**For Immediate Release**

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**3rd Annual Southern Illinois Ducky Derby Dash to Benefit Special Olympics Illinois**

Over 5,000 Ducks to Splash into the Water at Du Quoin State Fair on Sept. 3

**DU QUOIN, Ill.** –Special Olympics Illinois is gearing up for the third annual Southern Illinois Ducky Derby Dash at the Du Quoin State Fair on Sunday, Sept. 3. Come out to help us reach our goal of adopting 10,000 rubber ducks then watch them splash into the lake behind the Expo Hall and race towards the finish line.

Race Day kicks off at 1:00 p.m. with a parade! The ducks race at 3:00pm, followed by entertainment for the entire family – live music, face painting, games, and an appearance by Splash Duck, the mascot! Ducks will be sold at the event until 2:30 p.m.

The funds raised will help support year-round sports training and competition in 12 sports for more than 900 Special Olympics Illinois Southern/Area 15 athletes in Alexander, Franklin, Jackson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pulaski, Randolph, Union and Williamson counties.

Adopt a duck for $5, a Quack Pack (6 ducks for $25), a Flock of Ducks (24 ducks for $100) or a Ducky Derby Donor Package (60 Ducks for $250) for your chance to win one of the Southern Illinois Ducky Derby Dash’s great prizes including $1,000 cash courtesy of Country Financial, a NASCAR Race Package, or a 4-night stay in the Honeymoon Suite at Blue Sky Vineyards**.**

This year’s Duck Ambassador is 10-year-old Abbigail Williams of Pinckneyville, IL. This is her second year participating with Special Olympics Illinois. The softball throw is Abbigail's favorite, but she also enjoys the standing jump and running. She loves to practice with her little sister, Isabel. Abbigail enjoys being outdoors, playing with friends and family, and especially making others around her laugh. Her biggest accomplishment in life is beating cancer and she looks forward to participating for many more years with Special Olympics.

Duck sales teams are forming throughout the area and they compete for bragging rights and great prizes. To form a sales team or to adopt your ducks, visit www.duckyderbydash.com. If groups or companies would like more information, contact Dave Hug via dhug@soill.org or 618-457-2969.

The Southern Illinois Ducky Derby Dash is sponsored by SIU Credit Union, St. Nicholas Brewing Company, DuQuoin Tourism Commission, Blue Sky Vineyards, Heartland Coca Cola, Country Financial, Chicagoland Speedway and the Du Quoin State Fair.

Special Olympics Illinois is a not-for-profit organization offering year-round training and competition in 19 sports for more than 22,500 athletes with intellectual disabilities and nearly 20,000 Young Athletes ages 2-7 with and without intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics transforms the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, allowing them to realize their full potential in sports and in life. Special Olympics programs enhance physical fitness, motor skills, self-confidence, social skills and encourage family and community support. If you are interested in learning more about Special Olympics Illinois, volunteering or providing financial support to help make Special Olympics programs possible, contact your local Special Olympics agency, call 800-394-0562 or visit our website at [*www.soill.org*](https://mail.soill.org/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.soill.org/)*.*

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