

Special Olympics Flame of Hope Arrives at Morgan's Wonderland

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SAN ANTONIO (June 22, 2015) – Morgan’s Wonderland and Toyota celebrated Special Olympics athletes at the San Antonio-based family theme park designed with special-needs individuals in mind.

Local Special Olympics Athletes Scott Mena and Kristen Medley participated by cheering on Toyota Texas’ General Manager of the Assembly Division Brad Nye and Morgan’s Wonderland Founder Gordon Hartman and park namesake Morgan Hartman as they carried the Flame of Hope in a half-mile torch run around the park’s scenic lake en route to the 2015 Special Olympics World Games.

“Special Olympics has such a positive, strong impact on athletes and those who participate, and everyone at Toyota is proud to play a supporting role in the World Games and Special Olympics USA,” said Brad Nye, general manager, assembly division, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Texas. “We’re looking forward to following the progress of all the local athletes and cheering them on!”

“Being a part of the Unified Relay Across America is a truly gratifying and humbling experience,” said Gordon Hartman, founder of Morgan’s Wonderland. “It is because of our team members’ commitment to inclusion, and partners like Toyota that have strong community-based partnerships, that we can participate in meaningful events such as this. We look forward to celebrating the achievements of the Special Olympics athletes from Texas!”

Yesterday’s San Antonio ceremony was part of an ongoing celebration from Toyota as the Official Automotive Sponsor of the 2015 Special Olympics World Games, taking place in Los Angeles from July 25 to August 2. With more than 7,000 athletes, 177 represented countries and 30,000 volunteers, the 2015 Special Olympics World Games will be the largest sports and humanitarian event this year.

In addition to torch stops, Toyota dealers nationwide are supporting Special Olympics USA athletes and coaches in their journey to the Games through a fundraising program.

“Toyota really stepped up to show their support for Special Olympics Texas and our athletes,” said Margaret Larsen, President and CEO of Special Olympics Texas. “We are thankful for their leadership and commitment to helping develop our athletes and create communities of inclusion for all citizens.”

Texas has fourteen athletes competing at the World Games, as members of Special Olympics USA. Also representing the Lone Star state will be nine volunteer coaches who will be serving as head and assistant coaches in an array of sports for Special Olympics USA athletes from throughout the country.

Toyota’s San Antonio manufacturing plant also boasts a Business Practice Group dedicated solely to those that have family members or friends dealing with special needs, ToyotAbility.

TMMTX is the home of the Toyota Tundra full-size pickup, and also produces the ever-popular mid-size Tacoma. Founded on Texas Tradition in 1794, the oldest working ranch in Texas was acquired by Toyota in 2003. The manufacturing facility occupies 2,000 acres of the ranchland south of downtown San Antonio and began operations in 2006.

As a good corporate citizen, Toyota contributes to economic and social development in local communities, giving back to the communities where its team members live and work. When Toyota broke ground in San Antonio, it demonstrated its commitment to the community by providing donations supporting local organizations.

The Special Olympics event complements Toyota’s local investment in employment, philanthropic efforts and environmental responsibility. To date, Toyota has donated more than \$700 million to non-profits across the U.S.

Morgan's Wonderland is one of many highly visible initiatives of The Gordon Hartman Family Foundation to help those with special needs. Encompassing 25 acres, the unique, colorful, safe and affordable theme park offers fun for all ages and abilities. It's located in Northeast San Antonio, a half-mile west of IH 35 at the intersection of Wurzbach Parkway and Thousand Oaks Drive in what once was a quarry. VacationHomeRentals.com, an affiliate of Trip Advisor, has named Morgan's Wonderland the "best family attraction" in Texas.

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