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MAKING A DIFFERENCE AWARDS ANNOUNCED SPECIAL OLYMPICS KANSAS RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING SERVICE

Mission, Ks – Special Olympics Kansas (SOKS) has announced Making A Difference Awards for 2014.

- ❖ Family of Year – Family of Sean McMahon, Lenexa, KS
- ❖ Business of Year – Carter Energy, Overland Park, KS
- ❖ Coach of the Year – Rose Simon, Wichita Independents, Wichita, KS
- ❖ Event Volunteers of Year – Dave & Kris Heinemann, Topeka, KS
- ❖ Program Volunteer of Year – Det. Kristi Powell, Topeka Police Dept., Topeka KS

The McMahon Family are members of the Johnson County Parks & Rec. Rangers. The entire family supports Sean and the JCPRD Rangers and their dedication is to ensure that each athlete has a positive experience. The family has coached for 17 years, handles the team social media sites and has helped with Speakers Bureau for SOKS. They organize fundraising events for the team and serve as chaperones for other athletes if needed on trips. They are role models for all Special Olympics Families.

Carter Energy, a Division of World Fuel Services, Inc., has donated almost \$70,000 and provided hundreds of volunteer hours for the Fall Sports Classic in Shawnee and Overland Park. The Fall Sports Classic brings 1500 athletes state-wide to compete in bowling and volleyball. Each year, Carter Energy employees eagerly sign up and look forward to volunteering at bowling to work with their athlete friends from across the state.

Rose Simon has coached for 10 years for the Wichita Independents. Her athletes have achieved success at all levels, and Rose was selected as one of 7 Coaches from Kansas to attend the 2014 USA Games. Still, she is so much more. She will transport athletes as needed, assists in all fundraisers, & fixes food for the annual holiday party. She is constantly promoting and supporting Special Olympics.

Kristi Powell is a friend to athletes of Topeka Jr. Blues and Topeka/Shawnee SO teams. She knows them by name and works tirelessly for each of them. As a Detective with the Topeka Police Department, she is involved with the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) but doesn't stop there. She is a coach, event organizer, fundraiser, friend and advocate. She will also represent the Kansas LETR in the Final Leg at the World Summer Games in Los Angeles in July.

Dave & Kris Heinemann, of Topeka, have been a team for 32 years with the annual Special Olympics Kansas Legislative Shrimp Peel. The event started when the Heinemann's lived in Garden City and Dave was Speaker Pro-Tem of the Kansas House. Dave serves as Chairman of the Shrimp Peel Committee, which organizes cooks from western Kansas, obtains items for auction, solicits sponsors, and oversees the event. When the Heinemann's moved to Topeka Kris organized a thank-you BBQ dinner at their home for the volunteers to show appreciation.

Chris Hahn, President & CEO of Special Olympics Kansas stated, "It is an honor to recognize outstanding service to our organization, and these winners represent the best of the best. They have made a significant difference in the lives of our athletes, in our programming, and in our mission. SOKS is proud to recognize their accomplishments".

The Award winners will be officially recognized at the Opening Ceremonies of Summer Games, June 5th at 7 pm in Wichita at Cessna Stadium on the Wichita State University Campus.

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