



Special Olympics
Wisconsin
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Burlington Athlete Qualifies for Special Olympics World Summer Games in Greece

Madison- Special Olympics athlete Christopher Mark, age 17 of Burlington, was recently selected to compete at the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens, Greece to be held June 25-July 4, 2011. Team USA includes athletes and coaches from all 50 states and 185 countries, including Mark who is one of two Wisconsin athletes. He will compete in track and field in the 200m, 100m and long jump.

Mark has been involved in Special Olympics nearly three years. Outside of Special Olympics, which is his favorite past time due to sports, he enjoys art, truck pulling, driving tractors and camping. "It [Special Olympics] has given me the opportunity to be involved in sports and be recognized," said Mark, "and it makes me feel great that I can do what all other kids do." Honors include the "perfect attendance" award for five years straight in school, as well as being on the honor role and serving as a mentor for incoming freshman at his high school.

Mark's mother admitted that this trip is well deserved for Mark. "I couldn't ask for a better son, as he has always demonstrated good sportsmanship and always thinks of his team members and how they can excel as a team." She added that Mark even cooks on the side, having dinner ready at night and enjoys doing lawn work and garden maintenance without being asked!

The 2011 World Summer Games are expected to draw more than 7,500 athletes from around the world, as well as tens of thousands of volunteers, event officials, coaches, families, spectators and media representatives from around the world. The Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens will be the largest sporting event in the world in 2011 featuring 22 Olympic-type sports!

Dennis Alldridge, President of Special Olympics Wisconsin added, "Athens provides outstanding venues and demonstrates the knowledge, understanding and excitement around our athletes, the goals of the movement and the overall experience expected from a World Games event." Olympic organizers chose Athens as the Games host with its ancient tradition of sports excellence as the city is working overtime to provide an outstanding global platform to showcase the courage, dedication and talents of the athletes of Special Olympics.

Thank you to Kwik Trip and the Law Enforcement Torch Run, the Mission Partners of SOWI, enabling the organization to hold nearly 80 competitions and five state tournaments per year. SOWI provides year-round training and competition opportunities through 18 different Olympic-type sports for nearly 10,000 individuals with cognitive disabilities. Join our online community by following us on Twitter and Facebook! For more information, visit SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org or call (800) 552-1324 or visit www.athens2011.org for World Games specifics.

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To obtain photos or an interview with the delegation attending World Games, please contact Kelly Klopping at 608-442-5662.