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Special Olympics Flame of Hope Arrives in Carroll County! *Carroll County Law Enforcement Officers Join Forces to Escort the Special Olympics Maryland Torch, Ensuring its Safe Passage to the 2010 SOMD Summer Games*

Law Enforcement officers representing the police agencies throughout Carroll County will be out in force on Wednesday, June 9th beginning at 8:00 AM, escorting the Special Olympics Maryland “Flame of Hope” from five (5) separate communities around the county to Westminster. There they will join together and officially present the Flame of Hope in a brief ceremony at noon at City Hall. This year there will also be a 2.5 mile walking leg, known as the “Torch Run Trek”, where Torch Runners can hike – rather than run - to demonstrate their support for Special Olympics. It is the duty of these Law Enforcement Torch Runners to ensure that the Flame is protected until it is delivered to the waiting hands of Special Olympics athletes on Friday, June 11th at the Opening Ceremony for the Special Olympic Maryland Summer Games held at Towson University, Towson Maryland.

This portion of the Torch Run Relay is part of the Central Leg, and Torch Run volunteers from the Maryland State Police, Sykesville PD, Hampstead PD, Manchester PD, Taneytown PD, Carroll County Sheriff’s Office, the McDaniel College Office of Campus Safety, Springfield Hospital Police, State Fire Marshal’s Office, Office of the State’s Attorney, Maryland Police Training Commission and Westminster PD will escort the flame through various municipalities around the County, eventually converging at McDaniel College and traveling in a unified “Final Leg” along Main Street to City Hall in Westminster. The law enforcement volunteers are raising funds in conjunction with the run by selling Torch Run T-shirts, holding events, and soliciting donations. *(See end of press release for details on each of the 6 legs).*

“We are proud to join our brother and sister law enforcement and correctional officers from around the world in demonstrating our support for these very special members of our community,” stated Chief Jeff Spaulding of the Westminster Police Department. “We are particularly pleased that we will be joined on each of our runs by Special Olympics athletes from right here in Carroll County. It is a great opportunity to further strengthen the long-standing relationship between law enforcement and Special Olympics that we enjoy in Maryland.” ***Chief Spaulding invites the community to attend a short ceremony at Westminster City Hall following the Final Leg during which the Special Olympics Athletes who participate as Torch Runners will be honored for their participation.***

Statewide, the Maryland Torch Run Relay consists of four different legs – Eastern, Western, Central and Southern – and during the week of June 7th to 11th, thousands of law enforcement 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 three (3) miles to the Summer Games Opening Ceremonies at Towson University. It is there that the “Flame of Hope” is handed off to Special Olympics athletes who

have the honor of lighting the cauldron and officially declaring the 2010 SOMD Summer Games open. Carroll County will be represented by Chief Jeff Spaulding and other members of the Westminster PD in the Final Leg on Friday, June 11th.

The *Maryland Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics* is a year-round movement whose goal is to raise both funds and public awareness for the athletes who train and compete in Special Olympics Maryland. When it began in 1986, only a handful of officers participated, raising about \$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, raising more than \$3.6 million for Special Olympics Maryland in 2009 – the largest single fund raising effort for Special Olympics in the world.

For more information about the Carroll County Torch Run Relay, or to support the Torch Run Relay by purchasing a commemorative Torch Run T-shirt for \$10, contact the Westminster Police Department at (410) 848-4646. For more information about Special Olympics Maryland and the 2010 Summer Games, contact Kelley Schniedwind at (410) 789-6677 x117 or visit www.somd.org.

THE CARROLL COUNTY TORCH RUN EVENT INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING LEGS:

Sykesville Leg – Members of the Maryland State Police, Maryland Police Training Commission, Sykesville PD, and the Springfield Hospital Police. Runners/bicyclists will depart Maryland Police Training Commission Training Facility @ 8:15 AM and travel north on Route 32, Johnsville Road, west on Liberty Road to Route 97, to McDaniel College.

Hampstead/Manchester Leg – Members of the Hampstead PD, and Manchester PD. Runners and bicyclists will depart Manchester PD @ 9:00 AM and travel south on Route 27 to McDaniel College.

Taneytown Leg – Members of the Taneytown Police Department, Office of the State Fire Marshall and the Carroll County Crisis Response Team. Runners/bicyclists will depart the Taneytown Bowling Center @ 9:00 AM and travel east on Route 140 to WMC Drive to McDaniel College.

Mt. Airy Leg – Members of the Maryland State Police. Runners/bicyclists will depart Mt. Airy @ 8:00 AM and travel north on Route 27 to McDaniel College.

Union Bridge/New Windsor Leg – Members of the Carroll County Sheriff's Office. Runners/bicyclists will depart the Union Bridge Fire Hall @ 9:00 AM and travel east through New Windsor on Route 31 to McDaniel College.

“Torch Run Trek” Leg – Members of numerous agencies in the Westminster area will depart the Carroll County Farm Museum (South Center Street in Westminster) at 9:30 AM and hike to McDaniel College via Green Street and Old New Windsor Road. After a rest stop at McDaniel College, the Trekkers will continue on to Westminster City Hall via Main Street and Longwell Avenue.

Final Leg – Includes all participating law enforcement agencies in Carroll County (see above) to include members of the McDaniel College Department of Campus Safety, Office of the State's Attorney and Westminster Police Department. Runners/bicyclists will depart McDaniel College @ noon and travel east along Main Street to City Hall where a Torch Run welcoming ceremony and celebration will take place.

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