



For Immediate Release

Media Contacts:

Alex McMillin, Special Olympics Illinois

amcmillin@soill.org; 847-682-6897

Greg Rivara, Illinois State Treasurer's Office

grivara@illinoistreasurer.gov; 217-685-2380

IL State Treasurer Surprises Special Olympics Athletes with USA Games Reveal

IL ABLE Program Helps Illinois Athletes Compete in Orlando Next June

9/17/21 – Pontiac, IL – On Thursday, September 16, Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs visited Special Olympics Illinois athletes Brandy Stowers and Brian Antczak, who compete with Team AIR Pontiac in Pontiac, IL. During his surprise visit, Treasurer Frerichs revealed to the two athletes that they would be a part of Team Illinois, a group of athletes, coaches, and Unified Partners that will represent Special Olympics Illinois at the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games next June in Orlando, FL.

Brandy and Brian also learned that the IL ABLE Program will help sponsor the cost of Illinois athletes to participate in the USA Games. Special Olympics Illinois does not charge athletes to compete in the USA Games events, so Special Olympics Illinois relies on funding from individuals and organizations to make it possible for Illinois Special Olympics athletes to attend.

Through its support of this event, the IL ABLE Program hopes to make all Special Olympics athletes and their families aware of the benefits of having an IL ABLE account for people with disabilities. IL ABLE accounts are savings and investment accounts that eligible people with disabilities and their families can open to help themselves by building greater financial independence and improved quality of life while preserving benefits.

“Before the IL ABLE Program, families with loved ones with disabilities were discouraged and penalized for saving and investing,” Treasurer Frerichs said. “The Illinois Treasurer’s office is proud to have started IL ABLE so that eligible Illinoisans with disabilities, including many Special Olympics athletes, can improve their financial independence, health and quality of life.”

Twenty-five-year-old Brandy has been competing with Special Olympics for ten years. She enjoys walks and video games and, when she’s not competing, she works at Accolade and resides in a group home. Brian, 42, has been competing with Special Olympics for 15 years. He works at Stroller International and has previously enjoyed traveling to Florida to visit family.

To view the highlights from the Treasurer’s surprise announcement at the Pontiac Rec Center, please [click here](#). Additional b roll footage is also available [here](#) and [here](#).

The Special Olympics Illinois full team announcement will come later this fall.

ABOUT THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS USA GAMES

The Special Olympics USA Games, hosted every four years, will mark the largest humanitarian event in Florida’s history. The event will unite more than 5,500 athletes and coaches from all 50 states and the Caribbean. Over



10,000 volunteers will fill more than 20,000 volunteer shifts during the week. It is anticipated over 125,000 families, friends and spectators will witness the inspiring athletic accomplishments in 19 Olympic-style team and individual sports and more than 30 events at world-class venues across Orlando, centered at ESPN Wide World of Sports at Walt Disney World Resort.

The 2022 Special Olympics USA Games is scheduled for June 5-12, 2022 in Orlando, Florida. Jersey Mike's Subs is the Presenting Partner and the Games are hosted by Disney. During this magical week, more than 5,500 athletes and coaches from all 50 states and the Caribbean will travel to Florida to unite in one of the country's most cherished sporting events. The USA Games is hosted once every four years and showcases 19 Olympic-style team and individual sports and 30 events throughout the week including forums and VIP receptions. Website: www.2022usagames.org

ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS ILLINOIS:

Special Olympics Illinois is a not-for-profit sports organization offering year-round training and competition in 18 sports for more than 23,100 athletes with intellectual disabilities and over 13,000 Young Athletes ages 2-7 with and without intellectual disabilities. It strives to be a global leader in shaping a culture where people with and without intellectual disabilities are fully integrated into the community by providing year-round opportunities in competitive sports, health education, leadership and personal development. If you are interested in being a part of Special Olympics Illinois and its vision, contact your local region, call 800-394-0562 or visit our website at www.soill.org. Follow Special Olympics Illinois on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

ABOUT THE ILLINOIS TREASURER:

As Illinois State Treasurer, Michael Frerichs is the state's Chief Investment and Banking Officer and actively manages approximately \$52 billion. The portfolio includes \$27 billion in state funds, \$16 billion in retirement and college savings plans and \$9 billion on behalf of local and state governments. Frerichs' office protects consumers by safeguarding more than \$3.5 billion in unclaimed property, encouraging savings plans for college or trade school, increasing financial education among all ages, assisting people with disabilities save without losing government benefits, and removing barriers to a secure retirement. The Treasurer's Office predates Illinois incorporation in 1818. Voters in 1848 chose to make it an elected office.

ABOUT THE IL ABLE PROGRAM:

IL ABLE, or the "Illinois Achieving a Better Life Experience" Program is a savings and investment program that makes it possible for people with disabilities and their families to save and invest their money for expenses related to living with a disability. IL ABLE accounts can help solve a long-time predicament that many people with disabilities face: how to build financial wellness without risking federal government benefits.

IL ABLE is sponsored by the State of Illinois and administered by the Office of the Illinois State Treasurer. IL ABLE is designed to be a qualified ABLE plan offered through the National ABLE Alliance. Ascensus College Savings Recordkeeping Services, LLC, the Program Manager, and its affiliates, have overall responsibility for the day-to-day operations, including investment advisory, recordkeeping and administrative services.



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