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Georgia's Champions

January 2015

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News and Stories

Athletes Get Ready for Upcoming State Indoor Winter Games and Southeast Powerlifting

Last State Indoor Winter Games, Kimberly Ware's Uncle Tom Browning cheered from the stands at her bowling competition. Kimberly then asked if the avid bowler would give her and her Fayette County team, the King Pins, some bowling pointers before this year's state competition. He agreed, and for the last four Saturday mornings, Tom has driven from his home in Marietta to Peachtree City to help coach Kimberly's team.



His coaching has spurred on even more family involvement in Special Olympics. They'll bowl as a family after practices. "We don't get to see him much, so it's good family time," Kimberly said.



The retired law enforcement officer will cheer on his niece again this year at the State Indoor Winter Games January 23rd-25th in Cobb County. She will join approximately 2,272 athletes and unified partners from across the state. Basketball, floor hockey, gymnastics, powerlifting, and roller skating competitions will also be held. Opening Ceremony will be Friday night at the Cobb Civic Center with Grand Marshal Randy Cross leading the parade of athletes. Randy is a three-time Superbowl Champion who hosts a show on 92.9 The Game.

Thank you to the following sponsors of the State Indoor Winter Games: Metlife, Lockheed Martin Aero Club, Winter Construction, AutoTrader.com, firstPRO, Allied World Assurance, Commercial Property Professionals, JP Morgan, Georgia Power, Northside Athlete Foundation, Nypro, Econis Labs, Cobb EMC, Dream Ride, Amerigroup, Wynne Foundation, Knights of Columbus, and

Upcoming Events

Polar Plunge February 21st

The 2015 **Polar Plunge** for Law Enforcement Torch Run of Georgia and Special Olympics Georgia will be held Saturday, February 21st



at Lake Lanier Islands Beach & Water Park! Registration will begin at 11 a.m. and the Plunge will begin at 1:30 p.m. You can register now by visiting www.plungega.org. In order to plunge, you must raise a minimum of \$55, which will include a t-shirt. You won't want to miss it this year as Lake Lanier is adding SNOW MOUNTAIN! If you have questions concerning Polar Plunge, please contact [Lucy Faxon](#) or 770-414-9390 x118.

Chick-fil-A Give-Back Day January 24th

Metro Power.

[Click here to show your support of the athletes attending State Indoor Winter Games.](#)

Also that weekend, SOGA hosts the Southeast Powerlifting competition in Marietta, featuring 75 athletes and unified partners from across the state and from North Carolina, Florida, and Tennessee.

(In the top picture above, Kimberly Ware (top, right) stands with her team and Debbie Parrish, therapeutic coordinator at Fayette County Parks and Recreation. Kimberly and her uncle Tom Browning are in the bottom photo.)

Get Your Paper Torch Icon at Publix Until January 21st

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.



Until January 21st, stores across the region will 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. [Learn](#) more about the campaign.

Customers are given the opportunity to purchase a torch icon at [Publix](#), and in exchange, receive \$11 back in P&G coupons! Every year, Publix exceeds expectations through their dedication and support of this partnership. In 2014, Georgia stores raised an amazing \$524,000!

Special Olympics Georgia appreciates the support of [Publix Super Markets](#) and continues to enjoy shopping where Shopping is a Pleasure!

Be sure to visit your local Publix and purchase your very own paper torch!

Attention Coaches: New Certification Information

Due to new policies set forth by Special Olympics Inc., Special Olympics Georgia coaches must follow the New Policy for Special Olympics Georgia Coaching Certification and Re-certification Process, effective January 1st. [Check it](#) out here.



**Kroger Community Rewards®
Re-Enrollment/Enrollment**

Competing in
State Indoor
Winter Games?



Volunteering? Or, being a fan in the stands?! Come out to the Chick-fil-A on Windy Hill Road in Marietta for dinner and support SOGA Saturday, January 24th from 5-8 p.m. during State Indoor Winter Games. Simply put your receipt in the bucket and SOGA will receive 10% of all sales. We look forward to seeing you in Marietta!

Over the Edge May 2nd

Over the Edge is back for its fourth year! On Saturday, May 2nd, "edgers" will rappel 20 stories off the Buckhead Tower in Atlanta for Special Olympics Georgia.

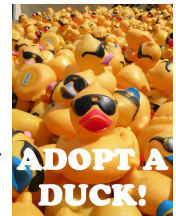


Register at

www.oteatlanta2015.org. For more information contact [Lucy Faxon](#) or 770-414-9390 x118.

Duck Pluck August 14th

Kick off the New Year with a cute little yellow rubber duck for you or a loved one! Adopt a quack pack now for Special Olympics Georgia's **Duck**



Pluck set for August 14th at Post Chastain in Atlanta. The quack pack costs \$30 and you'll receive a junior souvenir rubber duck and seven entries in the Duck Pluck. For a donation of \$5, a lucky duck number will be assigned to your duck in your or your loved one's honor. All ducks will be put into the Post Chastain pool for a swim, and if your duck is one of the first plucked, you win! [Click here](#) to learn more about the prizes and for more information.

**Volunteer
Opportunities**

Kroger Community Rewards® makes supporting Special Olympics Georgia 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 www.kroger.com/communityrewards, and in the Community Rewards section, select Special Olympics Georgia (code 57973) as the organization you wish to support.



State Indoor Winter Games January 23rd-25th Marietta

Get out of the cold and volunteer for the Indoor Winter Games. More than 2,000 SOGA athletes compete in basketball, bowling, powerlifting, floor hockey, roller skating, and gymnastics.

Polar Plunge February 21st Lake Lanier

This event has participants "plunge" into the freezing cold waters of Lake Lanier all to benefit the athletes of SOGA. Volunteers are needed from 9:45 a.m. until 2:45 p.m. to help with registration, set-up, games and activities, and attending the course, etc.

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

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"Power of Unity" Bangle Supports Special Olympics

Alex and Ani, a made in America lifestyle brand and producer of jewelry, and Special Olympics have partnered together through their Charity by Design division to create a new bangle. The "Power of Unity" bangle will be sold in Alex and Ani retail stores nationwide, online at www.Alexandani.com, and at partnering retail accounts. Alex and Ani will donate to Special Olympics 20% of the purchase price from each Power of Unity Charm sold between November 2014 and December 2015, with a minimum donation of \$25,000. The bangle design features the Special Olympics symbol which is an expression of how the Special Olympics movement reveals the champion in all of us, inspiring achievement, change, revelation and community in all who connect with Special Olympics. On the other side of the charm, the Special Olympics Athlete Oath appears, "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."



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, [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: Walmart

Special Olympics Georgia is very proud to recognize [Walmart](#) as a new Statewide Platinum Partner for 2015. Walmart has been a fan and friend of Special Olympics Georgia for more than 20 years.



Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to helping people live better through philanthropic efforts that draw on the strengths of [Walmart](#) in the arenas of sustainability, economic opportunity, and community. As part of their

commitment to creating a more sustainable food system worldwide, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are leading the fight against hunger in the United States. They recently exceeded a \$2 billion goal to fight hunger one year ahead of schedule and have donated more than 1.5 billion pounds of food to those in need across the country.

"Walmart is excited to continue helping the communities we serve," said Glen Wilkins, director of public affairs and government relations at Walmart. "The grant will assist the organization in providing physical fitness programs to children and adults with intellectual disabilities throughout the state."

Thank you **Walmart** 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.

Athlete of the Month: Rachel Blanchard

Special Olympics Georgia is proud to announce Rachel Blanchard of Columbus Parks and Recreation Department as the first Athlete of the Month of 2015.



Rachel has competed in Special Olympics for most of her life, beginning when she lived in Japan. She has won more than 50 medals from participating in sports such as basketball, bowling, swimming, tennis, cycling, and athletics. Rachel enjoys competing and lives by the athlete oath: "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me brave in the attempt."

In her free time, Rachel enjoys watching the Georgia Bulldogs; participating in Columbus Therapeutic Recreation Program; talking to her cousins Thomas and Rhyann; hanging out with friends and her peer buddy Morgan; shopping with her Mom; and going to church.

Congratulations, Rachel, for being January's Athlete of the Month!

Volunteer of the Month: Melissa Crawford

Special Olympics Georgia is proud to announce Melissa Crawford of Columbus Parks and Recreation Department as January's Volunteer of the Month.



Melissa has been involved with Special Olympics Georgia since 2013, and the department has truly grown since her arrival.

The athletes have been involved with State Games participating in Winter, Summer, Masters Bowling, and Fall Games, with the help of Melissa's dedication. She quickly earned her coach's certification in five sports: bowling, tennis, basketball, bocce, and cycling. This upcoming Spring, Melissa plans for her agency to host a state invitational for aquatics.

In addition to working with her athletes, Melissa enjoys shopping; traveling; fine dining; cooking; cake decorating; and spending quality time with the family.

Congratulations, Melissa, for being January's Volunteer of the Month.

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 \$23,067
- * SuperValu - Golf Tournament raised \$5,983
- * Max Lager's Wood-Fired Grill and Brewery Restaurant Give-Back Day raised \$809



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We're fortunate to have you as part of the Special Olympics Georgia family. Our goal is to reach as many potential sponsors, volunteers and athletes as possible, so please help us grow the family even more. Please forward this e-newsletter to your friends and family so they can **sign up** to also receive the monthly e-newsletter!



Tell Us Your Story

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 online.



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