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News Release

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Special Olympics athletes and Unified Partners gather for first Unified Team Bowling Tournament

[Albuquerque, NM] – Special Olympics New Mexico (SONM) announces the first ever Special Olympics Unified Team Bowling Tournament at Santa Ana Starlight Lanes this weekend. The tournament will take place from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm on Saturday, March 16th.

SONM typically has two state bowling tournaments throughout the year; however, those tournaments are only open to Special Olympics athletes. This Saturday, however, the Unified Team Bowling Tournament will bring together 65 teams made up of both Special Olympics athletes and Unified Partners – individuals without intellectual disabilities – to compete together. The tournament will give athletes and their partners a chance to show the meaning of teamwork in a unique way.

The concept of combining athletes with intellectual disabilities and those without was first introduced in the mid-1980s to promote equality and inclusion. Unified Sports enables athletes to learn new sports, develop higher-level sports skills, and experience meaningful inclusion as each athlete is ensured of playing a valued role on the team. The Unified Sports program also enables athletes to socialize with peers and form friendships with people outside of Special Olympics.

Special Olympics New Mexico provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. Today, Special Olympics New Mexico serves over 2,600 athletes, offering training and competition in 14 sports. Across the world, more than 3 million children and adults with intellectual disabilities participate in more than 200 programs in 180 countries. SONM is sponsored year-round by New Mexico Knights of Columbus, New Mexico Law Enforcement Torch Run, Dex Media, French Funerals Cremations, Wells Fargo, ConocoPhillips, Daniels Fund, and The Payroll Company.

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Be a fan of sports. Be a fan of courage. Be a fan of acceptance and dignity. Be a fan of joy.

*Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation
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