



NEWS RELEASE

OCEAN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND



Public Affairs Specialist Jessica Waters

410.520.5395: News Media Information
410.723.6610: General Police Information
443.235.4420: Public Affairs Cell Phone

Public Affairs Officer Michael Levy

410.723.6665: News Media Information
410.723.6610: General Police Information
443.235.4446: Public Affairs Cell Phone

For Immediate Release:

'Flame of Hope' Arrives in Ocean City

**OCPD Officers Participate in Statewide Torch Run Relay in Support for the
Special Olympics Maryland 25th Annual Summer Games**

On June 7, 2010, members of the Ocean City Police Department took part in the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run Relay for Special Olympics Maryland. Nearly 80 officers escorted and protected the Special Olympics "Flame of Hope" as it makes its way from 27th Street and the Boardwalk to North Division Street. The "Flame of Hope" will continue to travel toward the opening of the 40th Anniversary Summer Games at Towson University, June 11-13.



This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the Maryland Torch Run, a movement that began in 1986 with a handful of officers raising \$5,000, and has grown into a year-round effort that involves thousands of officers and raised \$3.7 million in 2009. Since its inception, the Torch Run has taken very seriously its role as "Guardians of the Flame," and the Relay is an important and celebrated part of every Special Olympics competition.

The local portion of the Torch Run Relay is part of a much larger effort. Statewide, the Maryland Torch Run Relay consists of four different legs – Eastern, Western, Central and Southern – and throughout the entire week, thousands of Torch Run volunteers will cover hundreds of miles, eventually converging on Towson where the individual flames will be united in the Final Leg Ceremony and then officers from around the state will travel the final 2.5 miles to the Opening Ceremony at Towson University. It is there that the flame is handed off to the Special Olympics athletes who have the honor of taking the final lap with the torch and then lighting the cauldron and officially declaring the 2010 SOMD Summer Games Open.

June 7, 2010

Quite often, citizens' hunches turn out to be valuable information to us. If you have information that you feel we should know, we encourage you to leave us e-mail.

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"This Torch Run Relay is really just a small piece of what the dedicated officers from around the state do for the athletes of Special Olympics Maryland on a year-round basis," said Lt. John Newnan, Torch Run Director for Maryland. "But it is perhaps the most visible, and as we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of this movement, it is a phenomenal opportunity for us to bring our message of hope, acceptance and tolerance to the community at large. If we can change even one person's attitude or educate someone about the abilities of Special Olympics athletes then every step of this week-long journey is worth it."

The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Maryland is a year-round movement whose goal is to raise both funds and awareness for the athletes who train and compete in Special Olympics Maryland. The Maryland Torch Run began in 1986 with a handful of officers raising \$50,000. Since that time, the Maryland Torch Run has grown tremendously, including volunteer officers from nearly every law enforcement agency and correctional facility in Maryland, and through special events such as the MSP Polar Bear Plunge, the annual Torch Run T-shirt sales and other efforts, raising \$3.7 million for SOMD in 2009, and once again earning "Top Fundraising Program" honors at the annual International Torch Run Conference.



The 40th Anniversary SOMD Summer Games are set for June 11-13 at Towson University. During this celebrated weekend, 1,200 athletes from around the state will go for gold in aquatics, athletics, bocce, equestrian, cheerleading and softball.

For more information about Special Olympics Maryland, the Torch Run Relay and the 2010 Summer Games, contact Kelley Schniedwind at 410-789-6677 x117 or visit www.somd.org.

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