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# Georgia's Champions

February 2014

Be a Fan. Bring Out the Champion in Everyone.

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## News and Stories

### Maybe No Medals at State Winter Games But Winning Isn't Everything for Cobb Team/Family

Mariah Owmy's Cobb Celtics basketball team might have lost a basketball game by two points and didn't win a medal, but they had the most important part of any state games: each other.

"They had a great time. The camaraderie was awesome," Mariah's Mom Carol said. Competing as friends and enjoying the weekend's Opening Ceremony and Olympic Town was still meaningful to the teammates who have become more like a family.

Mariah's team joined more than 2,000 athletes and unified partners at State Winter Games January 24-26 in Cobb County. Other highlights include Southeast Powerlifting also held during the weekend and Saturday's Olympic Town that hosted a combined number of 300 athletes who had their hearing screened and learned more about healthy lifestyles and nutrition. About 40 health professionals within the Healthy Athletes program explained to athletes their existing conditions and taught them ways to prevent future health issues.

None of the games would have been possible without sponsors. Special Olympics Georgia is honored to recognize the following sponsors for



## Upcoming Events

### 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! Check out the incentives for individuals and teams for reaching various fundraising levels at [polarplungega.com](http://polarplungega.com). Click "Sign up now" to begin. Contact [David Crawford](#) for more information.

### Virtual Run for Torch Run Til Feb. 21st

[Register online for the Virtual Run for Law Enforcement Torch Run](#) where



you run, walk, jog on your own time

their State Winter Games support: Georgia Natural Gas, Winter Construction, Lockheed Martin AERO Club, AutoTrader.com, MetLife, Superior Essex, Inc., firstPRO, Inc., Allied World Assurance Company, Commercial Property Professionals, and Bennett Thrasher Foundation.

### Athlete of the Month: John Holt

Cordele Athlete John Holt loves to ride his bike every day and truly "goes the distance." It's not always the casual ride around town but John will often go on 20-mile rides. He has competed in cycling for Special Olympics Georgia since he was a high school student.



Last June, John participated in Bike Ride Across Georgia (BRAG). There, John rode his bike from Cordele, located off I-75 below Perry, to St. Mary's, which is located south of Brunswick. The long ride was not easy!

John did not feel he could not make it through the ride sometimes. Still, with the experiences that he had already in the South Georgia humidity and his will to never quit, he gained the momentum he needed to finish the longest bike ride of his life.

John plans to return to BRAG this year and hopes to make BRAG an annual event for himself. We're proud of you John. Good luck at the next ride!

### Estate Planning

Do you have a will? Do you have a will that needs to be updated? Many people make a New Year's resolution to create or update their estate plans. Even though it is already February, there is no time like the present to get all of your plans in place. Special Olympics has complementary information that can help you plan or update your will. Our free materials describe the process of estate planning with steps that take you through planning, creating and updating your will, identifying a team to help you and making other key decisions. You'll find valuable tools, questions and answers, and a glossary of terms to guide your planning toward a financial foundation for the future. If you would like to receive these materials, or if you have any questions on how you can include Special Olympics in your estate plans, contact us toll-free at (866) 690-3951 or email us at [plannedgiving@specialolympics.org](mailto:plannedgiving@specialolympics.org).



### Magazine Subscription/Renewal

Whether renewing your favorite magazine or subscribing to a new one, you can help raise funds for Special Olympics Georgia by ordering through our partner,



schedule (until Feb. 21). So get your walking or running friends together for some exercise. It's up to you how far you go!

Pay \$30 and you'll receive a medal for your run and if you pay \$50, you'll receive a medal and T-shirt.

### GEICO Walk March 15th

For the 31st year, GEICO is organizing and hosting a benefit for Special



Olympics Georgia. This year's event is a 1 Mile Walk on Saturday, March 15th at the GEICO facility in Macon. GEICO's goal is to raise \$65,000. All participants will receive a t-shirt. For more information on sponsoring or participating in the walk, please contact [Randy Thompson](#), Walk Director.

### Virtual Race Sociercise April

Get fit and give back to SOGA all of April in the **Virtual Race**. Simply download the FREE Sociercise app from the app store on your phone.



**It's so easy!**

First download the app, then you either  
(A) Pay a registration fee of \$25 and get moving! OR  
(B) Create your own race page and ask friends and family to donate to your page based on miles you run or walk during the month of April. They donate straight to your page and it will go directly to SOGA! For more information on registration contact [Morgan Sumner](#) or call (770)414-9390 ex 112.

### Over the Edge April 26th

**DialAmerica.** You'll get BIG discounts, and DialAmerica will donate 12.5 % of your paid subscription to SOGA. To subscribe, call (877) 872-2362 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. or click on the icon above.

**Sponsor of the Month:  
Platinum Partner of Special Olympics Georgia  
AutoTrader.com**

**AutoTrader.com** has been a generous supporter and friend to Special Olympics Georgia for 10 years through year-round 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.

"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** for your continued belief in and dedication to the 25,878 Special Olympics Georgia athletes over the past 10 years!

**Hey Coaches, Parents and Athletes!**

We want to tell your stories! Email **Wendy Bigham** with a story about a Special Olympics event or person who has inspired you! You can also **submit your story** through an online form.



**AutoTrader.com**



Do you want to check something off your bucket list?!



How about rappelling from a 20-story building to help raise money for Special Olympics Georgia? On Friday, April 25th and Saturday, April 26th go Over The Edge at the Buckhead Tower in Atlanta.

**Click here to learn more about Over the Edge** or contact **Autumn Unrein**

Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor **AutoTrader.com**.

**Volunteer Opportunities**



**Polar Plunge  
Feb. 15th  
Lake Lanier**

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

**Over the Edge  
April 26th  
Atlanta**

Brave "soles" will climb over the edge of one of Atlanta's tallest buildings in the name of SOGA. Volunteers are needed to help with the day's activities -- and we promise not to send you "Over the Edge!" All volunteers must be 18 or older.

**State Summer Games  
May 30th-June 1st  
Atlanta**

We need Fans in the Stands volunteers and others to help run events for Summer Games.



Come cheer them on! [Click here to apply to volunteer.](#)

## 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:

- \* Buckhead Pizza Co. - Give Back Day raised \$183



If you are interested in the volunteering opportunities above, please contact [Stephen Sparks.](#)

## Quick Links

[Principals of Coaching](#)

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[FAQs](#)

[Our Web site](#)

[Contact us](#)

## Volunteer of the Month: Cindy Clifton

Constantly on the go, Cindy Clifton is the local coordinator for Crisp County Special Olympics, a liaison for Project Unify, and also a special education teacher for Crisp County Schools.



Cindy has filled those roles for numerous years and is a very positive role model. As a coach, she expects her athletes to be ready to learn and to eventually achieve their goals.

Cindy accompanied Cordele athlete John Holt -- who is this month's featured athlete -- on the Bike Ride Across Georgia as he wanted to succeed in completing the ride. Cindy, a veteran cyclist, knew what it would take for John to reach his goal and rode by his side the entire way. John completed BRAG.

She is very devoted to Special Olympics Georgia and is a great asset to her community of Cordele. It is a great pleasure to announce Cindy Clifton Volunteer of the Month for February 2014.

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

## Give Gift

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 visit Gift Give](#) to shop for SOGA's needs and decide which needs your money goes to fulfill.



## Torch Run Merchandise for Sale

Please make sure to visit all the souvenir locations at our upcoming Special Olympics Georgia State Events and purchase the





fabulous Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Georgia merchandise. All proceeds from the souvenir sales benefits the more than 25,878 athletes of Special Olympics Georgia! There are shirts, camouflage hats, tan visors and lanyards being sold, so come and check them out and sport this catchy gear!

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