's usually where you can find me.

At Special Olympics competitions, I tend to go from venue to venue, watching from courtside or from the deck of a pool. Sometimes I'm even closer; if it's Floor Hockey, there's a good chance I'm in a black-and-white striped shirt, running alongside the competitors.

At a recent SONY Basketball and Aquatics Sectional at Fordham University, though, I planted myself in the stands at the Aquatics venue with the families of our athletes. It was a great experience.

Families are where it's at. Sitting with them is like sitting in the cheap seats at a New York Giants game. That's where the truly passionate people are.

The noise was nonstop at Fordham. If an athlete was in the water, the families were cheering.

Special Olympics families don't cheer just for their relatives. Our families are equal opportunity cheerers. They clap and whistle and yell for every athlete. They take pride in each performance.

They also have the inside scoop on everyone. Family members can – and do – tell you which athletes have improved lately or how hard they've been training.

In fact, during the 25-meter freestyle competition, a woman told me about a young boy who was in the water.

"Just four months ago," she said, "he was so afraid that he wouldn't go near the water. Look at him now – he's competing!"

The boy's stroke was not perfect and he didn't win. In the woman's eyes, though, he was a winner. He was in the pool, swimming the full 25 meters. His effort was a source of pride.

The families at Fordham reminded me that the impact of Special Olympics goes beyond the athletes. The families are affected, too. They're a part of each athlete's success.

They're also fun to be around. The next time you go to a Special Olympics competition, sit with the families. Trust me, you won't be disappointed. ■

## Long Island Welcomes New Regional Director

*Heidi Lindsay takes her Special Olympics involvement to the next level.*

**H**eidi Lindsay of Malverne has joined SONY's staff as Regional Director of the Long Island Region. Lindsay's first day was May 13.

"We are very excited to have Heidi join our team," said SONY President and Chief Executive Officer Neal J. Johnson. "I know she will make a valuable contribution to the lives of the thousands of athletes our Long Island program serves."

Lindsay comes to SONY from the Nassau County Sports Commission where she served as Associate Director for nearly two years. Her responsibilities included global outreach, coordinating all aspects of fund-raising events and creating relationships with Nassau County residents, including the differently abled, economically disadvantaged and senior citizens.

For the past two years, Lindsay, a St. John's University graduate, also has served on the Local Organizing Committee for SONY's Summer Games at Hofstra. She served as chairperson of Olympic Village committee last year and is this year's Opening Ceremonies chair.

"I am truly excited about joining the Special Olympics New York team," Lindsay said. "I plan to continue to develop strong community ties with the athletes, volunteers and local advocates. In so doing, it is my goal to increase not only the awareness of, but the great success of Special Olympics." ■ DH



## Triumph

Vol. 8, No. 6, June 2004

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

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## Full Week of Events on Tap in Saratoga Springs

*Satins, Silks & Stars week will benefit Special Olympics athletes.*

Event organizers are excited to announce the dates of the 14th Annual Satins, Silks & Stars week to benefit Special Olympics New York. The weeklong slate of activities, presented by General Electric, will run from July 25 through Aug. 1 in Saratoga Springs.



The festivities will kick off with the Miles for Medals walkathon at Saratoga Race Course on July 25.

Coinciding with the walkathon will be the race course's Open House day and participants will enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of the famed racetrack before public admission begins.

For those who are a little more

“fleet of foot,” the next event is the acclaimed Silks & Satins 5K Run on July 31. This road race drew more than 1,000 runners in 2003, many of whom cooled down after the race by watching some of the horses race, courtesy of the free tickets to the racetrack that runners get in their goodie bags.

The Satins, Silks & Stars flagship event – the black-tie gala – is set for the evening of July 31, at the Prime Hotel in Saratoga Springs. The fun-filled evening will include:

- A “Roaring 20s” theme, complete with a “gin mill” and several vintage automobiles, displayed courtesy of Saratoga Automobile Museum.
- Dinner, dancing and a silent auction with some unique items (including the opportunity to “Be Steve Caporizzo for a Day,” with the high bidder helping the WTEN meteorologist prepare his broadcast).
- Celebrities slated to attend include



presented by 

John Castellanos of “Young and the Restless;” Thom Christopher, formerly of “Guiding Light;” Betsy Palmer, who starred as Jason’s mother in “Friday the 13th;” and David Andrew MacDonald, who plays Prince Edward on “Guiding Light.” John Gray of Fox 23 and New York Lottery’s Yolanda Vega will co-host the gala.

Finally, Satins, Silks & Stars week will conclude at Saratoga Race Course on Aug. 1 with an Equestrian Demonstration, a Q & A with the Stars and a Gourmet Luncheon at the race course’s *At The Rail Pavilion*.

For ticket prices or to make reservations for any of the events listed above, call 800-836-6976. ■ JF

## Egg-ceptional ... Egg-citing ... Eggs-traordinary ...

*The Million Dollar Duck Race returns to South Street Seaport.*

Last year, 20,000 rubber ducks took the plunge into the East River below the Brooklyn Bridge and raced under Pier 17 to the finish line. This year, an additional 10,000 of their bright-billed friends will join them on August 24 at South Street Seaport in Manhattan.

Thirty thousand ducks are up for adoption this year. And it’s so easy to participate – it’s downright reduckulous!

For a \$5 donation, you can adopt one racing duck. For \$25, you’ll get five ducks entered in the race, and one little racing duck will be sent to you as a keepsake along with coupons and other offers. For \$50, you’ll adopt 13 racing ducks, and you’ll receive a souvenir duck and a coupon package.

Adoptions can be made online at [www.specialolympicsNY.org](http://www.specialolympicsNY.org) or by calling the adoption hotline (212-490-1062).

The 2004 Million Dollar Duck Race is presented by the New York Lottery and sponsored by NYSUT, OppenheimerFunds, Merrill Lynch, WABC-TV, *Daily News*, Time Warner Cable, New York Sports Clubs and Amtrak. ■ DH



Dominick Totino

Thousands of rubber ducks will be dumped into the East River for the Million Dollar Duck Race.



A little rain at the Long Island Region's Spring Games couldn't dampen Christopher Bartley's spirits. Bartley was one of approximately 1,300 athletes who enjoyed the competition.

SONY Staff / John D'Alessandro



SONY Staff / Genesee Region

In May, six Genesee Region athletes competed in the Special Olympics Education through Sports Festival in Greece. The athletes – Eric Byrd, Amy Clark, Kim Converse, Steven Kewin, Brenda Manhart and Craig Newmiller – enjoyed a send-off with former Olympic skater Cathy Turner, Sgt. Sal Gerbino of the Gates Police Department, SONY coach Sylvia Korn, WPXY radio personality Pete Kennedy and Regional Director David M. McEneany.



SONY Staff / Doreen Hand

Cadets from West Point cheer on a shot put participant at the Orange County Spring Games. Each athlete had a personal cheering squad in the form of a cadet who spent the entire day with his or her athlete, attending events and awards, having lunch and getting to know the athletes.

## World Games Team

*Continued from P. 1*

Maksimyadis, Annmarie O'Sullivan, Frankie Ragusa, Paul Ryder, William Smith, Andrew Stawicki and Nicole Waag), they will travel to Nagano for the 2005 World Winter Games, February 26 through March 5.

The 2005 World Winter Games will mark the first time the World Games have been held in Asia. The Games will feature more than 2,500 athletes representing more than 80 countries, and will be the largest international sporting event of 2005. Special Olympics athletes will compete at many of the same venues used in the 1998 Nagano Olympics Games.

"The 2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games will give our athletes a chance to shine," said Neal J. Johnson, SONY's President and Chief Executive Officer. "Athletes aspire to compete at the highest level, on the world stage, and Special Olympics athletes are no different. Out athletes are thrilled that they'll be representing New York and the U.S.A." ■ JF

## LPGA Star to Challenge Golfers at Special Olympics Fund-Raiser

*June 21 tourney at Fairways of Halfmoon to benefit Special Olympics athletes.*

Local golfers will have a chance to "Tee It Up" for Special Olympics and test their skills against LPGA star Michele Redman on June 21.

The Second Annual Tee It Up for Special Olympics Golf Tournament, sponsored by Pacific Industries, will kick off at the Fairways of Halfmoon with a 9 a.m. shotgun scramble start. Day-of registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

Golfers also can pre-register by calling Rebecca Rickert at (518) 388-0793.

The registration fee, which includes a round of golf, an awards ceremony and a dinner emceed by Fox 23's John Gray, is \$110 for individual golfers or \$400 for foursomes. All proceeds benefit Special Olympics New York, which provides cost-free sports opportunities to 40,000 children and adults with mental retardation.

Redman will host a "beat-the-pro" hole at the Tee It Up Tourney. She will be tough to beat, though: Redman has shot as low as 63 for 18 holes.

Additionally, Whiteman Chevy is sponsoring a hole-in-one competition. Anyone who hits a hole-in-one on the specified hole will win \$20,000 or a brand-new vehicle.

Special Olympics New York athletes D.J. Nolan and Katie Spadafora, both from the Capital District, will participate.

Foursomes and sponsorships are still available.

For more information, please visit [www.specialolympicsNY.org](http://www.specialolympicsNY.org) or contact Rebecca Rickert at (518) 388-0793. ■ JF

## Point of View

By Jo Ann M. Felix

June 12, 2003 marked a night that I will never forget. It was that evening that I attended the Opening Ceremonies for Special Olympics New York's Summer Games. It was my first Opening Ceremonies and I consider myself truly fortunate to have been a part of the evening.

I had heard from other people how wonderful Special Olympics is, but others words could never truly capture the feelings I experienced when I saw it with my own eyes. The energy level in Hofstra's Arena was unparalleled to anything you could imagine. The seemingly endless line of athletes proudly parading onto the floor, each draped in the colors of their teams, was astonishing.

What I remember most about that night was the faces of each person I saw. Whether it was an athlete, a coach, a family member or a fan, one thing was consistent:

the smile. Everyone was beaming with joy. I knew at that moment that why Special Olympics is so special.

Over the next few days, I attended several athletic competitions. In particular, my father and I were very interested in the Track and Field events, where the athlete we sponsored captured the gold medal, not just once, but three times.

Each event was awe-inspiring. I was most impressed with the professionalism of the athletes. The dedication to achieving greatness was exemplified by each and every athlete. Win or lose, each athlete gave his all. I remember speaking to some of the athletes who expressed their excitement about simply being able to compete in the games.

I was as honored just to attend as they were to compete.

The weekend ended with the Closing

Ceremonies and – my favorite part – the VICTORY DANCE!

After a long, tiring competition, the athletes got to kick back and have some well-deserved fun. It was an amazing end to a spectacular experience.

My involvement with Special Olympics was one of one of the most fulfilling ever. Since then, I actively spread the word about my experiences. I can only hope that others will take the initiative to become fans and volunteers and to partake in something great. I know I will continue to do so.

*Point of View is written periodically. Jo Ann M. Felix is Associate Director of Conference Services for Hofstra University. To submit a Point of View idea or a story suggestion for Triumph, contact Jeff Foley at 518-388-0793 or jfoley@nyso.org. ■*

## Special Olympics New York Fund-Raiser Set for Oak Hill

*Sixth Annual Golf Classic will feature Craig Harmon and will benefit Special Olympics athletes.*

Golfers will have an opportunity to test their skills on one of the Northeast's finest courses and hone their skills with the help of a pro on July 19.

The Sixth Annual Summer Golf Classic to benefit Special Olympics will be held on the East Course of Rochester's prestigious Oak Hill Country Club, home of the 2003 PGA championship. Participants will enjoy the beauty and challenges of Oak Hill, and they'll benefit from a clinic with Craig Harmon, head professional at Oak Hill and named one of the nation's top-50 golf teachers by *Golf Digest* in 2001 (he was tabbed No. 20).

Additionally, Summer Golf Classic participants will enjoy 18 holes of golf, breakfast, an exhibition by Special Olympics New York athletes, lunch, a cocktail reception, an awards ceremony and dinner. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and golfing begins at 11:45 a.m.

Foursomes and sponsorships are still available. The cost for an individual golfer is \$1,750 and foursome packages range from \$5,500 to \$10,000.

For more information, please contact Laurie Kennedy at (716) 271-5151 or lkennedy@nyso.org. ■ JF



Golf pro Craig Harmon, right, will conduct a clinic at the Sixth Annual Summer Golf Classic.

# TORCH RUN TIMES

Law Enforcement Torch Run News

## Up Against the Column



This month, I'm going to brag. Day in and day out, the staff of Special Olympics New York proclaims the accolades of our athletes, our volunteers, our venue hosts, the law enforcement representatives, coaches, athlete families and countless other supporters. The activities and efforts they put forth are well worth being the center of attention, as they are at the core of our mission. But just this once, I want to take us down a different path, and speak the praises of a small and dedicated force behind the operation.

It's a small team, only numbering 51. This team has taught me more about loyalty; a willingness to go above and beyond; how important it is to keep a sense of humor; that even on the worst of days, tomorrow will be better; commitment; the spirit of enthusiasm; an unwavering sense of going the distance; and the fact that no matter how long you've been at SONY, it is still more than okay to cry at competitions.

I'm talking about the staff of Special Olympics. Fifty-one souls devoted to 40,000 athletes and 5,000 regular volunteers. That is an incredible statistic. Some other data you might not realize about the staff:

- The staff coordinates over 400 statewide competitions each year.
- One-third of these competitions take place in May and June.
- In the course of any given year, we host and facilitate approximately 75 fundraisers.
- We mail tens of thousands of save-the-date cards, invitations, newsletters, donation requests, event announcements, competition packages, thank you letters, etc. It's not uncommon to see a bunch of staffers sitting around a conference table well into the evening folding and stuffing envelopes.
- It doesn't make a difference what position you have. One minute you could be a Director of Development and the next minute you could be helping to coordinate

## Pulling for a Home Run and Special Olympics

Special Olympics New York and the Auburn Double Days baseball team are hoping to hit a home run on July 18. Not only is the Second Annual Auburn Correctional Facility Fire Truck Pull happening in the morning, but the Double Days will host Special Olympics Night that evening.

"Thanks to the Double Days, the Fire Truck Pull has turned into an all-day event that will bring the community, law enforcement officials and Special Olympics New York together," said Sgt. Michael Murray of Auburn Correctional Facility.

The Fire Truck Pull will take place at 11 a.m. at Auburn's Casey Park with teams of

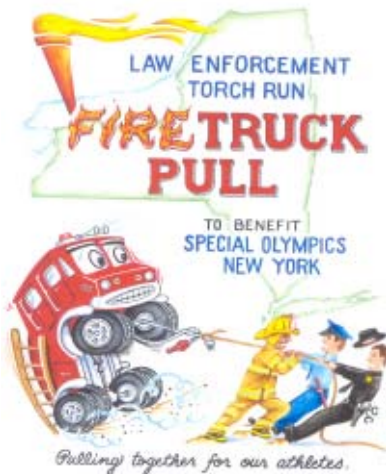
10 attempting to move a 46,000-pound fire truck 20 feet. Each team will get two tries and the team that covers the distance in the quickest time wins. There is a \$500 entry fee per team and registration begins at 9:30 a.m.

All proceeds from the Law Enforcement Torch Run event will benefit SONY's athletes.

The Double Days, meanwhile, a minor-league affiliate of the Toronto Blue Jays will welcome Special Olympics athletes and Fire Truck Pull participants to their night game. Ticket sales to the game also will

benefit SONY.

For more information, contact Sgt. Michael Murray at 315-889-7172 or Jeanne Mesick at 800-836-6976. ■ CP



## What Does a Duck Say?

There's going to be a Quack Attack on July 31, and you're invited to participate. As part of the Glens Falls Kiwanis Club's 14th Annual Million Dollar Duck Race, which will benefit the Law Enforcement Torch Run, thousands of rubber ducks will swim in Haviland's Cove Park. Ducks can be purchased for \$5 each.

Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place and there will be 25 other random prize packages. The grand prize winner will receive \$2,004 and a chance to take home the million dollar prize. One duck out of every 3,333 sold will be randomly selected as a million dollar duck.

"My desk is surrounded by ducks who are anxious to race," said Jeanne Mesick, LETR liaison for SONY. "If you purchase one today, you'll have a shot at winning big bucks."

"We've been training really hard," said Donald, a duck who didn't want his last name revealed. "We just hope that if someone wins the million bucks, they'll split it with us ... Or with the Law Enforcement Torch Run to benefit Special Olympics New York."

Ducks can be purchased by contacting Jeanne Mesick or Chris Porreca at 800-836-6976. ■ CP

## Up Against the Column

Continued from P. 6

a competition. If it needs to be done, it gets done. PR folks might have to load a truck. Finance people could help to coordinate volunteers. Our beloved receptionist (“Special Olympics New York, Holly Gray speaking”) hawks merchandise and even the big kahuna, Neal J. Johnson, is part of the all-hands-on-deck philosophy.

I could go on and on, but I know I’ve already exceeded the amount of space allotted for this column (sorry, Jeff). But SONY’s sense of work ethic, passion and spirit deserves recognition. By the time you are reading this we will be well into June and starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel since this our busiest time of year. The countless hours, nights and weekends will continue, but somehow we manage to have fun through it all. And we all know why we do it: It’s the same emotion that makes us tear up at Opening Ceremonies and competitive events. It’s that certain look in the athletes eyes.

So to my fellow staffers, I hope you know that you set an example. You lead when you could easily follow, you bring pride and joy to so many. And for that I am grateful to have the opportunity to work side-by-side with you. Once again, a job well done by all. You have my heartfelt admiration and thanks. ■

*Jeanne Mesick*

## Big Wheels Keep on Turning For Special Olympics

🔥 If you’re in Buffalo on Sept. 18, you’ll definitely want to look both ways before crossing the street. The World’s Largest Truck Convoy will be in town, with New York State truckers and law enforcement officials teaming up to drive and escort big rigs and raise funds for the Law Enforcement Torch Run to benefit Special Olympics New York.

The World’s Largest Truck Convoy works like this: Truckers will donate at least \$100 to Special Olympics; they will then gather at locations all across the nation on Sept. 18; and, with a law enforcement escort, they will drive en masse to a



predetermined location. The event is officially recognized by Guinness World Records™.

“With the amount of trucking that happens in New York State and the fact that the state’s trucking hub is in Buffalo, we’ve got the potential to have the largest convoy in the country,” said Chris Porreca, an Associate Director of Development at SONY. “It should be a lot of fun.”

For more information, or to participate in the World’s Largest Truck Convoy, contact Jeanne Mesick or Chris Porreca at 800-836-6976. ■ CP

## Enough Dreaming. It’s Time to Ride.

🔥 Imagine yourself on a 2005 Harley Davidson Softail. Or, if we can’t sell you on the bike, how about \$12,500?

The Western New York Law Enforcement Torch Run’s Harley Davidson Raffle is back and it’s better than ever. Only 3,500 tickets are available, so if you haven’t gotten yours yet, better get ’em now.

“Once they’re gone, they’re really gone,” said Jeanne Mesick, LETR liaison for SONY.

Tickets are only \$10 each and the drawing will be held on Sept. 16 in Buffalo. The winner will choose between the Harley and \$12,500.

Enough dreaming. It’s time ride.

Tickets can be purchased by contacting Jeanne Mesick or Chris Porreca at 800-836-6976. ■ JM



## Ordering Up Funds for Special Olympics

*Law enforcement officials raise \$6,000 for SONY’s athletes.*

🔥 New York State’s law enforcement community got lobsters out of tanks and dollars out of wallets during four recent Cops & Lobsters/Law & Orders events.

Under the Cops & Lobsters/Law & Orders programs, law enforcement officials serve as wait staff at restaurants

across New York. By assisting the regular staff, they share the tips that are received. The funds the officers raise are donated directly to SONY, supporting year-round athletic training and competition for Special Olympics athletes.

“The first four Cops & Lobsters/Law & Orders events of 2004 have raised more

than \$6,000,” said Jeanne Mesick, LETR liaison for SONY. “We get tremendous support from the law enforcement community – not only from the money they raise but also from their efforts to turn out people for our events and support Special Olympics New York’s athletes.” ■ CP



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## 2004 Calendar of Events

### June

- 1 Genesee Region, Basketball League Dansville Middle School
- 5 New York City Region,  
Metro Tournament Riverbank State Park
- 5 Capital District Region,  
Summer Sectional University at Albany
- 5 Genesee Region, Track & Field (Monroe County) RIT
- 5 Genesee Region, Spring Games  
(Steuben, Schuyler, Chemung) Campbell-Savonna
- 6 Long Island Region, Equestrian Show Thomas Farms
- 8 Western New York Region,  
Area 22 Spring Games Emnet-Lockport
- 10 Genesee Region, Corporate Advisory Council TBD
- 13 Long Island Region, Miles for Medals  
Fundraising walk to benefit Special Olympics New York  
Hofstra University, Hempstead
- 14 Hudson Valley Region, Winged Foot Golf Classic  
Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaroneck
- 17 - 20 Long Island Region,  
Summer Games Hofstra University, Long Island
- 17 State, LI Law Enforcement Torch Run Long Island
- TBA Western New York Region,  
Miles for Medals Fundraising walk to benefit  
Special Olympics New York Delaware Park, Buffalo

\* For more details, please contact Special Olympics New York office.

### Picture of the Month

Mr. Met served as the bench coach for SONY's Queens softball team as they battled Madoff Securities at Shea Stadium on May 11. Madoff invited SONY to participate in its corporate outing at Shea, but Madoff got more than it bargained for:



SONY Staff / Doreen Hand

With Michael Landerson on the mound, SONY was victorious. Everyone celebrated with a barbeque dinner, which was provided by the New York Mets.

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.