



**Special Olympics Florida and Ron Jon Surf Shop
Launch First-Ever Surfing Program for Special Olympics Athletes**

COCOA BEACH, Fla. -- (May 22, 2010) -- Special Olympics Florida and Ron Jon Surf Shop, through its affiliated Ron Jon Surf School, have partnered to bring the first-ever sanctioned surfing activities and instruction to Special Olympics athletes.

The program kicks off Saturday, June 5 with an afternoon of instruction and education for eight specially-selected Special Olympics athletes at the Cocoa Beach, Fla.-based Ron Jon Surf School. The athletes will then participate in a series of weekly lessons to help them hone their skills and build upon what they learned at the inaugural event.

The afternoon program will include an opening safety orientation, one-on-one interaction between the Special Olympics athletes and the experienced team of professionals at the surf school and some relaxation and fun on the beach.

Led by surf-industry veteran Craig Carroll, the Ron Jon Surf School is the largest and most experienced surf academy in Florida and the Southeast. Carroll, a former professional surfer who has surfed in Cocoa Beach for more than 40 years, has operated the surf school since 1993.

"Surfers consider themselves members of a family, and that family welcomes people from all walks of life," said Craig Carroll, founder of Ron John Surf School. "Those with intellectual disabilities will not only be accepted as part of the surfing culture, they will be embraced and encouraged in their efforts."

For Special Olympics Florida, having the ability to open the world of surfing to its athletes is both an exciting and groundbreaking opportunity: "the chance to introduce surfing instruction, competition, and the culture and lifestyle of surfing to Special Olympic athletes is truly unique and a first for the Special Olympics movement," said Special Olympics Florida President Monty Castevens, adding "Ron Jon has set in motion

something that has great potential to benefit many, many more Special Olympics athletes, all while giving them the skills to enjoy the sport of surfing with their friends, families, and the broader surfing community, for the rest of their lives.”

Ron Jon Surf Shop will provide all gear and equipment necessary and cover all costs associated with the program. The surf school will work closely with the athletes to ensure they are provided the safest environment in which to enjoy their introduction to surfing.

"We are excited to partner with Special Olympics Florida to provide this wonderful organization with a unique opportunity to expand its program offerings," said Debbie Harvey, president and COO of Ron Jon Surf Shop. "As surfing enthusiasts, we look forward to hosting these athletes and hope that they will come to love the sport as much as we do."

About Special Olympics Florida

Special Olympics Florida provides year-round sports training and competition to children and adults with intellectual disabilities, at no cost to the athlete or their caregiver, as a means to achieve physical fitness, self-esteem, socialization skills, and the life skills necessary to be a productive, respected and contributing members of their communities. To learn more, visit www.specialolympicsflorida.org.

About Ron Jon Surf Shop

Ron Jon Surf Shop was founded in 1959 by surfing enthusiast Ron DiMenna. Two years later, he opened a tiny oceanside shop in Long Beach Island, N.J. The lifestyle-apparel and board-sports-equipment retailer has since opened stores in Cocoa Beach, Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, Ft. Myers, Key West, Panama City Beach, Fla., as well as Myrtle Beach, S.C. The flagship store in Cocoa Beach is the world's largest surf shop. It operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

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