



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Golf Enthusiasts Rally Around Special Olympics New Jersey Helping to Ease the Sting of a Challenging Economy**

*Several premier golf tournaments planned for the next few months.*

LAWRENCEVILLE – Special Olympics New Jersey (SONJ), like many non-profits, relies on the success of numerous golf tournaments, and the corporate executives that play in them. Each tournament offers an opportunity for the players to brush up on their golf skills and to raise money for a great cause – a win-win situation for the golf enthusiast and SONJ.

Supporters come out and test out their drives on the golf course year after year with the Perlman Cup, Delta Dental Golf Classic, The Higgins Classic, Nelligan Sports Marketing Golf Classic, the Professional Insurance Agents of New Jersey Golf Classic, and the Law Enforcement Golf Classic – all taking place in the next four months. Despite the state of the economy, this year looks to be no exception. Why, when so many non-profits are struggling, do the sponsors and participants step up for Special Olympics?

“There are many reasons these events will continue to thrive,” said Marc Edenzon, President of Special Olympics New Jersey. “First, we have found some creative marketing techniques and incentives to get the golfers on the course. Second, we have dedicated volunteer committees working on these events that have a passion for what we do at Special Olympics and refuse to let these events flounder or not meet their goal.”

The Perlman Cup, which is the first golf event of the year, takes place May 11. SONJ has introduced a golfer’s clinic for the beginner golfers that might have not otherwise been able to participate in the tournament.

“We have been a supporter of the Perlman Cup for several years,” said Diane Belle, Vice President of Corporate Communications for Delta Dental of New Jersey, Inc. “We see this event as an opportunity to entertain some of our key brokers and clients who might enjoy the less competitive atmosphere of this golf event.”

Delta Dental not only sponsors and participants in the Perlman Cup, but will host their own golf tournament to benefit SONJ at the end of May.

“The more people get to know us, the more that they begin to realize the importance and the true impact that their donation has on the athletes of Special Olympics New Jersey,” Edenzon said.

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For the past eighteen years The Higgins Classic, named after former SONJ president Michael Higgins, has raised in excess of \$2 million for Special Olympics New Jersey.

“This has always been a wonderful event in support of very special athletes,” said J.C. Giordano III, Chairman of the 2009 Higgins Classic Golf Tournament and Executive Vice President at Jones Lang LaSalle Americas, Inc.. “We hope that this year’s Higgins Classic will continue in the tradition of supporting the 18,000 New Jersey athletes eager to compete.”

Giordano and the rest of his volunteer event committee are working with Fiddler’s Elbow Country Club in Bedminster Township this year to offer each foursome host one complimentary spot in the Special Olympics New Jersey VIP Outing in July. This is another incentive to encourage new and returning golfers to play in the tournament.

The tournaments offer something for everyone from the beginner golfer to the most accomplished amateur on some of the best courses in New Jersey. Foursomes return year after year.

“The PIANJ Golf Classic is clearly the premier golf/sponsorship event on our yearly calendar,” said John Danka of Farmer’s Insurance Company of Flemington, one of the sponsors of the PIANJ Golf Classic and a supporter of SONJ over the past 20 years.

“Many people and organizations have been affected by the economy but still find it within their budgets to donate to SONJ and enjoy a great day out, either with friends or business associates,” Edenzon said. “All of these events are expected to turn out more participants and increase the funds raised to support our athletes.”

SONJ does not charge athletes, or their families, for participation in any of its numerous programs. Funds raised at these tournaments go directly to support the more than 18,000 athletes that participate in training and competition throughout the state, all year round.

More information about any of these events can be found at [sonj.org](http://sonj.org).

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**ABOUT SONJ:** Special Olympics New Jersey 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.