



## SOGA CONNECTION

March 2012

**DONATE NOW**

### Show You Like Us on Facebook

Help Special Olympics Georgia reach our goal of 2,400 likes on Facebook. So, Be a Fan and like us!

[Click here to like us.](#) You'll get the latest news about athletes, volunteer opportunities and cool photos.

**facebook**

### Enjoy This Year's Art Auction

Join us for an evening in a beautiful "for sale" designer home on Saturday, March 24 for the Art Auction in Sandy Springs, to benefit Special Olympics Georgia. The event will include a tour of the home, live and silent auction, spirits, hors d'oeuvres, live music, and an athlete speaker telling her personal story. The night begins at 7 p.m. with a tour of the designer model home at 8 p.m. and the auction at 8:30 p.m. Entry fee is \$40. Pre-registering is preferred but you may pay at the door. To purchase your ticket, [click here](#), or for more information, visit [www.specialolympicsga.org/artauction2012](http://www.specialolympicsga.org/artauction2012).

Contact: [Rebecca.Surles@SpecialOlympicsGA.org](mailto:Rebecca.Surles@SpecialOlympicsGA.org) or 770-414-9390 ext. 102.



### Adopt Your Ducks Now, Quack Quack

Support Georgia's 23,620 Special Olympics athletes by adopting your rubber duck for the 7th Annual Duck Derby! For a \$5 or more donation, a lucky prize number will be assigned to a duck and entered into the derby in your name. On June 22, 10,000 yellow rubber ducks will race at Six Flags White Water. If your adopted duck is one of the first to cross the finish line, you could win a fabulous prize – like a three night stay at Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas, NV, a \$250 Macy's gift card, Six Flags White Water season passes and more. Thank you to the 2012 Duck Derby radio partner, 94.9 The Bull. [Click here](#) to adopt your ducks now! For more information contact: [Rebecca.Surles@SpecialOlympicsGA.org](mailto:Rebecca.Surles@SpecialOlympicsGA.org) or 770-414-9390 ext. 102.



## Let's Go Over the Edge

Are you brave and courageous like our athletes? Do you like to push the limits?

[Sign up here](#) to Go Over The Edge April 21 at The Overlook III in Atlanta and raise much needed funds for the 23,620 athletes of Special Olympics Georgia! Afraid of heights? You and your co-workers could raise \$1,500 to send your boss Over the Edge. For more information, contact Amber Mullins at [Amber.Mullins@SpecialOlympicsGA.org](mailto:Amber.Mullins@SpecialOlympicsGA.org) or call (770) 414-9390 ext. 105.



## Planned Giving

For most of us, our charitable giving helps us answer significant questions such as "Who am I?" and "What are my values?" Our giving might be something learned from our parents, based in faith, or driven by a life-changing event. As a result, leaving a legacy is much more than a financial aspiration—it represents a chance to pass along our values. By establishing a planned or legacy gift, you will ensure that SOGA's work of empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition continues well into the future. For more information on making a planned or legacy gift to SOGA, please visit our [gift planning website](#) or contact Connie Grandmason, Director of Bequests & Estate Gifts, toll-free at 866-690-3951 or [cgrandmason@specialolympics.org](mailto:cgrandmason@specialolympics.org).



## Athlete Spotlight: CJ Hranek

Christopher Joseph "CJ" Hranek is a Cobb County athlete who graduated from Harrison High School in 2008 and completed the S.E.T.S Program at Kennesaw State University. He is involved with Kiwanis and is a minister of hospitality at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church.

At three-weeks-old, CJ had a stroke and many seizures until he was 9, as brain cells died with every episode. He underwent intense therapy for many years to regain function of his right side. Finally the seizures were controlled through medication. CJ has come a long way, and this is credited to the support of therapists and his involvement in Special Olympics Georgia.

CJ has been an athlete since he was 9 years old in bocce, basketball, soccer, bowling, and track and field. He will compete in the 100 meter dash, 4x100 relay, and the shot put in the 2012 State Summer Games.

CJ's motto is from Eunice Kennedy Shriver: "Do it well, finish it properly, and move on." He remembered this when he was the final leg of the 4x100 relay race. The teams were neck and neck, and finally CJ was handed the baton. His shoe fell off as he began to run but he did not stop until he reached the finish line. CJ has won awards including, "Best All Around Athlete," Marvin Williams "MVP" for Strike Out The R-Word event, countless medals, and most recently the 2012 Peach of an Athlete award.



Many have said CJ would not have been able to reach these accomplishments and more, but they were wrong. Congrats to CJ, job well done!

## Sponsor of the Month:

Special Olympics Georgia is very proud to recognize [GEICO](#) as a new Statewide Platinum Partner for 2012. GEICO has been a fan and friend of Special Olympics Georgia for more than 30 years.



GEICO (Government Employees Insurance Company) is a member of the Berkshire Hathaway family of companies, and is the third-largest private passenger auto insurer in the United States, handling auto insurance coverage for 10 million private passenger auto policies and more than 17 million vehicles. GEICO also offers life insurance and insurance for motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, motor homes, boats, homes and apartments. GEICO is rated A++ for financial strength by A.M. Best Company and ranks at the top of several national customer satisfaction surveys.

GEICO's largest regional office in the country is in Macon. That means nearly 5,000 local Georgians share the corporation's admiration for Special Olympics, and out of that spirit, the GEICO Special Olympics Road Race was born. The road race has been a [GEICO](#) and Middle Georgia tradition for 29 years. Though the road race started small, it has grown significantly, and over the years, more than \$650,000 has been raised. "It's a pleasure for us to say that 100 percent of the funds collected from entry fees and sponsors go directly to Special Olympics Georgia," says Randy Thompson, GEICO Liability Claims Director. "The event has no administrative fees because it's run entirely by GEICO volunteers from beginning to end."

"At GEICO, we consider it an honor and a privilege to stand beside and work on behalf of the Special Olympics Organization and the thousands of brave athletes whose efforts inspire us all. It is rare in life that you get back more in return than what you put in, but for all of us who participate in this event, we come away better for the effort and proud to be partners in such a great cause," says Scott Markel, Regional Vice President.

Thank you [GEICO](#) for believing in SOGA's mission, for believing in our athletes, and for helping our athletes realize and reach their potential! Know that as part of the Special Olympics Georgia family, you are impacting and changing thousands of lives – the athletes, their families, and the community as a whole.

## Volunteer of the Month

At every event, Special Olympics Georgia has volunteers who join us for the first time, and it is always hoped that those volunteers decide to become mainstays and join us for more events or come back next year.

It is especially great to see a group of volunteers come out together and that group maintains and builds their relationship; the hope of every organization. And although UPS has been a longtime Premier Partner and has brought out tons of volunteers to help with meals each year at the Summer Games, this year was the first year Veronica Reisinger got involved with SOGA.

Veronica became very active in the annual Polar Plunge this year, helping to secure several UPS volunteers for the event. The volunteers helped with everything from registration to staging the plunge. It was an awesome turnout for a first time group and this was all thanks to Veronica's enthusiasm for getting involved with the Polar Plunge and the Law Enforcement Torch Run.

Veronica has already said that UPS will be back next year, and we hope to build the relationship even further for many years to come.

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Art Auction, Sandy Springs March 24

The Art Auction is being held at a beautiful multi-million dollar home in Sandy Springs. Volunteers are needed to help set up the auction in the afternoon. Volunteers must be 21 or over. And feel free to buy some amazing art pieces!

### Knights of Columbus "Get Inspired to Ride," Cartersville

## April 28

This Inaugural Ride hosted by the Knights of Columbus will help raise money for SOGA's Camp Inspire. The event will take place in the beautiful rolling hills of North Georgia at the Anheuser Busch Brewery. Volunteers are needed to help staff rest stops, register participants, etc.

## Awards Captains needed for the 2012 Summer Games

### May 18 - 20

SOGA is looking for dependable volunteers to be awards captains for the upcoming Summer Games. The awards captain is in charge of the awards at each venue and makes sure awards run on time, given out properly, materials are correct, and coordinate general volunteers assigned to awards. Awards captains must be 18 years or older, are available the entire weekend of May 18 - 20 and are ready to take on a leadership role.

If you are interested in volunteering for any of the above events, please contact Leslie Anderson at [Leslie.Anderson@SpecialOlympicsGA.org](mailto:Leslie.Anderson@SpecialOlympicsGA.org).

## Bocce Tourney April 29 at Brio's Overlooking Lake

La Societa Italiana hosts a bocce tournament at Brio Tuscan Grill behind Perimeter Mall April 29, Sunday from 1-5 p.m. Don't miss this fun event, which includes hors d'oeuvres, wine, an athlete speaker, door prizes and silent auction items. Cost is \$20. Teams of two will vie for the coveted gold & silver medals overlooking the lake at 700 Ashwood Pkwy. [Click here](#) for more information. Or contact Jennifer at [Jennifer.Daniell@SpecialOlympicsGA.org](mailto:Jennifer.Daniell@SpecialOlympicsGA.org) Brio's will donate 10 percent of what you spend at dinner. [Click here](#) to sign up in advance.

## Come to the R-Word Rally April 30 with the Braves

Support the athletes and their families at the R-word rally at the April 30 Atlanta Braves game against the Pirates. The rally will begin at 5 p.m. at Monument Grove at Turner Field through the start of the game. If you would like to purchase a ticket to the game, please email [Wendy.Bigham@SpecialOlympicsGA.org](mailto:Wendy.Bigham@SpecialOlympicsGA.org)

## \*Want to Coach a Special Olympics Team?

Come to a Mini-Sports Camp March 23 and 24 at Thomas N. Lay Park in Athens and become certified as a Special Olympics coach. [Click here](#) for more information and to register. Or contact [David.Crawford@SpecialOlympicsGA.org](mailto:David.Crawford@SpecialOlympicsGA.org).

## Get Inspired to Ride!

[Take The Inaugural Ride](#) to Inspire Cycling Event to be held in Cartersville, Ga. Saturday April 28, benefiting Special Olympics and Camp Inspire.

The event will take place in the beautiful rolling hills of North Georgia. The fully sagged rides begin and ends at The Anheuser Busch Brewery located 100 Busch Drive in Cartersville, Ga. with live entertainment and a wonderful meal at the finish.

There are four routes mapped out with distances of 15, 31, 48 and 66 miles and with fully stocked rest stops every 10 - 12 miles, there is a ride for all abilities. [Register for \\$25 and collect at least \\$100 in pledges. Sign up today.](#)





## Vehicle Donations

Are you thinking of selling or trading in that old car, boat or RV? Why not donate it instead? As a charitable contribution, your donation will make a big difference. SOGA has partnered with Car Program, LLC to turn your old vehicle into much needed funds for our program. Just download [this form](#) and fax it in. Car Program LLC will make arrangements to conveniently and quickly pick up your vehicle at no cost to you. They handle the title transfer requirements and provide you with a tax deductible donation receipt at pick-up!

## April 21: Black Tie Gala at The Vinings Club

Enjoy cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, and surf and turf dinner and dancing at The Vinings Club overlooking the lights of downtown. The gala is hosted by The Knights of Columbus of Georgia and benefits Special Olympics Georgia. [Click here](#) for more information.

**Enjoyed the Polar Plunge? Get your 2012 souvenir long sleeve shirt today! Costs \$15.**



Special Olympics Georgia | 770.414.9390  
4000 DeKalb Technology Parkway | Suite 400 Building 400 | Atlanta, GA 30340

For General Info, email:  
[Jennifer.Daniell@SpecialOlympicsGA.org](mailto:Jennifer.Daniell@SpecialOlympicsGA.org)

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