



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

January 3, 2018

Media Contact:

Crystal Yamasaki

(808) 389-2890

crystalclearcomms@gmail.com

Hawai'i Athletes Prepare for 2018 Special Olympics USA Games

The 20 athletes from across Hawai'i are training now to compete at the national competition in Seattle, WA this July

HONOLULU – Special Olympics Hawai'i athletes from O'ahu, Kauai, Maui and the Hawai'i Island are training for the chance of a lifetime. The 22 representatives (including 20 athletes and two Unified Champion School students) are preparing to represent Hawai'i at the 2018 Special Olympics USA Games taking place July 1- 6, 2018, in Seattle, WA. The athletes will join more than 4,000 Special Olympics athletes and coaches from across the country to compete in soccer, track and field, and basketball.

The cost to send one individual to the USA Games is more than \$1,900. Special Olympics Hawai'i is accepting tax-deductible donations to defray expenses at www.sohawaii.org and has also launched a campaign asking supporters to [donate their HawaiianMiles](#) to Special Olympics Hawai'i to help reduce the cost of transportation.

“Special Olympics Hawai'i is excited to send one of our largest contingencies of island athletes to represent our state at the USA Games. These athletes and coaches work so hard throughout the year and it's thrilling to see their commitment pay off,” said Nancy Bottelo, Special Olympics Hawai'i president and CEO. “The cost to cover transportation and accommodation will be significant. We are asking the community to help our athletes realize their dreams to compete on a national level by making a tax-deductible donation.”

Athletes were selected from amongst 3,400 participants statewide. Those representing Special Olympics Hawai'i include:

O'ahu 'Terminators' Soccer Team

- Kyle Burkhart
- Kyson Cadium
- DeSean DesJardins
- Sol Ray Duncan
- Nicole Kelly
- Renee Manfredi
- Brandon Nakata
- Rell Romero

Coaches: Danny Vasconcellos, Jr and Katherine Eum

Kaua'i Track & Field Team

- Kobe Iglesia
- Archie Lanning
- Divine Navalta
- Billie Jean Waiwaiole

Coach: Tamarine Carvalho

Maui High School (participating in Youth Leadership Experience)

- Britney Bautista
- Sidney Tanaka

Hawai'i Island Honokaa Basketball Team

- Gilbert Acosta
- Whitney Alameida
- Bernaldo Cabulizan
- Sean Conley
- John Joseph DeHerrera
- Isaiah De Luz
- Michael Mitts
- Greg Villafuerte Jr.

Coaches: Duane De Luz and Sheila De Luz

Also representing Hawai'i at the 2018 Special Olympics USA Games is Officer Tyler Prokopec with the Hawaii Police Department. He will join an elite group of individuals who will serve as the "Guardians of the Flame" and escort the Special Olympics Flame of Hope on a journey across Washington state. Since the first Special Olympics USA Games in 2006, members of law enforcement and Special Olympics athletes from across the United States have carried the Flame of Hope in the LETR Final Leg to usher the start of the national competition.

The 2018 Special Olympics USA Games shares the mission of Special Olympics by highlighting the abilities of athletes with intellectual disabilities, while promoting

acceptance and inclusion through sports. Athletes will compete in 14 Olympic-type team and individual sports before tens of thousands of spectators and volunteers.

For more information on the Special Olympics 2018 USA Games and how to donate to Special Olympics Hawai'i, please contact 808-695-3524 or visit www.sohawaii.org. Also, follow Special Olympics Hawai'i on Twitter at www.twitter.com/sohawaii, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsHawaii, and on Instagram at www.instagram.com/sohawaii.

About Special Olympics Hawai'i

Special Olympics unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports every day in Hawai'i. Through work in sports, health education and community building, Special Olympics is addressing inactivity, injustice, intolerance and social isolation by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities which leads to a more welcoming and inclusive society.

Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Special Olympics Hawai'i has grown from a handful of athletes to more than 4,700 participants across the state. With the support of more than 11,500 coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics is able to deliver 10 Olympic-type sports and more than 45 competitions throughout the year. There is never a fee for any athlete or family to participate in Special Olympics programs. For more information on Special Olympics Hawai'i, please visit www.sohawaii.org.

###