



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

## 2010 Annual Awards Program

### Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

**Deadline for Nominations: March 12, 2010**

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

#### SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: City of Peoria, Arizona Special Olympics Partnership

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Peoria, Arizona

Jurisdiction population(s): 156,000

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2009, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: January Year: 2005

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in San José, California, October 2010. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Carl Swenson

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: Peoria, Arizona

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact**

Name of contact: Kelly Corsette  
Title: Public Information Jurisdiction: Peoria, Arizona  
Mgr  
Street address: 8401 W Monroe St  
City: Peoria State/Province: AZ  
Zip/Postal Code: 85345 Country: USA  
Telephone: 623-773-7339 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: kelly.corsette@peoriaaz.gov

## **ICMA 2010 Program Excellence Award Nomination**

**Category: Community Partnership**

**Nomination: City of Peoria, Arizona Special Olympics Partnership**

*“Disabilities are yet another manifestation of global diversity. Let us always be committed to the fundamental principal of dignity and equality for all human beings”.*

*Kofi A. Annan*

*Former Secretary General*

*United Nations*

*Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt”*

*Special Olympics Athlete Oath*

### A Community for Everyone

Peoria, Arizona prides itself on being a community of inclusion, where everyone can enjoy life regardless of their particular personal circumstances. Peoria’s partnership with Special Olympics Arizona is an example of that philosophy. The City of Peoria’s Community Services Department began providing recreational opportunities for individuals with a disability in 1986. Special Olympics has been an integral part of the Adaptive Recreation Program since its inception. Special Olympics, created by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation, is an unprecedented global movement which, through quality sports training and competition, improves the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and, in turn, the lives of everyone they touch. All persons with

developmental disabilities, regardless of ability level, may participate in the programs and sports offered by Special Olympics Arizona. Individuals are eligible for training and competition at age eight. There is no upper age limit.

### Room for Improvement

In 2003, Special Olympics Arizona developed a five-year master plan for program development and competition opportunities, and evaluated the quality of service being extended to athletes. This plan showed that the West Valley area was not being served effectively. With the population growth in the West Valley, the cities of Peoria, Avondale, Goodyear, Surprise, Buckeye and other outlying cities, there was no established agency to oversee athlete recruitment, program development or to provide area competitions for local programs.

In 2004, based on the City of Peoria's dedication, leadership and commitment to the Special Olympics movement, Special Olympics Arizona approached the city to discuss expanding the level of service to athletes by creating the West Valley Area. This was the first expansion since the development of the East Valley Area in 1989.

### A Partnership That is Making a Difference

The City of Peoria and Special Olympics Arizona forged a partnership to improve program availability for the region. Special Olympics Arizona committed to funding a half-time Outreach and Competition Coordinator position, to be hired and employed by the City of Peoria. Funding for this position and benefits is budgeted at \$25,000 per

year. In return, the City of Peoria provides various in-kind services annually to support the administrative duties and facility related services for competitions. This in-kind value is estimated at \$27,000 annually.

The City of Peoria Outreach and Competition Coordinator is responsible for new athlete and local program recruitment, planning and implementing area competitions, and assisting in securing funds to offset the cost of Special Olympics expenses, such as uniforms, equipment, and competition. In addition, the City of Peoria Recreation Supervisor, whose proficiency is certified in therapeutic recreation, has taken the leadership role in serving as Area Director, overseeing all aspects of the West Valley Area Special Olympics, including recruitment and training of the Outreach and Competition Coordinator position, providing administrative support through marketing materials, securing facilities for competitions, and overall management.

### Program Results

Currently there are more than one million Special Olympics athletes worldwide in over 140 nations, including over 7,000 athletes in Arizona. The City of Peoria Adaptive Recreation Program launched Team Peoria Special Olympics in 1987 with twelve athletes and two sports. Today it serves over 190 athletes in seven different sports. Staff and volunteers with the Adaptive Recreation Program witness the positive contributions the Special Olympics Program makes in the lives of the athletes. Children and adults with intellectual disabilities who participate in Special Olympics develop improved physical fitness and motor skills, greater self-confidence and positive self-

image. They grow mentally, socially and spiritually and, through their activities, exhibit boundless courage and enthusiasm, while enjoying the rewards of friendship and ultimately discover not only new abilities and talents but "their voices" as well. The effort, challenge and thrill of competition enhance participants' self esteem and pride in their accomplishments

In 2005, the West Valley Area officially began as the 16<sup>th</sup> Area for Special Olympics Arizona. Since then, programs in the region have boomed:

- The number of registered Special Olympics Local Programs has doubled, from 16 to 32 delegations;
- The number of registered athletes has grown from 514 to 1,180, an increase of 130%;
- The number of regional competitions has quadrupled from two to eight annually.

The ultimate lesson learned is that regional cooperation, despite some of its inherent challenges, works. By pooling resources and thinking beyond municipal boundaries, Peoria's partnership with Special Olympics Arizona has made a positive difference for disabled individuals throughout the region.