



Special Olympics
Missouri

PRESS RELEASE

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Local athletes and coaches selected to represent Missouri at 2010 Special Olympics National Games in Nebraska

(Lee's Summit, MO) The Special Olympics USA National Games will be held July 18-23, 2010. In the heart of the competition in Lincoln, Neb., will be Missouri's own delegation of more than 160 athletes and coaches. Team Missouri athletes will compete individually in aquatics, track and field, bocce, bowling, golf, powerlifting and tennis, and the delegation will also include five teams in basketball, flag football, softball and volleyball.

Team Missouri will travel to Lincoln to make some *MO Magic*, along with 51 other delegations from the United States. More than 3,000 athletes are expected to compete at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the surrounding communities. More than 1,000 coaches are expected and an estimated 8,000 volunteers will be needed.

Right here in our own backyard is local Team Missouri delegate and Lee's Summit North Student, Jennifer Neihouse, who will compete in Track and Field. Jennifer has been competing in Special Olympics with the Lee's Summit school district for 7 years. She is a dedicated athlete who has won many honors including Channel 9 / Hy Vee Special Athlete of the Week and runner up for Ms. SOMO basketball. She is also committed to the Lee's Summit North High School girls' varsity basketball team as their manager. Jennifer worked very hard to secure her place on Team Missouri. She attended a week long sports selection camp and is now training rigorously for her events in the 200 meter run, shot put, running long jump and alternate on the 4 x 100 meter relay.

For Special Olympics athletes, participation in a national event like this means greater self-confidence, a more positive self-image, an enormous amount of pride and the opportunity to create lifelong memories. Standing on the awards stand to receive a medal alongside athletes from all across the nation is truly a moment that they have only dreamed of.

The cost to send Team Missouri to Special Olympics National Games is approximately \$165,000. This will cover training, transportation, uniforms, meals, equipment, housing and other costs associated with competition. We are seeking businesses, organizations and individuals who want to "*Feel the MO Magic*" and support this group of world-class athletes and coaches. Each delegate is trying to raise at least \$1,000. Support Jennifer Neihouse's fundraising efforts by visiting www.somo.org/jenniferneihouse, where you can make a donation online through Special Olympics Missouri's secure system. For information, contact Jeremie Ballinger, ballinger@somo.org 913-789-0332 or visit the Special Olympics website, www.somo.org/teammissouri.

Special Olympics Missouri is a year-round program of sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with mental disabilities. More than 15,000 athletes participate in 21 Olympic-type sports throughout the state. Special Olympics provides people with mental disabilities continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, and experience joy as they participate in the sharing of gifts and friendship with their fellow athletes, their family and friends, and communities across Missouri.

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