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Georgia's Champions

July 2014

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News and Stories

Team Georgia Rocks USA Games and Youth Summit

Still pumped after a week of firsts and successes, Team Georgia has a lot of good to reflect upon: from athletes flying out on private planes thanks to the Citation Special Olympics Airlift, enjoying Opening Ceremony, watching some entertainment from the cast of *Wicked* and WWE Superstars, including The Big Show; to winning medals, ribbons and making friends.



Every member of Team Georgia came home from USA Games with at least one medal and many received more than one. [Check out](#) the full list of Team Georgia results.

During USA Games, SOGA staffer Max Ellis, athlete Maegan Smith, and Y-Lead Kaitlyn Deas, both of Moultrie, learned how to make change in schools at the 2014 USA Games Project Unify Youth Summit. There, state program



Upcoming Events

CiCi's Pizza Icon Sales and More All of July

Purchase paper Special Olympics logos for \$1 at [CiCi's Pizza](#)



registers during the month of July and you'll receive a coupon for a regular-sized drink with the purchase of an adult buffet during the month of August. July 12th, SOGA athletes will be on hand from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. for a meet at participating locations. Wrapping up the promotion on July 31st, [CiCi's](#) will challenge guests to purchase enough paper to cover an entire law enforcement vehicle. 10% of the day's sales will be donated back to Special Olympics Georgia.

Buffalo Wild Wings Give Back Day

representatives shared ideas and were inspired by motivational speakers talking about the importance of helping others in order to live a fulfilling life.



Camp Inspire: A Week of Recreation, Learning, Fun

SOGA's 2014 Camp Inspire featured a lot of fun while learning and testing skills, and making friends June 15th-20th at Camp Dream in Warm Springs. 77 athletes, 35 Youth Leaders Educating others About Disabilities (Y-LEADS), 14 SOGA staff, and counselors participated in the overnight camp.



Before kicking off camp-style activities including swimming in the lake, bowling, archery, the climbing wall and even tackling a zip line; participants went through physical fitness tests and learned nutritional tips from Finish Line volunteers facilitating 13 Testing Recreational Activities and Improving Nutrition stations.

Y-LEADs participated in the Youth Leaders Forum where they learned leadership skills to promote inclusion and bridge the gap between students with and without intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics Georgia provided the camp at no cost and could not have done it without our wonderful and dedicated sponsors! Members of Knights of Columbus Georgia Council, the camp's presenting sponsor, assisted athletes during activities every day. Rotary Club of Dunwoody and Special Olympics Project Unify and the Youth Service Fund-Rotary Club of Atlanta also sponsored the camp.

The Gift That Costs Nothing

We have an increasing number of supporters who want to make a meaningful future gift in support of our athletes, but they don't know how to do it or are afraid it might be too complicated or costly. If this sounds familiar, consider making a gift through your retirement or life insurance plans. It is one of the easiest ways to give and costs nothing to set up.

To begin, contact your retirement or life insurance plan provider and request a "Change in Beneficiary Form." Sometimes these forms can be found online. Then, simply fill out the form according to your wishes



July 21st

Have lunch or dinner at Buffalo Wild Wings in Warner Robins July 21st, and SOGA will receive 10% of what you spend that day. Please take [this flyer](#) with you so SOGA will receive the funds.



**BUFFALO
WILD
WINGS**
WINGS. BEER. SPORTS.™

Duck Derby
August 8th

Time to adopt ducks for the **Duck Derby!** On August 8th, 10,000 rubber ducks will race at



Six Flags White Water. You can adopt a single duck for \$5, or increase your chances by buying a quack pack of 7 ducks for \$30! If your duck is one of the first six to cross the finish line, you will win one of these amazing prizes: iPhone 5c 16 GB, .55 Carat Diamond Stud Earrings on 14K White Gold, Six Flags White Water Family Ticket Package, Surface RT Tablet 32 GB, \$300 Publix Gift Card, or a \$150 QuikTrip Gift Card! Visit

www.AtlantaDuckDerby.com

to adopt your ducks today! Thank you to our sponsors **Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies, Rooms To Go Children's Fund**, Allconnect,

LAZ Parking, Whitaker Oil Company, Risk Placement Services, Precision Aviation Group, Dobbins Thrift Shoppe, Highwoods Properties, Sherwin-Williams, Craig Automotive, Dale Massey-State Farm Insurance, and North Georgia Replacement Windows. Also thank you to Six

indicating what percentage you would like Special Olympics Georgia to receive. It usually only takes a few minutes, and you can change the beneficiary at any time if your circumstances change. It's that easy. Please be aware that if you are planning to leave your retirement plan to anyone other than your spouse, it may be taxed-twice-due to estate taxes and income taxes. In some cases, these taxes can be 60% or more depending on the state and other factors. Because of these tax implications, some people choose to use their retirement plans to give to their favorite charities (tax free!) and leave gifts to their family and friends through their will. Want to learn more? Our staff of planned giving professionals can answer any questions you may have on how to include Special Olympics Georgia in any of your estate plans. Contact us toll-free at (866) 690-3951 or email us at plannedgiving@specialolympics.org.

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:

- * Seven Hills Homeowners Association, Inc. - Charity Event weekend raised \$9,480
- * Layne Heavy Civil - Golf Outing raised \$2,890

Athlete of the Month: Suzanne Goossens

You can look to Suzanne Goossens for an example of what Project Unify and Special Olympics truly means.

She swims with the Extra Special People Pirhanas, but when she isn't competing, she encourages her friends to work harder and improve each day. The fearless attitude is a testament to the dedication the Oconee/Clarke County athlete has given through Special Olympics over the past 10 years, in not only sports, but by encouraging her friends with and without intellectual disabilities.



Suzanne is enthusiastic about life and loves learning new things! Some of Suzanne's favorite things to do (besides swimming) include water skiing, boating, and hanging out at her lake house with her family.

She also enjoys zip lining, skydiving, and wall climbing. This May, Suzanne won a gold medal at State Summer Games.

Flags White Water and our media partner 94.9 The Bull.

Titletown Tasting August 9th

Enjoy live music, food and a silent auction at Titletown Tasting August 9th at the Cotton Corner in Valdosta. For tickets or information about being a sponsor or donating a silent auction item, contact [Stephen Sparks](mailto:Stephen.Sparks@titletowntasting.com) at 229-292-6955.



Strike the R-word September 16th

Strike the R-word and bowl with former Atlanta Falcon and Georgia Bulldog Dj Shockley and other celebrity supporters Tuesday, September 16th at Bowlmor Atlanta. Enjoy bowling, food, silent auction, and goodie bags, while striking the r-word "retarded," which demeans and hurts people. For more information, contact [Wendy Bigham](mailto:Wendy.Bigham@bowlmoratlanta.com).



GLOW for Gold September 20th

Help us encourage SOGA Athletes to Go for Gold at the first GLOW for Gold 5K/FunRun in Valdosta at the Freedom Park Softball Complex on September 20th. For more information on how to participate or sponsor, contact [Whitney Warren](mailto:Whitney.Warren@glowforgold.com) at 229-712-9973.



16th Annual

Congratulations to Suzanne for winning the gold and being named Athlete of the Month!

Volunteer of the Month: Kristin Caso

June's Volunteer of the Month goes to a very deserving individual: Kristin Caso of Albany. Her love and spirit for Special Olympics -- especially for the athletes -- shines every day.

Kristin competes in bowling year-round both as a coach and unified partner, and plays a very big role as a volunteer for Cops on Doughnut Shops and the Strikers Classic State Bowling Invitational, just to name a few.



She is the marketing and special events coordinator at the Albany Recreation and Parks Department, which is the city's largest department. For many years, Kristin's added SOGA to her list of activities; which recently have included helping organize the city's Fourth of July activities; Family Day with the Albany Museum of the Arts; and a summer food-service program for area youngsters.

Kristin, we're lucky to have you on SOGA's team!

Sponsor of the Month: Kids 'R' Kids and Rooms To Go

Special Olympics Georgia is proud to announce that Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies and Rooms To Go Children's Fund are Lucky Duck Sponsors of the 2014 Duck Derby!



Kids 'R' Kids wants all children to have the opportunity to grow physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually by playing, exploring, and learning with others in a fun, safe, and healthy environment. Kids 'R' Kids believes that happy, loved and connected children are destined for success in every facet of their lives. As a family-owned and operated organization, Kids 'R' Kids welcomes positive family involvement and encourages a parent-teacher approach where the needs of every child come first to obtain successful early childhood education and school-age care. "Having been in the business of caring for and educating children since 1961, we are pleased to partner with Special Olympics. We believe in developing the whole child and helping each one discover the champion within," said Pat and Janice Vinson, Founders of Kids 'R' Kids.

When **Rooms To Go** opened its first set of doors in 1991, the way people bought furniture was changed forever. Since then, Rooms To



Go has grown into America's #1 independent furniture company with the nation's largest furniture inventory. Rooms To Go offers stylish furniture at everyday low prices, original room packages, superior service and fast delivery. Walk into any Rooms To Go showroom and discover the ease of one-stop decorating. As the leading furniture company in America, millions of customers have enjoyed the entire Rooms To Go package and a more convenient, enjoyable and affordable way to shop furniture. "Each and every one of us at Rooms To Go is proud to support Special Olympics Georgia. The athletes and their families are an inspiration to us, and we hope our continued support will help them achieve great success," said Warren Kornblum, Chief Strategy Officer

Marlow's Tavern Golf Classic September 22nd

Join us on
September 22nd
at the Country
Club of Roswell



for the 16th Annual Marlow's Tavern Golf Classic benefiting SOGA. Since 1999, this annual golf tournament has raised more than \$431,000 for our athletes. This year's tournament goal is to raise \$58,000! The fun-filled day will include a putting contest, shotgun start, hole contests, and an awards ceremony, reception, and silent auction at Aqua blue Restaurant.

Corporate sponsorships and player information.
Registration Form.

For more information, contact
Susan Skolnick

or 770-414-9390 x111. Thank you Marlow's Tavern and past and current sponsors for your generous support over the years!

Clay Shoot September 25th

Secure your spot
now for the
Sporting Clay
Charity



Tournament, called the 2014 **Shoot for Champions,** Thursday, Sept. 25 at Foxhall Resort and Sporting Club in Douglasville. The event benefits the athletes of Special Olympics Georgia. Costs \$425 per person and includes breakfast, lunch, shells, snacks, beverages, and awards. **Click here** for the flyer. For more information, contact **Thomas Ritch.**

Bob Busse

of Rooms To Go.

Thank you [Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies](#) and [Rooms To Go Children's Fund](#) for your continued friendship and for helping to make our athletes' dreams come true!

Silent Auction Items Needed

SOGA has several upcoming silent auctions that are in need of items. If you personally have or know someone/a business who might be willing to donate any of the following, please contact [Susan Skolnick](#) or 770-414-9390 x111: vacation/time-share home, resort/hotel stay, sports memorabilia, sporting event tickets, concert tickets, airline tickets/vouchers, golf foursome, restaurant gift card, or any other item, type of service, or recreational activity that you think would be a great addition to a silent auction. Each silent auction item donation helps us to raise money and ensure that all SOGA programs are free to our athletes and their families.



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. Car Program will make all the arrangements at no cost to you. They handle the title transfer requirements and will provide you with a tax deductible donation receipt when they pick-up your car. Need more information? Click here to [donate your vehicle](#) and a helpful representative will call you shortly, or you may call our car donation program at 1-800-240-0160.



Atlanta Silverbacks Soccer Clinic to be Held Friday, July 18th

Athletes and coaches interested in practicing soccer skills and techniques should join us for the Atlanta Silverbacks and Special Olympics Georgia Soccer Clinic Friday, July 18th at the Atlanta Silverbacks Park.

The clinic will feature several soccer stations, autographs and a meet and greet with the Silverbacks players. Each participant will receive two tickets to the Saturday, July 19th game against FC Edmonton of Alberta, Canada.



Memorial Classic November 3rd

Special Olympics Georgia once again proudly hosts the [Bob Busse Memorial Classic](#). The tournament will be held at a prestigious golf club in Sandy Springs Nov. 3rd. This event promises to be a great way to spend your day. Each year, this tournament grows and becomes better than the last. Expect a great golf game, prizes, a silent auction and wonderful reception. Email [Riley Cerone](#) for more information.



Volunteer Opportunities



State Masters Bowling Tournament August 22nd-24th Warner Robins

Love bowling? We have a whole weekend of bowling for you and we need your help! Volunteers are needed to assist athletes on bowling lanes and hand out awards afterwards.

Strike the R-word Bowling Event September 16th Atlanta

Special Olympics has a worldwide campaign to eliminate the word "retard(ed)" and educate people on the effects of the hurtful word. Volunteers are needed day of to help with this event.

Email your RSVP to [Wendy Bigham](#).

SOGA appreciates the ever-growing friendship with the Atlanta Silverbacks!

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.



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

Quick Links

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Help us get the word out about what Special Olympics Georgia athletes, coaches and volunteers are doing in the community and how folks can get involved. **[Forward This E-newsletter to a Friend](#)** and ask them to sign up to receive their monthly updates.



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