



**Special
Olympics**
British Columbia



VPD generosity supported 130 athletes competing in 2013 SOBC Summer Games

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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When asked to help give Special Olympics BC athletes the life-changing experience of competing in the 2013 SOBC Summer Games, Vancouver Police Department members went beyond the call without hesitation and donated generously to provide the opportunity to 130 athletes.

Three hundred and seventy one VPD members donated overtime hours totalling just under \$45,000 in donations, supporting 90 athletes participating in the 2013 Special Olympics BC Summer Games. Held in Langley July 11 to 14, the 2013 Provincial Games were the largest in SOBC's history.

VPD members also sought community donations and fundraising to bring the VPD's total support to \$64,793, funding 130 athletes to compete in Langley.

At Special Olympics Games, athletes with intellectual disabilities take centre stage and amaze everyone with their achievements, sportsmanship, determination, and joy. Their confidence grows as they compete with pride and are cheered on by their teams, families, friends, and communities. They forge new friendships and bring home memories that last a lifetime.

In Langley, more than 1,100 athletes with intellectual disabilities from all over the province and the Yukon competed in 11 summer sports, and nearly 600 medals were awarded as the participants put on a stirring display of the Special Olympics spirit of true sportsmanship, inclusion, inspiration, and joy. The athletes were also competing for the opportunity to qualify for their provincial and territorial teams for the 2014 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games, which will be a significant event in Vancouver next July.

In 2012, more than 340 VPD members gave over 1,220 overtime hours, totalling \$36,675 in donations, to help SOBC's Team BC compete in the 2012 Special Olympics National Games in St. Albert, Alberta. In 2011, VPD members turned their overtime hours into \$24,500 worth of donations to help athletes compete in the 2011 SOBC Winter Sport Championships.

VPD members have long supported Special Olympics through the BC Law Enforcement Torch Run, giving their time and support to initiatives such as the annual Torch Run and volunteering at SOBC events. More than 30 VPD members currently volunteer their time to lead and coach the SOBC – Vancouver Club Fit program, where athletes build their fitness and are having tons of fun learning from their police department friends.

This year also saw VPD Staff Sergeant Joanne Wild, a longtime LETR volunteer, take part in the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg that led into the 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games in the Republic of Korea, raising awareness for Special Olympics and creating excitement for the World Games in the host country.

"It's so meaningful to be involved in the Special Olympics movement because the athletes themselves are so special and remarkable, and because of the way they make us feel when we have the honour of

working with them and helping them reach their goals,” said VPD Superintendent Dean Robinson, member of the BC LETR Executive Committee. “It is their spirit, their determination and courage, and their heart-melting smiles that lift those of in law enforcement who are lucky enough to join them in their quest for gold. We are so pleased to be able to contribute to their success, and in many ways they are actually the ones who are helping us.”

“We are so grateful to the members of the Vancouver Police Department who do so much to support Special Olympics athletes and programs,” said SOBC Chair Pamela Keith. “Your willingness to go beyond the call to help others is inspiring, and the friendship and respect you show to Special Olympics athletes does so much to make our communities more respectful and inclusive.”

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About Special Olympics BC:

Special Olympics BC is dedicated to providing individuals with intellectual disabilities opportunities to enrich their lives and celebrate personal achievement through positive sport experiences. In 55 communities around the province, we provide year-round training and competitive opportunities in 18 different sports to more than 4,200 athletes of all ages and abilities, thanks to the dedicated efforts of over 3,200 volunteers. For more information, please visit www.specialolympics.bc.ca. Find us on Facebook and Twitter: www.facebook.com/specialolympicsbc / @sobcsociety.

For more information and interview opportunities, please contact:

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