

# Georgia's Champions

December 2023

Get this  
Special Olympics  
ornament  
to help athletes  
everywhere!

GET YOURS TODAY!



*Happy Holidays from Special Olympics Georgia!*



Your gift  
MATCHED to  
support 2X the  
athletes!

DONATE NOW

SAVE THE DATES

Georgia's  
Champions

SPECIAL OLYMPICS GEORGIA

# INDOOR WINTER GAMES

JANUARY 26TH-27TH 2024



Sign up to be a  
State Indoor  
Winter Games  
Volunteer!

Click the link to sign up: <https://bit.ly/3EZYrfx>

**SAVE THE DATES**

**Georgia's  
Champions**

# THE DUCKS

**THE DUCKS ARE COMING BACK IN JANUARY...  
BE ON THE LOOKOUT  
TO ADOPT!**



Contact Ansley Bonner for information  
on being a 2024 Duck Pluck Sponsor.  
[Ansley.Bonner@SpecialOlympicsGA.org](mailto:Ansley.Bonner@SpecialOlympicsGA.org)

# ARE COMING!

# SAVE THE DATES

# Georgia's Champions

## "LIGHT THE TORCH" WITH PUBLIX JANUARY 12TH - 21ST, 2024



# Publix

"Light the Torch" with Publix  
Super Markets, January 12<sup>th</sup> -  
21<sup>st</sup>, 2024

Meet Publix Employee & Special  
Olympics Georgia Athlete  
Michael.

"I have been a Special Olympics  
Georgia Athlete since middle  
school and have been a Publix  
employee for ten years. I look  
forward to the Publix Campaign  
each year to help support my  
favorite organization at my favorite  
place to work!"

Stop in at your local Publix in January and  
make a donation at a cash register.

**Special Olympics**  
Georgia



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# 2024 HOT CHOCOLATE RUN VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



**Special  
Olympics**

*“America’s sweetest run is back for our most indulgent Hot Chocolate Run season yet in Atlanta on Sunday, February 4, 2024! With 5K and 15K distances and a post-run party that’ll make you go cocoa crazy, you and your friends will experience the ultimate chocolate celebration!”*

*For more information and to volunteer, visit <https://hotchocolate15k.com/city/atlanta>*

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## 2024 Polar Plunge

Be freezin' for a reason and come out to take The Plunge in support of Special Olympics Georgia Athletes!



Saturday, February 24, 2024  
Acworth Beach  
4425 Beach St., Acworth, GA 30101

For more information, contact:  
Jalen Young  
(770) 414-9390 ext. 1109  
[Jalen.Young@specialolympicsga.org](mailto:Jalen.Young@specialolympicsga.org)



## 2023 GRPA CONFERENCE



***Special Olympics Georgia's 2023 Training for Life Award was given to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks & Recreation Authority! Walton County Special Olympic Athlete, Rod S., helped the SOGA team present the award this year at the GRPA Conference in Athens.***

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## 2023 LETR CONFERENCE



***The 2023 Law Enforcement Torch Run Conference was held on October 28 - 30 and returned to the home of Special Olympics in Chicago, Illinois. Special Olympics Georgia was awarded the Diamond Award of Excellence for raising over \$1,400,000 in the year of 2022. Also big SOGA shout-out and congratulations to Major John Clifton for being selected as the Chairman of the LETR International Executive Council!***



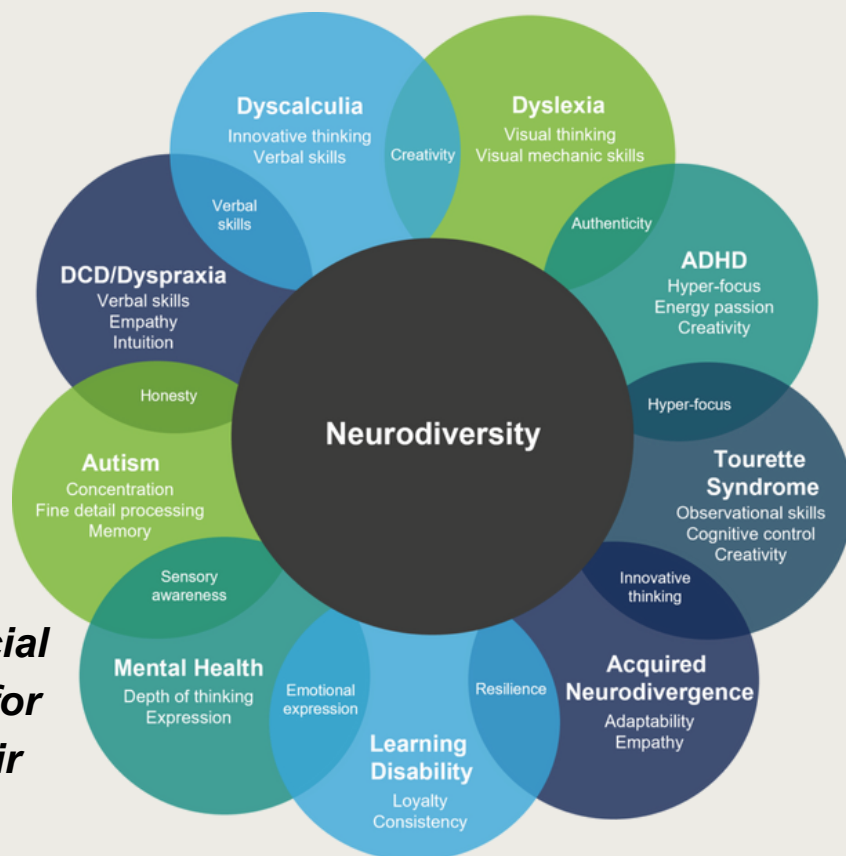
## Helpful Resource to Overcome the Challenges of Neurodiversity while Traveling

*Many parents will admit that traveling by air with children can be a challenge. This is especially true for families with children who are neurodivergent, a term that refers to people with conditions such as autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or other forms of neurological or developmental disabilities.*

*Unfamiliar sounds, smells, food, jet lag and changing schedules are extremely difficult for these children to manage. Disruptions and unfamiliar things may cause behavioral issues that make travel difficult for families. In fact, some families do not take family vacations because it is simply too difficult.*

*Thanks to Jonathan Suter, families of children who are neurodivergent now have an amazing resource to help them while traveling. Jonathan has created, **TravelingWiki**, the largest, free internet site which offers resources at airports throughout the United States for the autism community.*

*Jonathan is collaborating with Special Olympics to provide this resource for Special Olympics athletes and their families.*



*More information can be found at <http://www.TravelingWiki.com> and <https://travelingwiki.com/travelingwiki-in-the-news>*

## Special Olympics Georgia Athlete Named Villager of the Year

*Alyssa F. of the Annandale Community Day Program, has been named by her peers as the 2023 Villager of the Year. The award is presented on attitude, character, being helpful to peers, participation and exhibiting general love for Annandale. The annual Villager of the Year award is voted on by the community and day program. Alyssa was attending a golf tournament in Italy during the day of the initial award ceremony, but accepted the award in the presence of her peers when she returned. Since being awarded, Alyssa has shown great pride in her medal, wearing it everyday to school.*

*Alyssa is fully non-verbal but excels exceptionally well in everything she does. Alyssa participates with food prep and has done so well, she's been promoted to a supervisory role. Alyssa loves Mylie Cyrus' "The Climb" and musicals, she is obsessed with Coke Zero and loves the song "I Will Always Love You" by Whitney Houston. Alyssa's favorite musicals are The Greatest Showman, Snow White, Pinocchio and Phantom of the Opera.*

**CONGRATULATIONS ALYSSA!!  
YOU ROCK!!**





***Owens & Minor, Inc. is a Fortune 500 global healthcare solutions company operating continuously since 1882 from its headquarters in Richmond, Va. Owens & Minor is a 140-year-old company that has contributed to the Special Olympics Georgia program for many years. As a sponsor for our State Games and Duck Pluck events, Owens and Minor has shown continuous support for the athletes.***

***Most recently, Owens & Minor volunteered at our 2023 State Summer Games and provided volunteer and financial support for the 2023 State Fall Games as well. Their sponsorship of \$2,500 for State Fall Games, helped us raise over \$73,701.00 and support our mission of providing year-round sports training and athletic competition, in a variety of Olympic-type sports to children and adults with intellectual disabilities in Georgia. We appreciate all they make possible through their sponsorship and we look forward to working with them in 2024.***



**[www.owens-minor.com](http://www.owens-minor.com)**

## ATHLETE OF THE MONTH



### **Rudolpha R.**

***Born a month early in 1978 in the Virgin Islands with the umbilical cord wrapped around her neck, Rudolpha was revived back to life. She was not expected to ever learn to read or take care of herself.***

***Through a recommendation of a teacher, Rudolpha began competing in Special Olympics. "While there, I was among people like me, doing things and going places that most 'normal' people either could never or would never do," Rudolpha says.***

***She became a high school graduate at 19, competed in Virgin Islands Special Olympics and won medals, worked for Good Will, then moved to the Atlanta area and became a Global Messenger. She was selected in 2013 as one of the members of Georgia's Volleyball team to represent the United States in the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Ireland.***

## VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH



**Emily Hamilton**

***Emily has been the Volunteer Games Director for the State Horse Show for over 15 years. She is also a Special Olympics Georgia coach and clinician in Equestrian. Her knowledge, skill, passion, and leadership has led to many successful Horse Show competitions over the years! We would not be able to host quality Horse Shows without Emily. Thank you so much for all of your hard work and dedication to SOGA!***

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**COACHES  
NEED TO GET RE-CERTIFIED?  
RENEW YOUR CERTIFICATION  
ONLINE!**



<https://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/coach/>



ANY QUESTIONS EMAIL  
LIZ.SMITH@SPECIALOLYMPICSGA.ORG

## CALLING ALL UNIFIED PARTNERS

**COME BE A PART OF  
INCLUSION. IF YOU ARE  
INTERESTED IN BEING A PART  
OF A SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
TEAM PLEASE CONTACT US!**

LIZ.SMITH@SPECIALOLYMPICSGA.ORG



## SOGA PROMOS



Thinking of selling or trading in that old car, boat or RV? Donate it instead! SOGA has partnered with CARS to turn your old vehicle, whether it's running or not, into much needed funds for our programs. CARS accepts most cars, trucks, trailers, boats, RV's, motorcycles, off road vehicles, heavy equipment, and most other motorized vehicles. CARS will make all the arrangements at no cost to you. They handle the title transfer requirements and will provide you with a written acknowledgement of your donation and tax deduction information. Click here for more information or to donate your vehicle. A helpful representative will contact you within 24 hours to schedule a pickup, or call CARS seven days a week at 1-844-404-SOGA (7642) to speak with a representative.



**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 Kroger Community Awards, and in the Community Rewards section, select Special Olympics Georgia (code SH080) 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 Kroger Community Awards (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 Mary Thomason at [Mary.Thomason@specialolympicsga.org](mailto:Mary.Thomason@specialolympicsga.org)



**WEB SEARCHES** Each time you conduct a search on [www.GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com), one penny goes to benefit Special Olympics Georgia. Make Good Search your home page by going to "tools" in your browser and then clicking on "internet options." Type [www.GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com) in the space for home page. The first time you visit the site, type "Special Olympics Georgia in the box for "Who do you goodsearch for?"

## SPREAD THE WORD

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!

