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Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Special Olympics Georgia. Don't forget to add wendy.bigham@specialolympicsga.org to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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Georgia's Champions

December 2013

Be a Fan. Bring Out the Champion in Everyone.

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News and Stories

Watch Our Movie Dec. 14th on Most Fox Channels

Plan to watch (or record) SOGA's new documentary film, "The Love of the Games" beginning Saturday, December 14th on a statewide network of Georgia's leading television stations. The 30-minute film, created by a 24-time Emmy Award winner, offers compelling and inspirational insights to the benefits that Special Olympics Georgia has on athletes, their families, volunteers, and society. Stations in Macon will air the movie December 28th. [Click here](#) for a station near you, airing date and time.



Change a Life with a Year-End Gift

Help Special Olympics Georgia with a year-end gift and join us in changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. You can even make the donation in honor of someone as a holiday gift. With your generous support, SOGA is able to provide sports training, competitions, and other programs that benefit athletes, their families, and our community. [Click here to make your life-changing year-end gift.](#) "We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give." -Sir Winston Churchill



Upcoming Events

Buckhead Pizza Give-Back Day Dec. 17th

Enjoy a pizza night on the town December 17th at Buckhead Pizza Co. Atlanta location at 3324 Peachtree Road, Suite B, Atlanta, GA 30326. SOGA will receive 10% of the proceeds from the give-back day. Contact [Morgan Sumner](#) for more information.



Royal Cruise for SOGA Jan. 18th-26th

Join us aboard Royal Caribbean Independence January 18th - 26th, 2014 and Signs of Travel will donate \$50 for every SOGA cabin booked! Enjoy rock climbing walls, surf-simulators, mini-golf, and ice skating shows. You can



Get Ready for Winter Games in Marietta!

Before the holiday rush hits you, mark your calendar for State Indoor Winter Games and Southeast Powerlifting January 24th-26th in Cobb County. More than 1,800 athletes and unified partners are anticipated to compete in basketball, bowling, gymnastics, floor hockey, powerlifting and roller skating. Opening Ceremony is at 7:30 p.m. Friday, January 24 at the Cobb County Civic Center. [Click here](#) for more information.



Georgia LETR Receives the Ruby Award

Special Olympics Georgia's LETR recently received the Level of Excellence Ruby Award given by Special Olympics International. This is the first time Georgia's Torch Run program has received the prestigious award for outstanding performance in raising \$759,260. The award was presented at the Torch Run conference in Orlando. (Pictured on the right is Ed Christian, Director of Georgia Torch Run's Executive Council.)



Athlete of the Month: Lewis Gordon

As soon as he was eligible, Lewis Gordon began competing at 8 years old at Valdosta's West Gordon Elementary School, and he hasn't stopped in the last 27 years. Lewis competes in bowling, floor hockey, softball, and volleyball. His coach is Tammy Crosby of the Craig Center within the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Department.



Lewis has won many medals, but he's most proud of the medal he and his teammates won in Boise, Idaho in 2009. His floor hockey team, the USA Eagles, competed in the World Winter Games and came away in 3rd place. He also met athletes from Afghanistan and China.

As a Global Messenger, Lewis traveled to Washington, D.C. a year ago for Capitol Hill Day and asked Georgia representatives to support government bills that would benefit Special Olympics athletes all over the country. Lewis, congratulations on being named the December Athlete of the Month!

2014 State Fall Games Will be Held in Hall County

State Fall Games will be held in Hall County October 10th-12th, 2014, announced Special Olympics Georgia CEO Georgia Milton-Sheats and Hall County officials at a press



watch motorcycles leave the ship for the island Iron Torch Ride. Contact [Tim Cheek](#).

Polar Plunge Feb. 15th

We need a lot of wild and crazy people to soon start "Freezin' for a



Reason" in the 5th Annual Polar Plunge at Lake Lanier on February 15th, 2014! Check out the incentives for individuals and teams for reaching various fundraising levels at polarplungega.com. Click "Sign up now" to begin. Contact [David Crawford](#) for more information.

Over the Edge April 26th

Be brave and change your life forever when you go Over the Edge



with us Saturday, April 26th, 2014. Edgers will rappel 20 stories from Buckhead Tower in Atlanta if they raise \$1,000 for Special Olympics Georgia. Want to become an "edger"? [Click here](#) to register and learn more about the event! Contact [Autumn Unrein](#) for more information. Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor Autotrader.com.

Volunteer Opportunities



Gwinnett Arena Concessions

conference Wednesday, December 4th. That weekend, Hall County will also host Special Olympics Georgia's State Horse Show for the second consecutive year at Chicopee Agricultural Center. Both games, where nearly 2,300 athletes and coaches will travel across the state to attend, is expected to benefit the area's economic development with a boost for retailers and hoteliers. Dalton hosted State Fall Games for the previous three years.



Finish Line Supports Special Olympics This Holiday Season

For the second year in a row, Finish Line, a leading athletic shoe retailer, has chosen Special Olympics to be one of the beneficiaries of the Finish Line Youth Foundation's in-store and online holiday customer and employee donation campaign. This campaign is being held in Finish Line stores nationwide from November 1 - December 31. The first \$1 million raised will be donated to Special Olympics.



Sponsor of the Month: Publix Super Markets

Publix Super Markets is a leader in the food retail

industry. And to that, they are **WHERE SHOPPING IS A PLEASURE.®** a leader in Community Giving. As the Presenting Sponsor of the Law Enforcement Torch Run of Georgia and long-time supporter of Special Olympics Georgia, Publix continues to achieve gold through its support of our athletes. Every January, stores across the region sell Torch Icons at the registers for \$1, \$3, \$5 or \$10. In conjunction with this promotion, Proctor & Gamble also strives to create greatness with their partnership with **Publix** and Special Olympics. Customers are given the opportunity to purchase a torch icon at Publix, and in exchange, receive \$11 back in P&G coupons!

Publix.

Every year, Publix exceeds expectations through their dedication and support of this partnership. This year, Georgia stores raised an amazing \$475,000! Special Olympics Georgia appreciates the support of Publix Super Markets and continues to enjoy shopping where Shopping is a Pleasure! Publix is also a leader in employing Special Olympics athletes at their stores. Thank you to Publix Super Markets and Proctor & Gamble for your continued support of Special Olympics! Be sure to visit your local **Publix** and show your support of those that support us.

Volunteer of the Month: Dawn Vorel

Dawn Vorel has served with Special Olympics Georgia since she was a University of Georgia student. While pursuing a degree in special



Duluth

Contact **Wendy Bigham** if you're interested in volunteering at Gwinnett Arena concessions. We need 25 volunteers for the training date TBD.

State Indoor Winter Games

Jan. 24th-26th

Marietta

Volunteers are needed to help at competition venues and be Fans In The Stands. Please apply online to be a volunteer: sogeorgia.vsyshost.com

Polar Plunge

Feb. 15th

Lake Lanier

Helpers are needed at plunger registration, set up, games, and activities.

Color Me Rad

March 20th-22nd

Conyers

Volunteer on March 20th or March 21st to help with registration and March 22nd race day to help with course set-up, race registration, packet pick-up, color bombing, and course management. Volunteers must be 16 and be able to lift 20 pounds. Each volunteer receives a t-shirt.

Volunteer Word Press Programmer Needed

We need someone to help with the more technical side of the Special Olympics Georgia Web site. Please email **Wendy Bigham** if you are interested.

If you are interested in volunteering at State Indoor Winter Games, the Polar Plunge or Color Me Rad, please contact Stephen Sparks.

education, she volunteered with Special Olympics Georgia at the local level. Then, as a special education teacher in Effingham County, she rejuvenated a program that fizzled out in the county. She built a team of organizers, put the word out about a new program and gained community support from the parents and other teachers. Dawn's efforts were successful, and now the program has more than 200 athletes and continues to grow each year. We thank Dawn for her efforts and tireless dedication to creating opportunities for children with intellectual disabilities to be able to compete in Special Olympics Georgia. Congratulations Dawn!



Quick Links

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Competition Corner

Area 14, 15 and 17 Winter Games Held

-For Colquitt County, its 32nd Annual Area 14 Winter Games on November 22th in Moultrie offered competitions in basketball, floor hockey, and roller skating.

Participating agencies were Mitchell Baker Service

Center, Green Oaks Service Center, Albany ARC, Albany Recreation and Parks, Grady County, and Colquitt County.



-At Area 17's 2013 Winter Games, more than 300 athletes competed at four locations November 13th-14th. Competitions were in basketball skills, bowling and roller skating.

-Area 15's Winter Games featured 363 bowlers from 6 counties on November 19th in Valdosta. Then on November 21st, the Area 15 Winter Games basketball competition was held with 221 athletes competing from 5 counties. Approximately 275 volunteers helped put on the two events.

Tommie Copper Kicks Off Its Partnership with Special Olympics

Thank you to Special Olympics' new sponsor Tommie Copper, the originator of copper-infused compression and performance apparel, for its support of Special Olympics and Special Olympics Team USA. For each transaction made at www.tommiecopper.com between December 1-31, Tommie Copper will donate \$1 to Special Olympics to support Special Olympics athletes, including Special Olympics Team USA members on their journey to the 2015 World Games. Help support Special Olympics now, and look for more campaigns in 2014!



TOMMIECOPPER

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:



- * Dunwoody Country Club - Charity Weekend Events raised \$60,723
- * Marlow's Tavern - Sandy Springs Sneak Preview and VIP Party raised \$6,807
- * Georgia Chapter of the Club Managers Association of America - Gala raised \$2,200

Gift 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. 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.



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