



Special Olympics of Rhode Island
Gerri Walter
Dir. Of Marketing & Communications
(O) 401-349-4900
(C) 401-527-1086
Gerri@specialolympicsri.org

City of East Providence
Patricia Resende
Office of the Mayor
(O) 401-435-7500
(C) 401-529-3207
Presende@cityofeastprov.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

East Providence Police Officer Selected Among 96 Officers Around the World to Carry “Flame of Hope”

Flame serves as beacon of inspiration to thousands during Law Enforcement Torch Run to UAE

SMITHFIELD, R.I. – Special Olympics Rhode Island and the City of East Providence is proud to announce that Det. Sgt. Diogo R. Mello of the East Providence Police Department, has been selected to serve as part of the Final Leg team, leading up to the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games.

The Final Leg team, a team of 112, which includes 96 law enforcement officer runners, 10 Special Olympics athletes, and logistics personnel – will serve as Guardians of the Flame®.

Mello, a 29-year member of East Providence Police Department, will also serve as a Guardian of the Flame® as he runs the “Flame of Hope” throughout the United Arab Emirates (UAE), leading up to the start of the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi.

“We were excited to learn Det. Sgt. Mello was selected to not only represent the East Providence Police Department but all of Rhode Island in the Final Leg Law Enforcement Torch Run,” Mayor Bob DaSilva said. “Det. Sgt. Mello along with Cpl. Tammy David have dedicated years of their time to this wonderful cause. Our community is so proud of these officers and their dedication to SORI.”

Mello has been a volunteer with Special Olympics for more than 10 years. From 2016 through 2018, Mello was a member of the Torch Run Super Plunge Team <https://vimeo.com/207340691>, a team which consisted of a small group of dedicated individuals who plunged into the frigid waters of Galilee; every hour on the hour for 24 hours. As a member of that team, Mello raised more than \$30,000 for the Special Olympics. Mello and his team continue to raise funds for the Final Leg team. Read more about Mello and his team and information on how to donate here: <https://bit.ly/2tsGdOJ>

Final Leg runners from around the world were selected to proudly represent their local Torch Run and Special Olympics Programs. The [Law Enforcement Torch Run®](#) Final Leg for the 2019 World Games will take place from March 3 through March 14.

The run will honor the spirit of the Special Olympics global movement and deliver a message of hope to communities where people with intellectual disabilities continue to fight for acceptance and inclusion.

The Final Leg Team will attend many community events and embark on different routes, running the “Flame of Hope” throughout Ajman, Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi.

The Final Leg and community visits will raise excitement for the World Games throughout the country.

“For more than 38 years, the Law Enforcement Torch Run has been an integral part of the Special Olympics Movement,” said Khalfan Al Mazrouei, managing director of the 2019 Special Olympics World Games. “We look forward to cheering on the Final Leg Team as they bring the World Games message of inclusion throughout the country.”

The Final Leg Team is slated to safely deliver the “Flame of Hope” to the 2019 Special Olympics World Games Opening Ceremony on March 14, which is expected to attract more than 45,000 spectators while being viewed by millions worldwide via global broadcast partners ESPN and Abu Dhabi Media. Games will be held March 14 through March 21.

###

