



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Mandy Murphy
Special Olympics Inc.
mamurphy@specialolympics.org
+1 (202)-824-0227

Martha Jo Braycich
Special Olympics Europe-Eurasia
MBraycich@specialolympics.org
+32 (2) 538 80 68

Special Olympics Awarded U.S. Department of State Grant

Coaching Fellowship Program Builds Opportunities between the United States, Serbia, and Montenegro to Benefit People with Intellectual Disabilities

Washington, D.C., 21 December 2011—Special Olympics has been awarded a two-year grant from the U.S. Department of State to support a coaching fellowship to recruit and train high level Special Olympics coaches and leaders from the United States, Serbia, and Montenegro. A total of 20 fellows from the United States, Serbia, and Montenegro will participate in various 10-day workshops focused on recruiting and training high-level coaches and adapting their skills to work with athletes with intellectual disabilities to compete in soccer (football) and volleyball. The program is funded through an International Sports Programming Initiative grant from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.

“We are thankful to the U.S. Department of State for awarding Special Olympics this grant,” said Lee Todd, Chief of Sports Training and Competition for Special Olympics. “We pride ourselves in providing the best training possible to all of our athletes and with this grant we will expand our coaching base in Europe and the United States, which will mean more quality training for our athletes.”

Beginning on December 21st, 2011, the fellowship program will be accepting qualified applicants for the first class of the program at www.specialolympics.org (insert specific page URL).

During the first year of the project, five American, three Serbian, and two Montenegrin Fellows will spend 10 days in Serbia and 10 days in Louisville, Kentucky observing major sporting events and taking part in classroom trainings and practicum led by Special Olympics staff and experts in the sports of volleyball and soccer (football). In the program’s second year, participants will spend 10 days in Serbia and Montenegro, then will travel to the United States. They will spend five days in Washington, D.C. and five days in Villanova, Pennsylvania. All 20 Fellows from the two exchanges will be required to complete a six-month fellowship project.

Special Olympics Serbia was founded in 2002 and has 11,595 athletes and 121 coaches. It offers 10 national and 60 local competitions annually in nine sports. Special Olympics Montenegro is one of Special Olympics newest European Programs, founded in 2007, focused on growing beyond its population of 280 athletes and 24 coaches. It offers 12 competitions annually in six sports. Special Olympics Programs reach less than five percent of people with intellectual disabilities in both Serbia and Montenegro.

About Special Olympics

Special Olympics is an international organization that changes lives through the power of sport by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities, promoting acceptance for all, and fostering communities of understanding and respect worldwide. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown from a few hundred athletes to more than 3.7 million athletes in over 170 countries in all regions of the world, providing year-round sports training, athletic competition and other related programs. Special Olympics now take place every day, changing the lives



of people with intellectual disabilities all over the world, from community playgrounds and ball fields in every small neighborhood's backyard to World Games. Special Olympics provides people with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, and experience joy and friendship. Visit Special Olympics at www.specialolympics.org. Engage with us on: [Twitter @specialolympics](https://twitter.com/specialolympics); fb.com/specialolympics; youtube.com/specialolympicshq, and specialolympicsblog.wordpress.com.

About the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' SportsUnited Division – The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' [SportsUnited](#) Division leads the U.S. Department of State's international exchange efforts to bring the global community together through sports. Under its International Sports Programming Initiative, public and private U.S. based non-profit organizations, 501(c)(3), may submit proposals to address one of four themes: Youth Sports Management, Training Sports Coaches, Sport and Disability, and Sport and Health. Since 2002, the office has awarded 77 grants to U.S. non-profits to conduct programs in 52 countries around the world.

###