



# Georgia's Champions

April 2013

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## News and Stories

### 2012 Annual Report: Champions Abound

Click here for your first peek at SOGA's 2012 Annual Report. See the athletes accomplishments, goals reached and lots of great photos wrapped in SOGA's new brand and colors. Thank you for helping make the year great.



### State Summer Games May 17-19

Nearly 2,300 athletes across the state will compete May 17-19 in **State Summer Games** at Emory University. Athletes will do their personal best in athletics, flag-football, gymnastics, soccer, table tennis, tennis, and volleyball. To athletes and coaches: Check out the free Special Smiles, Opening Eyes and Fit Feet Healthy Athletes offerings at Summer Games. There will be give-aways, including new prescription glasses. The screenings will be open from 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Olympic Town and in the Woodruff PE Center.



### The Torch soon coming to a town near you

Law Enforcement Officers will run the "Flame of Hope" across the state in the annual **Torch Relay** May 6-May 17. Officers will then carry the torch into the



## Upcoming Events

Duck Derby, June 21

Nine



thousand rubber ducks have been waiting all year for their chance to race on behalf of the athletes of Special Olympics Georgia but they cannot do it without your help. Help our ducks get entered into the race by adopting your duck today! Each duck entered races for fabulous prizes and raises money for SOGA.

Adoptions are \$5 per duck or you can increase your chances to win by purchasing a QUACK PACK for \$30, which includes 7 duck adoptions and a souvenir duck; a QUACKER'S DOZEN, which includes 15 duck adoptions and two souvenir junior ducks; a MEGA QUACK PACK, which includes 25 duck adoptions and three souvenir ducks.

Opening Ceremony of State Summer Games on the 17th at Emory University. The top five



fundraising departments have the honor of carrying in the torch and lighting the cauldron. \*Don't forget the Final Leg will be from the State Capital and run to Emory University on Friday, May 17th at 9 a.m. Governor Nathan Deal along with Atlanta's Police Chief Georgia Turner will light the Flame before it begins its final 6.2 mile journey to Emory University. Please click the link below to see when and where the "Flame of Hope" will be traveling to your area.

## A New Way to Give

At Special Olympics Georgia we give our athletes a choice. A choice to participate in athletic events and develop the pride that comes from being in competition. Now, as one of our valued donors, we want you to have a choice in how you meet our needs. Please follow this link to shop for SOGA's needs and decide which needs your money goes to fulfill. This new way of giving will really help us and your donation will make a big impact at this year's Summer Games! Go to:



<http://www.gift-give.com/specialolympicsga/summergames>

## Athlete Spotlight: Omar Ramos

*-By Dalton Coach Laura Ogas*

I remember Omar and I strolling through the school, and a second grade class came running into the hallway to cheer him on! The commotion brought out the other second grade classes, too. They all know him, love him and support him daily.

Omar Ramos is a second grade student at Antioch Elementary. He has Down Syndrome and significant vision loss.

When he entered school, he was not able to walk. He would move around the classroom by "army crawling" on his belly. Other than floor/play time, he spent most of his academic day in a stroller or wheelchair.

He has been walking with the assistance of a walker for the last two years, but still spent a considerable amount of time in his stroller.

In our local Special Olympics competitions, Omar has progressed from participating in Level A Athletics. Last year, he competed in the Soccer Skills. This year, based on his progress and current ability level, he will play as a member of a unified soccer team.

Create a team! Get your friends, family, coworkers, etc. to adopt on your behalf. Set up a team and tell everyone you know to adopt under your team! Your team name can be anything you can think of (most creative duck names start here!).

To adopt your duck, go to [www.AtlantaDuckDerby.com](http://www.AtlantaDuckDerby.com). Your adoption enters you for a chance to win: (1st place) a 42" flatscreen TV with DVD and Home Theater System, (2nd place) an iPad mini, (3rd place) a \$300 Publix gift card, (4th place) an iPod touch, or (5th place) a \$150 VISA gift card.

All proceeds from the Duck Derby go to the athletes of Special Olympics Georgia.

For more information on the Duck Derby, contact **Leslie Anderson**.

## Duck Derby, June 21, Marietta

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He is now able to walk with and without his walker (with minimal assistance) and he absolutely LOVES to kick the soccer ball all over the court. The unified partners help keep the ball close to him so it doesn't get out of his line of vision.

He is also now saying "kick the ball." These words, spoken by a student who has minimal language skills, are enough to bring tears!

### Volunteer of the Month: Jeff Jansma

Jeff Jansma, the father of Special Olympics athlete Josh Jansma, is a long-time volunteer and coach with Special Olympics. As part of the Gwinnett Masters agency, Jeff influences SOGA athletes daily as a coach. At a coach's clinic last month in Athens, Jeff not only went over the rules of all the different levels of volleyball that SOGA offers but also gave the other coaches advice ranging from how to help an athlete get over their fears on the court to the best way to teach the athletes to work as a team.



In addition to working with Gwinnett Masters, he also devotes every day to helping adults with special needs at Annandale Village in Suwanee, said Annandale Recreation Instructor Adrienne Clay.

"Jeff is a natural working with Special Olympic athletes. He has a passion and love for life that reflects onto the athletes. Jeff is always seeking new opportunities for the residents to enrich their lives. The focus is always about the resident or athlete, which is one of the main reasons Jeff, should be the volunteer of the month," Clay said.

### Platinum Partner of Special Olympics Georgia

**AutoTrader.com** continues to generously support Special Olympics Georgia year-round through financial and volunteer support at our competitions and events. It is AutoTrader.com employees and their families that lend a hand with whatever is needed, cheer on the athletes during the competitions, and make the awards ceremonies special for each athlete.



AutoTrader.com believes in the power of participation and knows that together we can make a difference. AutoTrader.com does more than just connect buyers and sellers of new, certified, and used cars. It connects to the community. **AutoTrader.com** and its employees focus on unique and meaningful ways to collaborate with community partners and expand its reach in the community.

PACK for \$30, which includes 7 duck adoptions and a souvenir duck; a QUACKER'S DOZEN, which includes 15 duck adoptions and two souvenir junior ducks; a MEGA QUACK PACK, which includes 25 duck adoptions and three souvenir ducks.

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All proceeds from the Duck Derby go to the athletes of Special Olympics Georgia. Thank you to our sponsors **Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies**, Allconnect, Atlanta Arms & Ammo, LAZ Parking, Rooms To Go Children's Fund, Whitaker Oil Company, Risk Placement Services, Precision Aviation Group, Dobbins Thrift Shoppe, Craig Automotive, North Georgia Replacement Windows, The Accident & Disability Attorneys of Monge & Associates, and Marquis at Mt. Zion. Also thank you to Six Flags White Water and our media partner 94.9 The Bull. **Kids R Kids** For more information on the Duck Derby, contact **Leslie Anderson** or (770) 414-9390 ext. 120.

### Go Over the Edge for SOGA April 20

Want to cross off something on your bucket list?

How about rappelling off of a 20-story building while raising \$1,000 for



"AutoTrader.com truly values our partnership with Special Olympics Georgia. Our employees relish the opportunity to volunteer at the State Winter and Summer Games, as well as local track and field events. Special Olympics games are signature events for our employees - we can all identify with working towards a goal and celebrating moments of triumph. Our volunteers become cheerleaders, confidants and shoulders to lean on. Seeing smiles on the athletes' faces, sharing a high-five, and encouraging them to work harder next time keeps us coming back for more. Our company is proud to partner with such a respected and trusted organization" says Jennifer Bronner, Community Relations Manager.

Thank you [AutoTrader.com](http://AutoTrader.com) for your continued belief in and dedication to the 24,470 Special Olympics Georgia athletes!

### The SOGA Community Makes a Difference

We often receive calls from individuals, companies, and groups who have an idea for a fundraiser and want to donate the proceeds to SOGA. Every single fundraising effort, no matter the financial outcome, is very significant and makes a tremendous difference. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following:

- \* LAZ Parking - Golf Tournament raised \$8,258
- \* Sherry Management, LLC - Georgia Elvis Festival raised \$1,367
- \* PCMS Foundation - Dress Down Day raised \$1,430.24
- \* GA-PCOM Sports Medicine and Ortho Clubs - Fundraiser raised \$320
- \* The Big Ketch Saltwater Grill - Give Back Days raised \$46



Special Olympics Georgia?  
On April 20, you can join in on the fun of going Over the Edge. There are still spots available to be an "edger"! Click here to register. Thank you to our Presenting Partner - AutoTrader.com! For more information, contact [Georgia.Milton-Sheats](mailto:Georgia.Milton-Sheats) or call (770) 414-9390.

### The Big Ketch and You Support SOGA March 11, 12, & 13

The Big Ketch Saltwater Grill in



Buckhead will hold Give Back Days for SOGA on March 11th, 12th, and 13th.

**Simply print this flyer,** present it to your server when ordering, and The Big Ketch will donate 10% of your check to Special Olympics Georgia. This offer is valid both for dine-in and take out orders. For more information, contact [Susan Skolnick](mailto:Susan.Skolnick) or call **770-414-9390 x111.**

### La Societa Italian Bocce Tournament

Join us on April 28 1 p.m.-5 p.m. for



La Societa` Italiana's Bocce Tournament at Brio's Tuscan Grille near Perimeter Mall. For more information, contact **Jennifer Daniell**.

**Volunteer Opportunities**  
**Georgia Elvis Festival**



**March 15 - 17**  
**Brunswick, GA**

Love Elvis? Well, we have the event for you! Come out to volunteer and be a part of the first ever Georgia Elvis Festival taking place in beautiful Brunswick. We need volunteers to represent SOGA at our booth at the festival. There will be various shifts for that Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

**Over the Edge**  
**April 20**  
**Atlanta, GA**

This one is for those that would rather get their adrenaline rushes from watching others take all the risks - Over the Edge has brave participants rappelling down one of Atlanta's tallest buildings. Volunteers are needed to help with the day's activities and we promise not to send you "Over the Edge."

If you are interested in

volunteering for any of the above events/positions, please contact **Leslie Anderson**.

**Would your school, playground, or organization benefit from a synthetic turf installation?**



Our friends, Synthetic Turf International, have created the Better Play and Recreation Contest where they will award a synthetic turf installation worth \$50,000 to an eligible entrant winner. The deadline is April 26. You can find out more about the contest [Here](#)

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