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SPECIAL OLYMPICS PA TO CELEBRATE ITS 50TH ANNUAL SUMMER GAMES AT PENN STATE UNIVERSITY, JUNE 6 – 8

HUNDREDS OF VOLUNTEER POSITIONS STILL NEED TO BE FILLED

(NORRISTOWN, PA, May 17, 2019) – Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) will hold its 50th Annual Summer Games at Penn State University in State College, PA, from Thursday, June 6 to Saturday, June 8, 2019. While the very first Summer Games was a track and field meet held at West Chester University 50 years ago that hosted a total of 135 athletes, Summer Games has now become the largest statewide competition bringing more than 2,000 athletes and 750 coaches from across the state of Pennsylvania together to compete in 8 sports (aquatics, athletics, basketball, equestrian, golf, gymnastics, softball and tennis). Weeks of hard work and dedication in training will be rewarded as athletes are cheered on and supported during this three-day competition by more than 1,000 enthusiastic volunteers.

The Summer Games committee is currently seeking volunteers to serve in specific roles, including general event volunteers, to assist with athlete arrival, luggage assistance, and equipment tear down. Volunteers are also needed for sports specific roles including but not limited to, score keepers, runners, timers, lane monitors, announcers, judges, and more. Visit the [SOPA website](#) and follow the volunteer registration process to become a volunteer.

Preliminary Summer Games competitions will begin on Thursday, June 6, followed by the traditional fanfare of Opening Ceremonies at Pegula Ice Arena, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Opening Ceremonies will be emceed by Kellie Goodman-Shaffer, President and CEO of the Bedford County Chamber of Commerce, and Bedford County athlete Christa Mereen. Opening is expected to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Summer Games with a short video retrospect and welcome special guests. It will also feature entertainment by the State College Area High School Marching Band, Penn State's multidisciplinary performing arts club Harmony, and end with the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron by the Flame of Hope carried by participants of the ninth annual ["Be a Fan" Torch Run](#). The Torch Run is a 3-day, 150-mile run from Pittsburgh to State College. This year's Torch Run is sponsored by the [Law Enforcement Torch Run](#) (LETR) Guardians of the Flame Premier Sponsor, Energy Transfer. Over 400 members of law enforcement representing more than 50 teams from across the state will participate by carrying the torch from home plate at PNC Park in Pittsburgh on June 4th to the Pegula Ice Arena in State College to celebrate and kickoff the 50th Annual Summer Games on June 6th.

On Friday, June 7, competitions begin as early as 8:00 a.m. at eight venues in individual skills, individual events, relay and team events. The day will conclude with a Family Ice Cream Social and formal Victory Dance, presented by Comcast, in the Pegula Ice Arena from 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. Final competitions and awards are scheduled to take place at each venue between 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 8th.

Special Olympics Pennsylvania

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The complete [Summer Games tentative event schedule](#) is available via the SOPA website. Summer Games will also host Healthy Athletes programs in Pollock Commons on June 6th and 7th where health promotion, fun fitness, eye, ear, dental, and podiatry health screenings will be offered. Our Healthy Athletes program provides health services and education to Special Olympics athletes free of charge, and is changing the way health systems interact with people with intellectual disabilities. The program has now made Special Olympics the largest public health organization for people with intellectual disabilities in the world.

This year marks the 32nd consecutive year that Penn State University will host Summer Games, and the 27th successive year that Sheetz, Inc. will serve as a state-wide corporate partner. Energy Transfer, Comcast, the Central Pennsylvania Convention & Visitor's Bureau, Penn State Book Store, Geisinger and Aerotek are other premier sponsors of this year's event. Likewise, StateCollege.com, Centre Daily Times, WTAJ, and Forever Media/Majic 99 will serve as key Summer Games media partners.

About Special Olympics Pennsylvania

Special Olympics Pennsylvania provides year-round training and competition in 21 Olympic-type sports to nearly 20,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities or closely related developmental disabilities. For more information about how you can join "The Inclusion Revolution," visit www.specialolympicspa.org.

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