



**Special
Olympics**
British Columbia



VPD support gave 34 athletes opportunity to compete in Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games

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When the Special Olympics Canada Games came to B.C. for the first time in 24 years, the Vancouver Police Department played a significant part in supporting this inspiring event and giving local athletes the opportunity to compete.

The Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games were held in Vancouver July 8 to 12, involving 1,300 athletes with intellectual disabilities from across Canada going for gold in 11 summer sports. To support Team BC 2014, 290 VPD members donated overtime hours totalling \$34,500 in donations, which gave 34 athletes the empowering experience of competing in the National Games in their home province.

At the National Games in Vancouver, the athletes were competing for pride, personal bests, and podium finishes, as well as the opportunity to advance to the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles. Among the athletes drafted by the VPD were members of the Team BC basketball squad that qualified to go on to the World Games, becoming the first Special Olympics Team Canada basketball team. Basketball, bocce, and golf made their Special Olympics Canada Games debut in Vancouver.

In addition to the financial support, VPD members came out in droves to take part of the Vancouver section of the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg that carried the Flame of Hope throughout the Lower Mainland and into the 2014 National Games Opening Ceremony, and the Vancouver Police Foundation sponsored the local leg.

The LETR Final Leg raised awareness for Special Olympics and the 2014 National Games, and demonstrated the relationship of respect and caring between law enforcement members and Special Olympics that plays such an important part in encouraging Special Olympics athletes and changing perspectives on individuals with intellectual disabilities and all that they can do.

VPD members have long supported Special Olympics through the BC Law Enforcement Torch Run movement, giving their time and support to initiatives such as the annual Torch Run and volunteering at SOBC events. Since 2011, VPD members have been donating their overtime hours to give Special Olympics athletes the chance to compete in Provincial and National Games, turning the hours into donations totalling just over \$140,000.

"When asked where the reward comes from by being involved in Special Olympics or Law Enforcement Torch Run, I answer that it comes in part from both those entities, but almost entirely from the contact with the extraordinary people who are the athletes of Special Olympics and who the Law Enforcement Torch Run is designed to fundraise for and support. These athletes are unwavering and relentless in their commitment to many things that include their pursuit of excellence in their sport, being committed to each other as teammates or competitors, in fair play, being committed to Special Olympics and perhaps most importantly to being great citizens," retired Supt. Dean Robinson says. "In a sporting sense, when it comes to effort and an attempt to master their sport, the athletes always give it all they have and leave nothing on the table."

“The members of the Vancouver Police Department give so generously of their time and donations to support Special Olympics. Their long-standing dedication to helping Special Olympics athletes sets an inspiring example and truly makes a difference in the lives of our athletes and in this community,” said Special Olympics BC President & CEO Dan Howe.

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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 57 communities around the province, we provide year-round training and competitive opportunities in 18 different sports and youth programs to more than 4,300 athletes of all ages, thanks to the dedicated efforts of over 3,300 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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Involved in Nov. 25 photo opportunity:

Retired VPD Superintendent Dean Robinson
SOBC President & CEO Dan Howe
SOBC – Vancouver athletes Shane Carr and Annabelle Davis*
**Both athletes have qualified to be part of Special Olympics Team Canada 2015 – Carr in basketball, Davis in 10-pin bowling*