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Georgia's Champions

January 2014

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News and Stories

Cobb County Team To Compete at State Winter Games Is More Like a Family

When a team has competed as a unit for eight years, the athletes and their families develop an irreplaceable bond. "It's become a family of athletes and coaches," said Carol Owmbly, mom to athlete Mariah in Cobb County.

After weekly basketball practices and scrimmages, Mariah's team is ready to join nearly 2,000 athletes competing in six sports January 24-26 at various locations in Cobb County. The sports are basketball, bowling, floor hockey, gymnastics, powerlifting and roller skating. Southeast Powerlifting will also be held the weekend of Winter Games, bringing more southern states to compete in Cobb County. Come cheer on Mariah's team and all of the athletes in just a few weeks. [Click here](#) for a Winter Games schedule and map of competition venues.

(Pictured above is Mariah on the right and her long-time friend Michelle Pratt on the left.)



Bert Passes the Reigns to Wife For Over the Edge

Last year, Bert Weiss from Q100-The Bert Show went Over the Edge and raised over \$24,000 for Special



Upcoming Events

Publix Paper Torches Campaign Through Jan. 22nd

While at your favorite **Publix Super Markets** until Jan. 22, show you're a fan of Special Olympics Georgia by purchasing your very own **paper torch** at the check-out register for \$1, \$3, \$5, or \$10 to support SOGA! This year's torches include \$12.50 in coupons on select Procter and Gamble products. Purchase a torch and you'll find out just how rewarding it is to "Be a fan!"



Polar Plunge Feb. 15th

We need a lot of wild and crazy people to soon start



Olympics Georgia!

This year, his wife Stacey is giving it a go and trying to beat his total.

Click here to go Over the Edge with her or to support The Bert Show team.



For more information, please contact **Autumn Unrein** or **click here**. Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor **AutoTrader.com**.

Kroger Community Rewards®

Kroger Community Rewards® makes supporting SOGA super easy . . . all you have to do is shop at Kroger and swipe your Plus Card! Sign up with your 12-digit Kroger Plus Card number at **https://customer.kroger.com**

/communityrewards.aspx, and in the Community Rewards section, select Special Olympics Georgia (code 57973) as the organization you wish to support. Once you're enrolled, you'll earn rewards for SOGA every time you shop and use your Plus Card, and you'll keep earning rewards points for yourself! **Enroll now for the Kroger Community Rewards Program.** (You must re-enroll each year to continue earning rewards for SOGA). If your Kroger Plus Card is not already registered online, you will need to create an account. If you already have an account, simply sign in, find the Community Rewards section, and select Special Olympics Georgia. Questions or problems, contact **Susan Skolnick** or 770-414-9390 x111.



Athlete of the Month: Will Gillis

Will Gillis was the sole representative of Pierce County at his very first State Fall Games in October. He knew very few people there, and yet still did well in his golf competition. That kind of bravery is why Will Gillis was selected as Athlete of the Month.



Will is a student at Pierce County Middle School and an avid golfer. He and his Father "Pap" enjoy nothing more than hitting the course for a round of golf. So, they took their game to the state level in Dalton. The father-son duo was not completely alone in their trip to Fall Games. Will's Mother Lisa and sister Laci also cheered them on. Will enjoyed his experience at State Fall Games, from Opening Ceremony to putting in the last shot on the 18th hole!

We look forward to seeing where else Will's love of golf will take him. Congratulations Will on being named Athlete of the Month for January!

Monthly Giving

Athletes remind us every day that the



"Freezin' for a Reason" in the 5th Annual Polar Plunge at Lake Lanier on February 15th! 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.

Color Me Rad March 22nd

Color Me Rad, benefiting Special Olympics Georgia, will take place March



22nd at the Georgia International Horse Park in Conyers. Color Me Rad is a 5K that fires off in a blaze of color bombs, color cannons, color mortars, and multi-toned courses and guarantees a tsunami of color that'll make colored tears of joy run down your cheeks.

You'll start off with a shirt as white as your granddaddy's dentures, and throughout the run, come out like a tie-dyed hippy of blue, green, purple and yellow. **Register using Special Olympics Georgia's promo code SOGA** and save 10% off your registration and have 15% of your registration go to Special Olympics Georgia. (Registration is \$40-\$50, depending on registration deadlines). **Click here to register for the race or for more race details.** If you are interested in volunteering for the race or have other questions, please contact **Susan Skolnick** or 770-414-9390 x111.

Volunteer

triumph is in the trying and not necessarily in the winning. You can share the joy of Special Olympics by **becoming a monthly donor/Sustaining Partner** and providing dependable funding for the athletes. For \$10 a month, you will feed 24 athletes 1 meal at a State Game; for \$25 a month, you will provide medals for 12 competitions at a State Game; for \$50 a month, you will send 2 athletes to Camp Inspire; and for \$100 a month, you will provide 80 athletes housing for 2 nights at a State Game. Your monthly donation can be any amount you choose. Please consider becoming a Sustaining Partner with a monthly gift and know that your monthly contribution will make a tremendous difference in ensuring athletes can train and compete year-round. Together, we can make a difference!

Donate Monthly.



Sponsor Spotlight: Georgia Natural Gas

Special Olympics Georgia is very pleased to announce that Georgia Natural Gas is returning as the Opening Ceremony sponsor for the 2014 State Indoor Winter Games.



Georgia Natural Gas

More Georgians depend on **Georgia Natural Gas** than any other gas marketer to provide clean-burning natural gas for their homes and businesses. In fact, nearly half-a-million customers look to Georgia Natural Gas as their natural gas expert. And for good reason . . . Georgia Natural Gas is a Georgia-based company, and natural gas is their only business; and they offer a variety of price plans and the expertise to help you make an informed choice.

Georgia Natural Gas's commitment to the community is as strong as its commitment to its customers. In 2012, **Georgia Natural Gas** received the prestigious IMPACT Award from the Corporate Volunteer Council of Atlanta, and they also have been awarded the Category II Torch Awards for Community Service from the Better Business Bureau serving Metro Atlanta, Athens, and Northeast Georgia in recent years.

By sponsoring the 2014 State Indoor Winter Games, **Georgia Natural Gas** is making a positive impact on the lives of our athletes by giving them the financial means to train and compete.

Thank you Georgia Natural Gas for your continued support and belief in our mission and athletes!

Volunteer of the Month: John Locke

Bill Gates once said, "Leaders are those who empower others." No truer words can be said about January's Special Olympics Volunteer of the Month John Locke.



Opportunities



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 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.

If you are interested in the volunteering opportunities above, please contact Stephen Sparks.

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John empowers others through giving them the opportunity to succeed. Employed by Ogeechee Technical College in Statesboro, he also serves as the chairperson of the Area 13 Management Team. He and his wife Amanda faithfully serve the Special Olympics community, as Amanda is the local coordinator for Evans County. John's daughter Marie is also an athlete with Evans County Special Olympics. Recently, the management team held their annual winter event, which consisted of hosting the Area 13 agencies for bowling, arcade games, and a pizza party in Statesboro. What a successful event, especially with John at the helm!



The way that John leads the Area 13 Management Team and the athletes to be successful is what makes him an amazing leader and Volunteer of Month. Congratulation and thanks for all your hard work John!

LETR Kick-Off Luncheon Set for January 16th

In 2013, officers within the Law Enforcement Torch Run raised over \$750,000 for the 25,878 athletes in Georgia -- the most in SOGA history. This year, they plan to raise even more!



Law enforcement officers can learn how to be a hero to SOGA athletes at this year's Kick-Off Luncheon Thursday, January 16th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the UPS World Headquarters in Atlanta. Lunch will be provided, as well as a continuing education session about how law enforcement can better serve the community.

This is a perfect way for departments to bridge the gap between law enforcement and your communities.

The address of the kick-off luncheon is 55 Glenlake Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30328.

4000 Dekalb Technology Pkwy | Suite 400 Bldg. 400 | Atlanta, GA | 30340 | (770) 414-9390 | www.SpecialOlympicsGA.org
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