

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Kathy Muffenbier
303.592.1361 (Office)
303.720.0203 (Cell)
km@specialolympicsco.org

Law Enforcement Flame of Hope Torch Run for Special Olympics Colorado Media Day June 4 at State Capital

DENVER, Colo. -- More than 200 Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) officers and Special Olympics Colorado athletes will gather at the west steps of the State Capital Thursday, June 4 at 11:30 a.m., to participate in the 2009 Flame of Hope Torch Run Unification Ceremony.

For the past month, hundreds of LETR officers have carried the Special Olympics Flame of Hope through their communities around the state, accumulating nearly 1,800 miles, in anticipation of the Special Olympics Colorado 2009 Summer Games. At the Capital, three flames will be unified into a single torch, which will then head down the 16th Street Mall on the way to its final journey to the Summer Games Opening Ceremonies Saturday, June 6, at the University of Northern Colorado-Greeley.

WHO: More than 200 Law Enforcement officers and Special Olympics Colorado athletes
Colonel James Wolfinbarger, Chief of the Colorado State Patrol
Former Wichita, Kansas., Chief of Police Richard LaMunyon, who is credited with starting the Torch Run for Special Olympics in 1981

WHAT: Three different legs of the torch run will reach the west steps of the State Capitol for the flame unification ceremony. The legs will run from Civic Park along 14th Street. A short ceremony will include comments from special guests Colonel James Wolfinbarger and Richard LaMunyon plus Special Olympics Colorado athletes and personnel.

Following the ceremony, officers will run with a single Flame of Hope down the 16th Street Mall and then head toward the University of Northern Colorado for the Special Olympics Colorado 2009 Summer Games.

WHEN: Thursday, June 4 at 11:30 a.m.

WHERE: West Steps of the State Capital

WHY: This event, resulting from the efforts of more than 1,000 officers representing 150 agencies statewide, signifies communities working together to raise awareness for Special Olympics Colorado. People with intellectual disabilities are members of every community. The Law Enforcement Torch Run is committed to raising awareness for Special Olympics athletes and to showcasing their tremendous talents and abilities. The Flame Unification Ceremony also helps build excitement for the Special Olympics Colorado 2009 Summer Games June 6-7, 2009, at UNC-Greeley. Summer Games include competition in aquatics, track & field, gymnastics, powerlifting and soccer.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics is the movement's largest grassroots fundraiser and public awareness vehicle. The Torch Run began in 1981 in Wichita, Kansas, when then **Police Chief Richard LaMunyon** saw an urgent need to raise funds for and increase awareness of Special Olympics. Today, hundreds of citizens in the United States and more than 50 foreign countries can witness the Olympic Torch being carried by dedicated members of law enforcement through their communities on its journey to the Opening Ceremonies of the Special Olympics Games. At its most basic level, the Torch Run is an actual running event in which officers and athletes run the Flame of Hope to the Opening Ceremonies of local or state Special Olympics competitions.

The Colorado Law Enforcement Torch Run, which celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2009, raises money (over \$250,000 annually) and awareness to support the 10,000 Special Olympics Colorado athletes who participate year-round in 20 different sports. Nearly 150 agencies and 1,000 law enforcement volunteers work throughout the year to accomplish this goal through a variety of vehicles -- from the actual Torch Run to events like Tip-a-Cop, Cops on Doughnut Shops, FirstBank Golf Tournament, Guardian of the Flames Hockey Tournament, Polar Plunge and many more.

Special Olympics Colorado provides children and adults with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy and friendship. There is no cost to participate.

If you are a *FAN* of competition, then you are a *FAN* of Special Olympics Colorado.