

# WHAT IS THE VIRGINIA LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN?



Each year, law enforcement officers from across the state raise money for Special Olympics Virginia (SOVA) by conducting the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics. Since 1987, when the Virginia Law Enforcement Torch Run began, it has grown consistently every year. In 2010, law enforcement officials raised over \$825,000! Through the efforts of you and thousands of other officers and Department of Corrections officials, the Virginia Law Enforcement Torch Run has contributed more than \$12 million to Special Olympics athletes in Virginia since its inception.

## How it Works

The VA Torch Run (VALETR) involves more than 4,000 law enforcement officers from over 300 agencies who take part in a 2,000 mile, 8 day torch relay to pass the Special Olympics "Flame of Hope" across Virginia. All of the relays will converge in Richmond in June for the lighting of the cauldron during the SOVA Summer Games Opening Ceremonies.

## The History

The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics, the largest grassroots fundraising program benefiting Special Olympics, began in 1981 when Wichita, Kansas Police Chief Richard LaMunyon saw an urgent need to raise funds for and increase awareness of Special Olympics.

The idea for the Torch Run was to provide local law enforcement officers with an opportunity to volunteer with Special Olympics in the communities where the officers lived and worked. After three years of successful runs in Kansas, Chief LaMunyon presented his idea to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which endorsed Special Olympics as its official charity through the Torch Run. Today, all 50 states and over 40 countries have their own versions of the Torch Run. In Virginia, the first Torch Run was organized in 1986 when relays were run from Northern Virginia, Harrisonburg, and Tidewater to Richmond to the University of Richmond, site of the SOVA Summer Games. Today, the Torch Run has grown into the most important fundraising effort of Special Olympics Virginia. Since its inception, the Torch Run has continued to reach new records in fundraising efforts every year. Currently, the VA Torch Run is recognized as one of the top ten fundraising Torch Run Programs in the World. Along with being the premier fundraising event for SOVA, it is also the most visible event in Special Olympics.

The Virginia Law Enforcement Torch Run is presented by SunTrust and Enterprise and is organized by the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, the Virginia Sheriff's Association, the Virginia Department of Corrections, and the Virginia Association of Regional Jails.

**If you would like more information about how you can get involved with the Law Enforcement Torch Run, please visit [www.torchrunva.com](http://www.torchrunva.com)**

