



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Local law enforcement officer selected to carry the Flame of Hope for the 2017 Special Olympics World Games

A member of the Oak Bay Police Department will join an international team of law enforcement runners and Special Olympics athletes in Austria who will carry the Flame of Hope through communities and into the Opening Ceremony of the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games.

Constable Sheri Lucas is one of 123 law enforcement members chosen from around the world to participate in the 2017 World Games Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg. Constable Lucas will proudly represent the BC Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics as a Guardian of the Flame on the 2017 Austria World Games Final Leg Torch Run Team.

The LETR is a global movement that raises vital funds and awareness for Special Olympics. Since 1990, the BC Law Enforcement Torch Run have been dedicated supporters of SOBC with LETR members around the province leading a variety of fundraising events throughout the year, raising more than \$3 million to date. The Final Leg is the preeminent LETR event worldwide.

The 2017 Final Leg Team will begin in Bregenz, Austria, and embark on two different routes, running the Flame of Hope through 45 cities, towns, and communities across the country, honouring the spirit of Special Olympics and delivering a message of hope where people with intellectual disabilities continue to fight for acceptance and inclusion. The Final Leg Team will deliver the Flame of Hope to the Special Olympics World Games Opening Ceremony on March 18, 2017.

"I am very excited and feel extremely privileged to be representing both the Oak Bay Police Department and the BC LETR on the 2017 Final Leg Team," Constable Lucas said. "Throughout my interactions with Special Olympics athletes, I have learned about team spirit, determination, positive attitudes, friendship, and how all of these things can help overcome anything, both on and off a playing field. These men and women inspire me to be better in my own life and to not be so quick to judge. I am very grateful to be a Guardian of the Flame to help spread the Special Olympics message of inclusion."

The 2017 LETR Final Leg will take place from March 9 to 18. A team of 133 members, including 88 law enforcement runners, 10 Special Olympics athletes, and logistics personnel from 26 countries, will serve as Guardians of the Flame. SOBC – Coquitlam's Mandy Manzardo has been selected to be one of the 10 international athletes lacing up alongside the law enforcement members in Austria.

On June 18, 2016, Constable Lucas will join Greater Victoria law enforcement and Special Olympics athletes and supporters for the annual Victoria Torch Run along the Galloping Goose Trail, spreading a message of respect and inclusion and raising funds for Special Olympics BC.

Approximately 100 runners are expected to participate, including members of the Saanich Police Department, Central Saanich Police Service, Victoria Police Department, Oak Bay Police Department, and Military Police, along with Special Olympics athletes. The five-kilometre run, which starts at the Saanich Police Department and is followed by a pancake breakfast by donation. Members of the public are welcome to register and join in the run.

Victoria Torch Run

Date: Saturday, June 18, 2016

Start: 9 a.m. at the Saanich Police Department, 760 Vernon Ave., Victoria

Route: Five-kilometre run/walk along the Galloping Goose Trail followed by a pancake breakfast at 10 a.m.

More information on the BC LETR: <http://www.specialolympics.bc.ca/letr>

Twitter: @BCLETR

More information on the LETR: <http://www.lettr.org/>

More information on the Final Leg team: www.lettr-finalleg.org

About the Law Enforcement Torch Run

The Law Enforcement Torch Run was started in 1981 in Wichita, Kansas, by Police Chief Richard LaMunyon. Chief LaMunyon saw an urgent need to raise funds for and increase awareness of Special Olympics. He proposed the idea of police officers running in support of Special Olympics athletes, while raising financial contributions from fellow police officers, private individuals, and the business community.

From this modest beginning, the Law Enforcement Torch Run has developed into an inspiring international movement, with Torch Runs being held in more than 30 countries, including Canada. The LETR has raised more than \$500 million for Special Olympics programs around the world.

About the 2017 Austria Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg

The Final Leg tradition is for law enforcement officers, representing their country, province/state, and Torch Run program, to act as Guardians of the Flame and carry the Special Olympics Torch, the Flame of Hope, into the Opening Ceremony of the Special Olympics World Games. This Torch Run event is called the Final Leg because it represents the culmination of Torch Run events that have occurred previously throughout the World. The Torch Run Final Leg is not only a salute to the athletes from around the world who will compete in the World Games, but also an honour for the participating law enforcement officers who comprise the Torch Run Final Leg Team. The Olympic flame symbolizes the light of spirit, knowledge, and life; with identical power and majesty, the Special Olympics Flame of Hope symbolizes the courage and celebration of diversity the Special Olympics movement represents. The mission of the Final Leg is to create awareness and excitement for Special Olympics, support and attendance of the World Games, and involve, inspire, and motivate runners to increase their level of commitment to Special Olympics when they return to their local Programs.

The 2017 Final Leg will precede the Special Olympics World Games held in Schladming, Graz, and Ramsau, Austria. The Final Leg Team, 133 members strong, is comprised of law enforcement runners, Special Olympics athletes, and Logistics Team members from 44 provinces/states and 26 countries around the world representing 83 Torch Run programs. Final Leg runners were chosen for their dedication and commitment to the Law Enforcement Torch Run and Special Olympics by their respective Torch Run programs. For more information on the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg for the 2017 World Games, please contact Final Leg Committee Chairman and Team Captain John Newnan at final.leg@gmail.com.

About Special Olympics BC

Special Olympics BC is dedicated to providing individuals with intellectual disabilities opportunities to enrich their lives and celebrate personal achievement through positive sport experiences. In 57 communities around the province, we provide year-round training and competitive opportunities in 18 different sports to more than 4,400 athletes of all ages and abilities, thanks to the dedicated efforts of over 3,400 volunteers.

www.specialolympics.bc.ca

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