

# Media Release

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## **First ever Delaware Memorial Bridge Run to Acceptance for Special Olympics raises awareness, financial support**

New Castle, Del. – On Sunday, October 1 at exactly 7:00 a.m., with three of the four lanes on the northbound span of the Delaware Memorial Bridge closed, more than 225 men and women from several neighboring states did what nobody has done before – they embarked on a 5k run across the bridge.

"What a tremendous event," said Tom Cook, Executive Director of the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA). "Our police administrator, Col. Rick Arroyo, is a passionate supporter of Special Olympics Delaware and has been advocating for this special event for a few years. It's a great day for Special Olympics Delaware and, more importantly, a great day for the beneficiaries of Special Olympics Delaware."

More than \$34,000 was raised for Special Olympics Delaware, a nonprofit that provides sports training and competition opportunities for more than 4,200 children and adults with intellectual disabilities. For some of the runners, it was an opportunity to support an event that raises money for the very cause that has given so much to their own family.

"Special Olympics has been a vital part of our family's life for over 15 years," said Kim Bates, whose son participates year-round in the program. "Special Olympics has provided Justin with incredible opportunities through sports, camps and attending the 2018 USA Games in Seattle. All of this wouldn't be possible without the financial support of the community, especially our first responders who ran today to promote acceptance for Special Olympics Delaware athletes."

In addition to the outpouring of support from the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA), key contributors to and sponsors of the event included Delaware Law Enforcement for Special Olympics, M&T Bank, Larkins Bus Services, Emergency Medical Service, the Delaware Air National Guard, and a host of law enforcement and fire officials from several agencies across the First State who volunteered to ensure the safety of all involved.

"A unique first-time event of this magnitude could never have happened without the complete support of the DRBA," said Ann Grunert, Executive Director of Special Olympics Delaware. "It was because of their desire to make this event a success that so many others got on board to help us achieve our goals of

creating awareness of the abilities of people with intellectual disabilities, raising funds to reach more athletes, and providing the first responders of our community with the exclusive opportunity to be part of this first-time event.”

This first event on the bridge was limited to active and retired first responders as officials worked through the safety and logistical details involved with organizing and executing an event of this stature for the first time. Colonel Richard Arroyo, Police Administrator of the DRBA, was pleased with the results.

“It was an honor to work with all the volunteers who made this historic run such a success,” Arroyo said. “I want to thank our Commissioners, Executive Director Tom Cook and his Senior Staff for permitting this first-time event to take place. Special Olympics Delaware is a great organization and this event will benefit thousands of people with intellectual disabilities.”

#### **Radio read**

Today/yesterday, more than 225 runners participated in the first ever Delaware Memorial Bridge Run to Acceptance for Special Olympics. The 5k race from New Jersey to Delaware took place across the northbound span of the bridge and is the first public event ever held on the structure. It raised more than \$34,000 for Special Olympics Delaware, which provides sports training and competition for more than four-thousand two-hundred children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

#### **About Special Olympics Delaware**

Special Olympics Delaware has been changing the lives of Delawareans since 1971. Through sports training and competition in 19 sports, more than 4,200 athletes with intellectual disabilities have proven that, given the chance, no disability is too great to overcome. Using sports as a platform, Special Olympics strives for acceptance of all people, regardless of ability, not only on the playing fields, but in their local communities.

#### **About the Delaware River and Bay Authority**

The DRBA, a bi-state governmental agency created by Compact in 1962, owns and operates the Delaware Memorial Bridge, the Cape May- Lewes Ferry, and the Forts Ferry Crossing. The DRBA also manages corporate and aviation properties through its economic development powers - two airports in New Jersey (Millville Airport and Cape May Airport) and three in Delaware (New Castle Airport, Civil Air Terminal and Delaware Airpark). All DRBA operating revenues are generated through the bridge, ferry and airport facilities. For more information, please visit [www.drba.net](http://www.drba.net).

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