

# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Correctional staff recognized for Special Olympics fundraising

By Peggy Jones

Lovelock Review-Miner

According to the Special Olympics Nevada website, the cost of providing one season of athletic training to a Special Olympics athlete is about \$100. That puts the achievement of the Nevada Department of Correction, North (NDOC) in perspective.

By raising more than \$6,000 through such activities as T-shirt sales, bake sales, Tip-A-Cop and Polar Plunges, NDOC has made it possible for the Special Olympics to provide free athletic training to roughly 60 athletes like Lovelock's Missy Byrd, Ofelia Gonzalez and Emily Knight. The trio recently participated in the 2014 Northern Nevada Bowling Competition and may also take part in the Summer Olympics track and field events.

On Jan. 27, staff from Lovelock Correctional Center (LCC) and Northern Nevada Correctional Center (NNCC) attended the 2015 Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) kick-off at the National Bowling Stadium in Reno. While there they accepted a Bronze Award for raising between six- and 10-thousand dollars for the Special Olympics on behalf of NDOC, North.

On hand to receive the award were Sgt. Jim Donnelly, of Unionville, Lt. Valaree Olivas and Michelle Gilder, of Lovelock, and Ron Hannah and Monica Navarro from NNCC.

"I've been part of Special Olympics for a long time because my son has Down's Syndrome," said



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Above photo, left to right, is Sgt. Jim Donnelly, Administrative Assistant II (AAII) Michelle Gilder (LCC), Caseworker Ron Hannah (NNCC) and AAI Monica Navarro (NNCC). Not pictured is Lt. Valaree Olivas- LCC.

Navarro. "He participates in the track and field events and it's done a lot for him so I decided to get involved on the fundraising end." In March, after raising at least \$125 in pledges, Navarro heads towards Zephyr Cove to immerse herself in the icy waters of South Lake Tahoe. "The Polar Plunges are major fundraisers for Special Olympics. I'm definitely going all the way in," she said, shivering in anticipation.

Made up of 85,000 law enforcement officers from all 50 states, 12 Canadian provinces and 35 countries, the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) is the largest grass-roots fundraiser for the Special Olympics and has raised more than \$100,000,000 for the organization since its inception in 1981. NDOC came on board in August 2014. Locally, their year-

round fundraiser will culminate June 5—6 at the Special Olympics Summer Games at the University of Nevada in Reno. Preceding the event, correctional staff will join other law enforcement personnel and athletes in relaying the Flame of Hope to the opening ceremonies in MacKay Stadium. There, they will light the cauldron to officially open the games.

Statewide, each correctional institution has a volunteer coordinator. Michelle Gilder and Valaree Olivas are the coordinators for LCC, the Humboldt Conservation Camp (HCC) and Carlin Conservation Camp (CCC).

NDOC North includes NNCC, Warm Springs Conservation Camp, LCC, CCC, HCC, Stewart Conservation Camp and the Northern Nevada Restitution Center.