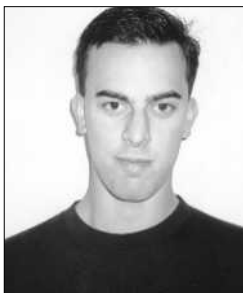


## ATHLETE RUNNERS

*"For great world athletes like those who enter the normal Olympic Games, the contest may only last minutes, then it is over and these men and women have won or lost. But for Special Olympics athletes, the contest can last a lifetime – the challenge begins anew each day. What you are winning by your courageous efforts is far greater than any game. You are winning life itself and, in doing so, you give others a most precious prize – faith in the unlimited possibilities of the human spirit."*

*Eunice Kennedy Shriver*



**JONATHAN LANE BLACKMON**  
**Special Olympics Texas, USA**

Hometown: Flower Mound, Texas  
 Years with Special Olympics: 10.5  
 Family: Mom Cheryl and lots of aunts and uncles  
 Hobbies: Playstation 2, running, NASCAR, other auto racing, broadcasting, sports, computers

**Awards:** 1999 World Games participant. Selected for two Area Games and one State Games Torch Run. Selected for two commercials for Special Olympics.

**Special Olympics Involvement:** Athletics, golf, swimming, basketball, triathlon, member of ALPs

**Favourite Torch Run Memory:** In May 2002, I was selected to run the last few miles of the Torch Run for the State Summer Games. It was a blast!

**Favourite Special Olympics Memory:** Winning the bronze medal for Team USA at the 1999 World Games and the whole experience of the World Games, plus making friends with a coach from Norway. (Bronze medal for 5,000m event)

**Proudest Achievement:** Becoming a Global Messenger. I can speak for Special Olympics. That's important! I can educate others about the abilities of the athletes.

**What involvement with Special Olympics has meant:** My family is very involved in Special Olympics. My mom is a board member and coach who organises our fundraising event — the golf classic. My uncle organised fundraising so I could attend the World Games. My family knows that Special Olympics is helping me to grow as a person.

**Looking forward to in Ireland:** I would like to meet the people of Ireland and meet other Special Olympics athletes from around the world.

**Reasons to support Special Olympics:** This gives the athletes an opportunity to compete and do better. It makes them feel successful.

**Inspired by officers:** The officers have made me proud and make me feel safe. That gives me hope for the world.

# ATHLETE RUNNER



## **KEVIN BROWN**

### **Special Olympics New York, USA**

Hometown: Albany, New York

Years with Special Olympics: 28

Family: Two brothers, two sisters

Hobbies: Working around the house, helping other athletes

**Awards:** Athlete of the Year, Special Olympics New York, 1992. Athlete of the Year, Area 10. Volunteer of the Year, Area 10. Represented Special Olympics New York in 1992 Presidential Inaugural Parade.

**Special Olympics Involvement:** Volleyball, basketball, Nordic skiing, bowling, softball, track and field. He is also a Global Messenger and helps whenever called.

**Favourite Torch Run Memory:** Running with the “Flame of Hope” at the 1999 Special Olympics New York Summer Games in Albany. “It made me feel special to represent my fellow athletes.”

**Favourite Special Olympics Memory:** Earning a gold medal in the relay at the 2001 World Winter Games Nordic Skiing competition with partners from other programmes.

**Proudest Achievement:** My World Games relay in 2001.

**What involvement with Special Olympics has meant:** “My parents, before they died, were very proud when I came home with my awards and medals.” Brown’s family came to see him accept his Special Olympics New York Athlete of the Year Award in 1992.

**Looking forward to in Ireland:** Meeting some of the other athletes from around the world and seeing the countryside and the buildings in Ireland.

**Reasons to support Special Olympics:** You should care because the athletes represent people with disabilities and we show people what we can do instead of sitting around. Look at what Special Olympics did for me.

**Inspired by officers:** Kevin said that knowing New York State Police (NYSP) Supt. James McMahan, NYSP Sgt. John Penney and NYSP Maj. Geoff Culkin, along with many other officers from Albany and the Capital District, inspires him to perform well in his sports because he wants to prove to them that he can run as far and as fast as they can. He proved it in the late 1990s when he ran with them in a local leg of the Torch Run.



**TONY GORCZYCA**

**Special Olympics Maryland, USA**

Hometown: Gaithersburg, Maryland

Years with Special Olympics: 28

Family: Cas and Daisy Gorczyca and five siblings

Hobbies: Running, biking, shooting pool, listening to police scanner

**Awards:** 2001 High Five Award, Special Friend Award

**Special Olympics Involvement:** Track and Field events as an athlete; learning to become a coach, and serving as a Board Member for Special Olympics Maryland.

**Favourite Torch Run Memory:** Two! First, the arrival of the Torch in North Carolina in 1999 - I was so excited! And second, Closing Ceremonies of the 2001 Summer Games in Maryland when I was supposed to run the Flame out of the gym, and it went out in my hand instead!

**Favourite Special Olympics Memory:** Winning a gold medal at the 1999 World Summer Games in North Carolina for the half-marathon. This was my proudest achievement, too.

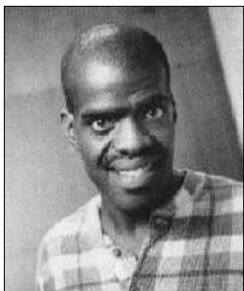
**What involvement with Special Olympics has meant:** Special Olympics, and especially the officers from Maryland's Torch Run have become like family. I feel good about myself because these nice people help me to be my best.

**Expectations for the Final Leg:** I would like to meet officers and people from other countries. I have never been to another country. I think it will be hard, fun and exciting. As a Special Olympics Maryland Board member, I hope to show that athletes can be leaders too!

**Looking forward to in Ireland:** Seeing all the athletes from different countries, trading pins with them. I also want to meet all the different police officers who will be at the Games.

**Reasons to support Special Olympics:** Because Special Olympics can help you. My best friends are athletes and friends are important to being happy. When you help people, you feel good about yourself.

**Inspired by officers:** The police in Maryland have been very nice to me. I collect patches and pins from all over the United States, and these nice Torch Run people remember that and give me gifts.



**DAVID HENDERSON**  
**Special Olympics Colorado, USA**

Hometown: Denver, Colorado  
 Years with Special Olympics: 8  
 Hobbies: Sports, helping others and his job at the Pepsi Center and Coors Field where he cooks hot dogs and hamburgers for sporting events. He also enjoys being a mentor to other athletes on his Special Olympics Colorado teams.

**Awards:** Denver Metro Area Male Athlete of the Year (2000). Henderson is one of Colorado's athletes who has not received a lot of recognition but is certainly deserving of such!

**Special Olympics Involvement:** While athletics (track and field) and basketball are his favourite sports, Henderson also participates in and enjoys floor hockey, volleyball and soccer. He will tell you that what he likes most about track and field is the challenge to run fast around the track (he participates in the 800m and is the anchor in the 4x100 relay), and furthermore, he likes the action involved in basketball.

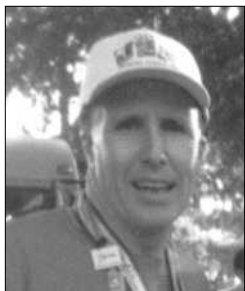
**Favourite Special Olympics Memory:** While many of our athletes are quick to remember a time when they won gold, Henderson remembers a time when he was able to help others and to be challenged himself. At this past Summer Classic, his softball team — the Red Devils — took third place, and even though his team won first place the year before, Henderson enjoyed being able to take new teammates under his wing this year to teach them the rules and basic skills of hitting and throwing the ball.

**What involvement with Special Olympics has meant:** Special Olympics has been wonderful to me. It's been good for me to be a part of this organisation, and it's helped to build my pride. I just love the Games. I enjoy the friendships I have gained from being involved and challenging other athletes to improve.

**Looking forward to in Ireland:** Henderson can't wait to watch athletes from other countries compete and to see how they are different from or similar to Special Olympics Colorado athletes.

**Inspired by officers:** There has been an officer who plays on Henderson's softball team who always challenges him to do his best. He has been inspired by this officer and his commitment to be a part of their team.

# ATHLETE RUNNER



## **DALE JONES**

### **Special Olympics Georgia, USA**

**Hometown:** Locust Grove, Georgia

**Family:** Lives with his mother, has four brothers and sisters, five nieces and nephews, two that live close by.

**Hobbies:** Special Olympics, listening to music, watching videos

**Awards:** In 1979, the first Special Olympics stamp was designed by Dale and signed by Eunice Kennedy Shriver. In 1983 he received a trophy at Central Illinois for the “Meet Olympian.” In 2000, he received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Henry County Board of Commissioners.

**Special Olympics Involvement:** Long-distance and medium-distance running.

**Favourite Torch Run Memory:** In 1994, running the Torch with the Fayetteville Police Department.

**Favourite Special Olympics Memory:** Going to the World Games in 1999 in North Carolina, training with the group of six runners and then getting a silver medal in the half-marathon.

**Proudest Achievement:** Taking the silver medal in the 1999 World Games.

### **What involvement with Special Olympics has meant:**

Special Olympics has given Jones the opportunity to participate in sports just like other boys and girls do in high school. He has been able to experience the thrill of being a winner, and it has taught him sportsmanship.

**Looking forward to in Ireland:** Meeting new people, seeing a foreign country. The sense of pride gained from this experience is something he will never forget in his lifetime.

**Reasons to support Special Olympics:** If it had never been established, people like Jones would probably still be shunned and ignored and treated with disrespect. Special Olympics gives him something to be proud of — to be recognised for in a small town of 1,200 people.

**Inspired by officers:** Chief Jesse Patton, hometown police chief and Ken Swanson, Captain, have given Jones a lot of respect and recognition and he is inspired by them as he doesn't have a father figure at home to relate to. The Mayor puts his name up on the marquee in front of city hall after his Special Olympics events.



**ROBERT JORDAN**  
**Special Olympics Ireland**

Hometown: Shillelagh, County Wicklow, Ireland  
 Years with Special Olympics: 10  
 Family: Father, mother, three brothers, two sisters  
 Hobbies: Running, cycling, swimming, indoor soccer, basketball, collecting model motorbikes

**Awards:** 2002 European Games, Hungary — gold, silver, bronze. 2002 National Games, Dublin — 3 silver 1500m, 3000m, and relay. 2001 Leinster Games, Dublin — 3 gold 800m, 1500m, relay.

**Special Olympics Involvement:** I compete at Local, National and International levels in athletics, swimming, basketball and indoor soccer.

**Favourite Torch Run Memory:** 2002 National Games in Dublin at the Opening Ceremonies.

**Favourite Special Olympics Memory:** Returning to Ireland having competed at the European Athletics Competition in Debrecen, Hungary in August 2001. Bringing home three medals — one gold, one silver, one bronze — for my country.

**What involvement with Special Olympics has meant:** It has made me a better person, more confident and very dedicated to my training. My family and the community are very proud of me. They honoured me with a “Person of the Year Award.”

**Expectations for the Final Leg:** I will be very proud as this will be the biggest sporting event in the world and the first time for the World Games to come out of the United States.

**Looking forward to in Ireland:** All the people of Ireland, my fellow athletes, my family and friends looking on as we arrive in Dublin.

**Reasons to support Special Olympics:** Even though I have a disability it is my way of showing that people with disabilities can do anything.

**Inspired by officers:** During the 2002 National Games I spent five days in Morton Stadium, Santry, where I had the opportunity to meet and talk with law enforcement officers. Before each of my events, the support and encouragement I got from these people gave me the courage to do my very best.



**MICHAEL QUINN**  
**Special Olympics Ireland**

Hometown: Coalislaw, Armagh,  
 Northern Ireland

Years with Special Olympics: 10

Family: His family lives in various  
 parts of the world, including  
 Australia and New Zealand

Hobbies: All types of sports,

especially athletics

**Awards:** Two gold medals and one bronze in the 2002 Dublin National Games.

**Special Olympics Involvement:** Meet up with athletes from Appleby Sec. to train in football and skiing; also on Regional Special Olympics Committee.

**Favourite Torch Run Memory:** Joined the Torch Run in Armagh in 1998 and 2002, also ran with Torch at the Opening Ceremonies of the National Games in 2002.

**Favourite Special Olympics Memory:** Winning gold in the 1500m and 3000m and bronze in the 4x4 relay.

**Proudest Achievement:** Joining the regional committee and then winning gold medals.

**What involvement with Special Olympics has meant:** Top of the world. Traveling to new places. Making new friends.

**Expectations for the Final Leg:** Proud of myself and as an athlete, trained hard to get where I am now. Proud to represent my country.

**Looking forward to in Ireland:** Live in Northern Ireland, looking forward to meeting people from all over the world.

**Reasons to support Special Olympics:** Proving to other people that people with a disability can achieve great goals, many of whom could not run a half-marathon!

**Inspired by officers:** Has run with the police in Northern Ireland and the Garda in Ireland. Also has done outdoor pursuits with local community police.

# ATHLETE RUNNER



**RYAN A. SINATRA**  
**Special Olympics New Mexico,  
USA**

Hometown: Albuquerque, New Mexico

Years with Special Olympics: 12

Family: Dad Kenn, mom Denise, brother Deren

Hobbies: Sports, biking, sports card collecting

**Awards:** 2001 Special Olympics New Mexico Athlete of the Year, Global Messenger

**Special Olympics Involvement:** Golf, softball, basketball, poly hockey, volleyball, biking and track and field

**Favourite Special Olympics Memory:** Being named the 2001 Special Olympics New Mexico Athlete of the Year.

**Favourite Torch Run Memory:** My dad is a retired police officer and I have been running in Torch Runs forever. Every time I carry the Torch, I am thrilled. Officers are my heroes.

**Proudest Achievement:** Lighting the cauldron after running in the State Summer Games Opening Ceremonies with the Torch Run.

**What involvement with Special Olympics has meant:** It is the best part of my life. I have met all my friends and coaches through Special Olympics, and look forward to all the practices and events.

**Expectations for the Final Leg:** To make my coach, Gerald Sandoval, my family and all the Special Olympics staff and athletes proud.

**Looking forward to in Ireland:** Running with the police officers.

**Reasons to support Special Olympics:** Special Olympics gives me and other people a chance to compete in sports, make friends and be a winner just for doing our best.

**Inspired by officers:** My coach and his whole family are the best. They do everything for us. Gerald even stayed on top of a Wal-Mart to raise money. He runs, bikes and does sports and is my best friend.

# ATHLETE RUNNER



## **SAMUEL A. STILLINGS**

### **Special Olympics Minnesota, USA**

Hometown: Owatonna, Minnesota

Years with Special Olympics: 18

Family: Parents, one brother, two sisters

Hobbies: Stillings is an avid sports enthusiast, computer “geek” and coin collector

**Awards:** 1995 Special Olympics Minnesota Male Athlete of the Year; appeared on Wheaties box. 1991 World Games silver medal in aquatics. 1995 World Games silver medal in athletics pentathlon. 1999 World Games silver medal in table tennis. 2002, one of five Minnesota athletes who attended ALPs in Atlanta.

**Special Olympics Involvement:** Stillings joined Special Olympics in 1984 in Wisconsin and later moved to Georgia, then to Minnesota and has participated in aquatics, athletics, softball, basketball, bowling and table tennis. He is involved in the Athlete Leadership Programme as a Global Messenger and assistant coach. Stillings attended two Athlete Congresses in Minnesota, and is a true athlete leader in the state.

**Favourite Special Olympics Memory:** The 1995 World Summer Games in New Haven, Connecticut, when he ran and won the 400m leg of the pentathlon.

**Proudest Achievement:** Sam has several: 1995 Special Olympics Minnesota Male Athlete of the Year, being on a Wheaties box, three World Games, volunteering at the 1997 World Games in Toronto, being in Special Olympics Minnesota’s ALPs programme as one of the core group of leaders.

**What involvement with Special Olympics has meant:** Lifelong experience for Sam and his family — traveling, meeting people from around the world, making new friends, achieving personal bests, becoming an athlete leader.

**Reasons to support Special Olympics:** The chance to become a leader, to build self-confidence and become a contributing member of the community.

**Inspired by officers:** Rodney Seurer shows that a law enforcement officer can protect and serve and be a leader for the Minnesota Torch Run, bringing new funds to Special Olympics Minnesota. He is helping to keep the “Flame of Hope” burning in Minnesota.



**SAVVAS VIKELIS**  
**Special Olympics Greece**

Hometown: Athens, Greece  
 Years with Special Olympics: 17  
 Family: He lives with his parents and is single  
 Hobbies: Swimming, fishing, music, participating in any athletic event

**Awards:** Gold medalist in 1991 Special Olympics World Summer Games, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA in the half-marathon.

**Special Olympics Involvement:** He participates in the Torch Lighting Ceremony as a Torch Runner. He participated in events as an athlete in the Special Olympics Hellas Games.

**Favourite Torch Run Memory:** During the Torch Lighting Ceremony in February 1993 for the Special Olympics World Winter Games, I was the first Torch Runner to take the Torch from the Sacred Place of Pnyx where the traditional “Flame of Hope” is lit.

**Favourite Special Olympics Memory:** When I won the half-marathon in the 1991 Special Olympics World Games in Minneapolis.

**Proudest Achievement:** I became the gold medalist in the World Games (first division) and from that I became famous, and helped other athletes participate in Special Olympics.

**Expectations for the Final Leg:** Everybody must know that the Torch Run means peace. This idea started many years ago in Greece. Now, police officers from all over the world promote this ideal. This really is a noble target.

**Reasons to support Special Olympics:** Because it offered me many opportunities in my life. I became a productive, happy person. We have to support the programme in order to offer happiness to more and more athletes.

**Inspired by officers:** John Carapanagos started and supported the Special Olympics Torch Run in Athens. Now the headquarters of the Hellenic Police are our sponsors. Those respected law enforcement officers offer humanity lessons to the community. Special Olympics athletes feel protected and accepted as equals (we run side by side). That is the best!