

2016 LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN

Shining a light of awareness

It only takes a spark to ignite a flame.

Each year, law enforcement officers throughout the county hope to be that spark, lighting the flame atop the ceremonial torch that they use to shine a light of awareness on a community often cast in the shadows.

For more than 25 years, Pinellas County has hosted the Law Enforcement Torch Run to raise awareness for the Special Olympics and to bring attention to the many sports programs available for the intellectually disabled.

Before the sun had risen Wednesday, April 27th, sworn personnel, staff, and community supporters accompanied by a few Special Olympics athletes, gathered at the St. Petersburg Police Department to light the torch, which they passed from agency to agency in six relay race legs spanning Pinellas County.

Participants ran and biked a combined total of more than 20 miles, stopping at various law enforcement buildings, public parks, and special needs schools, where they were greeted by booming music, rejuvenating snacks, and crowds of supporters holding motivational signs and banners.

In addition to the community awareness and sense of law enforcement unity and support, the Torch Run raised almost \$2,000 through Torch Run merchandise sales that will benefit Special Olympics Florida.

Before the final stop at Paul B. Stephens Exceptional Student Education Center, the very people for whom participants were racing met them down the road to join them in the last few steps before they crossed the finish line, hand in hand.

