

2010 Annual Report Special Olympics Georgia

# **MISSION**

SPECIAL OLYMPICS GEORGIA PROVIDES
YEAR-ROUND SPORTS TRAINING AND ATHLETIC
COMPETITION IN A VARIETY OF OLYMPIC-TYPE
SPORTS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITIES, GIVING THEM CONTINUING OPPORTUNITIES
TO DEVELOP PHYSICAL FITNESS, DEMONSTRATE COURAGE,
EXPERIENCE JOY, AND PARTICIPATE IN THE SHARING
OF GIFTS, SKILLS AND FRIENDSHIPS WITH THEIR FAMILIES,
OTHER SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES
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770-414-9390 www.SpecialOlympicsGA.org

Cover photo taken by Mike Powell. Other photos were taken by Powell, Dutch Walters Photography and Kory Pryor.

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Dear Special Olympics Georgia (SOGA) Fans and Supporters,

2010 marked Special Olympics Georgia's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of empowering 23,620 children and adults with intellectual disabilities to feel accepted. We've seen the community respond positively by embracing the athletes and their many successes. As a result, more athletes have signed up to compete at State Games and local participation has increased. Relationships between athletes and their communities have truly blossomed.

We are grateful for your continued support as you spread the word that people with intellectual disabilities are more similar than different from you and I, and that everyone has the right to be treated respectfully.

The youth of today are leading the charge through a program called Project Unify, where students are spreading the word in their communities about the hurtfulness of the R-word through rallies and school projects. The second Youth Forum will be held in the summer of 2011 with a huge increase of participants. In 2010, we also had an increase in youth unified sports partners (athletes who do not have intellectual disabilities) who competed on teams with SOGA athletes. Their energy and enthusiasm demonstrated that our athletes and Special Olympics is vital in communities everywhere.

SOGA athletes are inspirational in their courage, hard work, and determination, and this continued throughout last year. Helping athletes achieve their dreams are more than 17,000 volunteers, athletes' family and friends, generous donors, a knowledgeable Board of Directors, the Honorary Board, law enforcement and our staff. It was these groups working together with the common goal of empowerment and understanding that created success in 2010.

We hope your unwavering support will carry over to SOGA's largest grassroots fundraising program. The Law Enforcement Torch Run is carried out by 1,000 law enforcement officers from 100 agencies across the state. For the last 25 years, officers have also run the 1,000 mile two-week torch relay passing the Flame of Hope across the state. Join us in celebrating the officers' work in 2011.

Even with the accomplishments in the last 40 years, we still have a ways to go in this grassroots effort to build a more welcoming community where everyone can feel a contributing part of mainstream society. We continue to challenge Georgians to respect one another and understand that everyone is unique and can be better when we work together through sports training, competition and other activities.

Thank you for celebrating our achievements and for continuing to build a better future for the athletes of Special Olympics Georgia.

Sincerely,



*Georgia Milton-Sheats*Georgia Milton-Sheats
Chief Executive Officer



Bryan Davis Bryan Davis Board Chairman

## Ways You Can Help

- <u>Sign up</u> to volunteer at State Games and be inspired by the athletes.
- Attend a <u>coaches' clinic</u>.
- Add a link of our Web site <a href="https://www.SpecialOlympicsGA.org">www.SpecialOlympicsGA.org</a> to your site.
- Adopt a duck and you could win a stay in Las Vegas!
- Tell a friend to not use the <u>R-word</u>.

- Read the <u>monthly e-newsletter</u> and forward the link to a friend.
- If you need a <u>credit card</u>, get the Bank of America Special Olympics card.
- Get your free prescription discount card.
- Cheer your <u>local law enforcement</u> officers on at their next event.
- Join the Monthly Giving Club.

## Join us

#### Year-Round

#### Law Enforcement Torch Run, Statewide

Law enforcement officers from all over Georgia compete in raising money through special events such as "Polar Plunge," "Cops on Doughnut Shops," and "Cuffed for a Cause."

#### May 20-22

#### State Summer Games, Atlanta

Nearly 1,500 athletes will compete in aquatics, athletics, badminton, flag football, rhythmic gymnastics, soccer, tennis, table tennis, and volleyball at Emory University. Come out and be a fan in the stands.

#### June 4-11

#### Bicycle Ride Across Georgia (BRAG)

BRAG is a week-long bicycle ride across the state of Georgia. Join Team SOGA and make a contribution.

#### June 24

#### Duck Derby, Marietta

Thousands of yellow rubber ducks will be raced for prizes at Six Flags White Water in Marietta. Adopt a duck at <a href="http://www.atlantaduckderby.com">http://www.atlantaduckderby.com</a> and support the athletes of Special Olympics Georgia.

#### August 19-21

#### State Masters Bowling, Warner Robins

### State Horse Show, Perry

More than 1,000 bowlers, who are at least 22 years old, will compete in Warner Robins. Visit www.SpecialOlympicsGA.org to make a donation and support the athletes. In Perry, athletes and unified sports partners demonstrate their personal best at Georgia National Fairgrounds & Agricenter in various equestrian competitions.

#### September 9-11

### Sailing Regatta, Lake Lanier

Sail for Champions, supported by Sunrise Cove and the Southern Sailing Club (SSC), is two days of boating and sun at Lake Lanier. Visit the Web site's September calendar and sign up.

#### October 21-23

#### State Fall Games, Dalton

Over 1,200 athletes will compete in bocce, cycling, golf, softball, and long distance running and walking in beautiful Dalton. The annual spectacular event is open and free to the public. Visit our Web site, click on the October calendar.

#### November 7

### Bob Busse Golf Classic, Sandy Springs

One hundred forty-four golfers will play at Cherokee Golf Club. Visit the Web site's November calendar.

# Behind the Scenes SOGA BY THE NUMBERS

	2010	2009
Registered Athletes	23,620	23,078
New Registered Athletes	4,462	3,875
Unified Partners	6,652	6,001
Certified Coaches	3,931	3,815
Parks and Recreation Part	ner 71	66
Family Action Network Me	mbers 74	69
Young Athlete Presentatio	ns 156	97
Total Number of Volunteers	21,473	17,023
Athletes attending		
Winter Games	1,537	1,435
Summer Games	1,844	1,504



# action

## Statement of Activity

Masters Bowling

Fall Games

Horse Show

## For the Year Ended December 31, 2010

900

1,467

128

Support a	and Revenue
-----------	-------------

Support and Contributions	\$3,420,445
In-kind Contributions	\$352,584
Special Events	\$931,707
Other Income	\$224,226

803

1,336

226

Total Unrestricted Support and Revenue \$4,928,962

## Expenses

Sports and Training	\$1,393,903
Field Services	\$1,497,439
Public Education	\$228,718
Public Relations	\$145,706
General Administrative	\$211,792
Development	\$775,069

Total Expenses \$4,252,627



## Male Athlete of the Year: Tyson Smith is Someone You Can Look Up To

Tyson Smith enjoys lifting someone's spirits just as much as competing. "He looks forward to helping and supporting others, and even chaperones, no matter what the cause may be. In Fayette County's eyes, Tyson is someone who puts a smile on everyone's face," said Debbie Parrish in Smith's winning nomination for Male Athlete of the Year, one of Special Olympics Georgia's highest honors, a Distinguished Service Award.

"I help out whenever I can," Smith said in a *The Citizen* story. "I help them up or cheer them up if they are having a bad day."

The 28-year-old Newnan athlete started participating in Special Olympics in Maryland in 2001. Right after a friend asked him if he liked

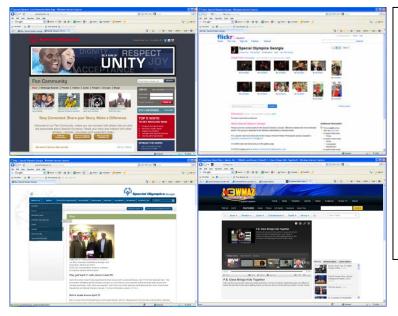
baseball, he then played all three seasons. In Winter, he plays basketball and competes in powerlifting in the fall. He can lift 380 pounds dead weight and bench press 200 pounds. He sets his own personal goal each year. As soon as power lifting competitions are over, he quickly moves on to volleyball, then bowling and softball.

"Tyson started out with as much enthusiasm as anyone could ask for and has yet to stop," Parrish said. But it's not just the sportsmanship and dedication to each sport and his team, he's become a role model to his peers off the field and court. As a "higher-functioning" athlete, his coaches can count on Tyson as a chaperone to other athletes. "Usually, you don't have to ask him to do something, he's already done it!" Parrish said.

With all of Tyson's accolades he's still humbled by the several recent articles about him. When he read his article in *The Citizen*, Parish said, he thanked Parrish and asked if he could help with anything. She told him that just showing up with a smile everyday was all anyone could ask for.

# Exposure and New Communities inspire

In 2010, Special Olympics Georgia launched a more engaging Web site that included links for Games registration, interactive features and a daily updated blog. Today, viewers can keep up to date with photos posted by long-time SOGA volunteer photographer Dutch Walters on Flickr and our blog.



SOGA has been featured at the following events/conferences:

R-Word Day at the Capitol
SEC Football FanFare
SEC Women's Basketball FanFare
Special Education Spring
Leadership Meeting
Georgia Recreation and Parks Assoc.
Georgia Chiefs Assoc.
Parent Mentor Conference
The Coca-Cola Volunteer Fair



# For His Athletes: Officer Matt Underwood Fundraises, Coaches and Extends His Family

After church, six feet, five inches tall Matt Underwood picks up his team and heads for practice. They call the Douglasville police officer: coach. For 15 years, he's coached Special Olympics volleyball, softball and basketball.

His physique may seem intimidating but Underwood says he doesn't treat this team of masters athletes, who are in their late 30's to early 40's, any different than he would his own children. "But if they do something wonderful, I'm the first person to tell them and give

them a high five," he explains. His love of the athletes began when he volunteered as a high school student at a volleyball practice. "I was blown away in one minute," Underwood remembers. "It was a truly humbling experience." He felt happiness radiate from the athletes in the room. "We all live a life of worries, always concerned about when the next paycheck comes, our health and our family. There is none of that here."

He's gotten his family involved, too. His wife, Jennifer, helps at practices. Their eight-year-old son Wyatt just became a unified partner in flag football. The family holds barbecues and pool days for the athletes. Their three-year-old daughter Shelby has been attending practice since she was 1.

In addition to coaching, Underwood has become a "one man show," within Douglasville Police Department (DPD) for Special Olympics. He recruited his department as a Torch Run agency and was selected to serve on the Torch Run's Executive Council. Plus, DPD raised the most money at the annual Joe's Crab Shack fundraiser where officers waited on tables for tips as donations to SOGA. Underwood says it's all for the athletes, he calls his kids.







## 40<sup>th</sup>: The Start of a Brave Few Turns Into 23,620 and Going Strong

Arthur Dickerson remembers coaching his Augusta students at their first State Summer Games competition in 1970 at North Dekalb Stadium at Chamblee High School.

Dickerson (pictured in the far right of the first photo) and his 13 athletes from Grace Wood Hospital, now known as East Central Regional Hospital, were among the 350 competing at SOGA's first State Games which consisted of only track and field events. For many athletes, this was the first time playing a sport outside of an institution. "People usually frowned on our kids. And that's why parents hid their children in their homes and institutions. It was a great experience and the first chance for athletes to compete," he remembered. His athletes represented Georgia in the first International Games in Chicago and athlete Willy Tanner brought home the first gold medal.

May 2010 was Special Olympics Georgia's 40<sup>th</sup> year, which has grown from 350 athletes to 1,800 at Summer Games. That first 350 athlete population continuously grew to today's 23,620 athletes competing in most counties in 24 sports.

SOGA's Chief Executive Officer Georgia Milton –Sheats has led the growing organization for the last 12 years, starting out as a coach herself. "I've seen athletes who are more skilled year after year do training, and they continue to show commitment and receive great coaching," she said and noted there has been tremendous growth in participation in State Games as well as unified sports. "The general public has become more aware of Special Olympics Georgia and I have seen relationships between athletes and the community flourish."

## Female Athlete of the Year: The "Dream" Melissa Middleton of Cumming



In the face of adversity, athlete Melissa Middleton pressed on with a smile. That's why her coach Ed Speas calls her a "Dream Athlete."

She was born a conjoined twin and survived many major surgeries as a baby. And the physical challenges growing up hasn't stopped the Female Athlete of the Year, dubbed by Special Olympics Georgia in its most prestigious award, the Distinguished Service Award.

Melissa doesn't stop at taking any sport and trying her best, she shares her knowledge and love of the sport with her teammates.

She tries her best and succeeds. In her first year of table tennis, she competed in the skills competition and had the highest score of anyone in the State. The next year she played three matches (best three out of five). One of her competitors was a former gold medal winner and Melissa never lost a game. This year, she will compete in the men's category. "She has helped me coach the less experienced athletes we have and even helped coach volunteers as she does all of the

demonstrations at coaches clinics," said Speas. At the area spring games, Speas told her she could either compete or be a volunteer, her choice. "She immediately said she wanted to volunteer and help out. She loves to work hard, learn and help out anyone that she can," he said.

Her volunteer work extends beyond Special Olympics by growing her hair long and donating it for wigs for cancer patients.

"She always comes to practice with a big smile on her face and a hug for her coaches," Speas said. Known for laughing and giggling, "when she competes she's the most focused athlete I have ever coached," he said.

## The Beat Goes on for Volunteer Who is Inspired by the Athletes



For the last 10 years, Bill Hassell has spent countless hours setting up the sound and technical parts of State Games Opening Ceremonies and Dances and at times will don a silver Mohawk and dance on the speakers himself.

It's all for the athletes, he said. Athletes will come up to him and say, "Look what I got," holding up medals and he said he just melts. "It reminds us of the feeling we have when we do something well and we're recognized."

The athlete oath has become a reminder of why he puts in the time and elbow grease in setting up for events and selecting the music. "The motto, 'Let me win but if I can not win, let me be braves in the attempt' is so touching. You feel that statement of

purpose and that the athletes are doing everything they can to reach that goal," he said.

So, typically at State Summer Games at Emory, he'll set up all day for Opening Ceremony, handle the music, mics and everything sound related, take the equipment down. Then early Saturday morning he sets up for Olympic Town, where athletes take a break from competition for music, snacks and games, that goes all day and he moves all the equipment, some of which is his, that night. That's just one example of Bill's event work. In the 1990's, the former photographer who works in Hewlett Packard's support, orchestrated music by cassette tape. Now he's spinning CDs. But the music selection is the same. He listens to music programs and sees where trends are headed. "I look for music that you can clap your hands to and gets people moving, because Special Olympics is a celebration of people."

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Monkey Joe's – Statesboro Arthur Montgomery

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Bonnaroo Restaurant Group

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US Foodservice

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Whitfield County Sheriff's Office

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PC

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CKS Packaging Thomas C. Clark Claxton Poultry Farms Cobb County 4 H Club

Cobb County Police Department

Coleman Talley LLP Page 15

\$500-\$999 (CONT'D)

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Cupples & Associates Custom Laser & Printing Dade County Sheriff's Office Dade Paper and Bag Company

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DeKalb County Sheriff's Office

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First Data Foundation Fleming & Hall Flowers Bakeries

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Gordon & Rees

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Stephanie & Mark Luetters, Georgia

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Brian Mahony Man's Best Friend William Henry Masden

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Mechanical Services Inc. Merit Construction Co.

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James Singleton, Jr.

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Harold W. Small

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Claire D. Smith

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# Thank You!

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