

## Special Olympics Torch Run boosts moral, lifts spirits

Written by By Boderra Joe Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 25 May 2018 07:06

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### Area law enforcement personnel ORGANIZE EVENT

This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> year Special Olympics Torch Run across the United States and on May 14, the torch passed through Gallup.

Judith Goins, co-coordinator of the event and McKinley County's Sheriff's investigation administrative assistant/sex offender and tracking, said the Gallup Police Department was originally in charge coordinating the event, but recently, Goins and Merle Bates, chief investigator, took the reins.

"We took over," Goins said. "What it involves is law enforcement across New Mexico ... law enforcement brings the torch from the four corners of New Mexico and we meet in Albuquerque."

### TEAMING UP

Officers and staff from the McKinley County Sheriff's Office, New Mexico State Police, Navajo Nation Police Department, Ramah Police Department, Zuni Police Department, White Cliffs Volunteer Fire Department and the District Attorney's Office participated in fundraising for the Special Olympics by selling T-shirts, plush dogs, challenged coins, and pins.

Participants walked from the sheriff's office to the Courthouse downtown, and from there ran to

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the New Mexico State Police office east of Gallup. Next they biked into Grants to transfer the torch to the law enforcement agencies there and so on.

“We had 30 participants total this year,” Goins said. The most they had this year than previous years.

For the past two years, Goins said they invited the participants that are actually going to participate in the New Mexico Special Olympics in the area to join in the walk and run.

“They were really excited,” she said.

Goins added by inviting participants was a way to acknowledge them and say, “Hey, these are our people. This is who we are going to root and cheer on.”

### **FUNDRAISING, RAISING AWARENESS**

Some other tasks law enforcement tackle besides fighting crime, they also raise funds for the Special Olympics by selling items.

“We want to do more next year,” Goins said.

Given that law enforcement is short-handed sometimes, Goins said she hopes when the staff increases, those coordinating and participating in the torch run can have their shifts covered and raise some more funds for the cause.

An idea for fundraising is “tip a cop,” where a police officer serves your food at a restaurant and receives tips from diners. Those tips then get placed in the Special Olympics Torch Run event fund.

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“We’ve raised roughly around \$1,000,” Goins said.

The Special Olympics Torch Run is held every year around the same time, first week of May or second week.

### **PASS IT ON**

Goins said if the community wants to get involved, she encourages those to purchase either a T-shirt, plush dog, challenge coin or pins to help fund raise to continue the Special Olympics.

She would also like to thank Car Quest for transferring items store to store to avoid shipping fees when getting the items to Gallup, which helps a lot when fund raising money.

“Kudos to them,” Goins said. “Every year they do that and it’s all for Special Olympics and it’s pretty neat that they do that.”

***For more information, contact Judith Goins at (505) 722-8514***

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