



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS PENNSYLVANIA TO CELEBRATE ATHLETE SUCCESS DURING VIRTUAL SUMMER GAMES FROM JUNE 13-27

WHAT: **2021 Virtual Summer Games** – The general public is invited to come together virtually to celebrate the success of Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) athletes who trained and competed from home for the **2021 Virtual Summer Games**. A series of virtual events will take place on the organization's social media platforms ([Facebook/YouTube](#)) and feature Opening Ceremonies, SOPA's new Talk Show, Closing Ceremonies, a Victory Dance and more.

WHEN: **Sunday, June 13 through Sunday, June 27** – Virtual Summer Games Schedule:

- **Opening Ceremonies** – June 13 at 7 p.m.; hosted by Steve Jones and Kim Schickly, a SOPA athlete from Columbia/Montour.
- **Online Talk Show** – June 14 through June 18 at 7 p.m.
(Highlighting SOPA's programming & services, competition highlights, athlete interviews, games, etc.)
- **Virtual Healthy Athletes** – June 21 through June 27 via Zoom
(Opportunities for athletes to schedule virtual health screenings with healthcare professionals and students)
- **Closing Ceremonies** – June 27 at 2 p.m.
(Featuring the selection of athletes to represent Team PA at 2022 USA Games in Florida)

***Media outlets who are interested in airing Virtual Summer Games coverage can receive video segments upon request and be connected with athletes in their coverage area for interviews.*

WHO: **More than 1,000 participating Special Olympics athletes**

Special Guests Include:

- Matt Aaron, SOPA President & CEO
- Steve Jones, play-by-play voice for Penn State football and men's basketball others
- Pennsylvania State Senator Jake Corman
- Sara Thorndike - Senior Vice President for Finance & Business/Treasurer at PSU
- Special Olympics PA athletes as talk show hosts and co-emcees

(NORRISTOWN, PA, May 27, 2021) – Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) is excited to announce that nearly 500 athletes have been training remotely for the [Fitness Heptathlon](#) competition, which will culminate at the [2021 Virtual Summer Games](#), presented by Sheetz. In an effort to virtually celebrate their success, a series of virtual events will air on the organization's social media platforms from June 13 – 27, 2021.



The [Fitness Heptathlon](#) required athletes to train in seven exercises of their choice across three disciplines (strength, agility and endurance) over a 10 week period. At the end of the training athletes will be divisioned and awarded based on their percentage of improvement in their chosen exercises.

Virtual Summer Games programming will include Opening Ceremonies; the launch of SOPA's new Talk Show, which will showcase Fitness Heptathlon highlights, athlete interviews, games and more; a [Virtual Healthy Athletes event](#), presented by Geisinger, which allows athletes to schedule virtual health screenings with a variety of clinicians; and Closing Ceremonies. This year's Closing Ceremony will feature a very special announcement – SOPA will be selecting athletes from around the state to represent Team PA at the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games in Orlando, Florida.

Celebratory programming will also include [“Be a Fan” Torch Run](#) highlights, which is a 3-day, 150-mile run from Pittsburgh to State College by 500 participants representing more than 50 law enforcement teams that are accompanied or cheered on by local Special Olympics athletes. Energy Transfer is SOPA's premier “Guardians of the Flame” Law Enforcement Torch Run partner.

Summer Games, SOPA's largest annual statewide competition, typically brings more than 2,000 athletes, 750 coaches, and more than 1,000 enthusiastic volunteers from across the state together on Penn State University's main campus for 3 days of competition. This year would have marked the 33rd consecutive year that Penn State University hosted Summer Games. Both organizations are firmly committed to bringing the Summer Games back to State College in 2022.

Presented by Sheetz, Inc., a key SOPA statewide corporate partner for nearly 30 years, Summer Games are also financed in part by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development. Additional Virtual Summer Games partners include: Energy Transfer, Harmelin Media, Law Enforcement Torch Run, The Paterno Family, PSECU, The David & Marjorie Rosenberg Foundation, Penn State Alumni Association, Penn State University, Post-Acute Medical, The Tombros Family Foundation, and the Starfish Fund (Suzanne and Albert Lord).

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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