

MEDIA ALERT

**Special
Olympics
Missouri**



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Special Olympics Missouri Training for Life Campus to be Built in Jefferson City

(Jefferson City) After meeting on Saturday, Jan. 17 to review the bids for the Training for Life Campus (TLC) from Columbia and Jefferson City, the Special Olympics Missouri (SOMO) Board of Directors made a unanimous decision to enter into an agreement with Jefferson City officials to locate the 44,000-sq.-foot Training for Life Campus on the 15.5 acres donated by Farmer Holding Company and Twehous Excavating.

"We really want to commend both cities on the bids they put forward," said SOMO Board Chairman Dr. Phil Cook. "It has been a long process, but through it all it has shown us just how lucky we are to have two amazing communities who support our program and athletes, while looking for ways to grow our partnerships even more.

"The decision to locate the TLC in Jefferson City was based in large part due to the Jefferson City proposal allowing the campus to truly be a place for our athletes to call their own. We've said from day one that was important to us now and 50 years in the future. The ability to own the land in Jefferson City versus leasing it in Columbia in a partnership with Columbia Parks and Recreation was an important difference."

Jefferson City Mayor Eric J. Struempf said, "We are very pleased and excited Special Olympics Missouri has selected Jefferson City as its new location for the Training for Life Campus. This project has truly been a great partnership between many entities all working together toward a great project that will have a big impact on our community. The cooperation between the City of Jefferson, Cole County, Jefferson City Convention and Visitors Bureau, Jefferson City Area Chamber of Commerce, developers, healthcare providers and business leaders all coming together to bring resources and support makes this project a great win for the Jefferson City area and Special Olympics Missouri."

When finding out Jefferson City won the bid, Columbia City Manager Mike Matthes said, "There is very little in life as inspiring and joyful as Special Olympics. We are disappointed not to play host to Special Olympics Missouri to be sure, but certainly happy for our friends in Jefferson City as we know how lucky they are to get this wonderful organization."

"We are disappointed that Columbia wasn't chosen," said Mike Griggs, director of Columbia Parks and Recreation. "We feel that Columbia presented an excellent option and we're proud of the work that was done by everyone who assisted with this proposal. The Columbia Parks and Recreation will continue to be a strong and supportive partner for Special Olympics Missouri and look forward to hosting some of their larger events."

Despite Columbia not winning the bid, SOMO President and CEO Mark Musso said he is confident the Columbia program will continue to “be one of the strongest in the state” thanks in large part to the partnership with Columbia Parks and Recreation.

“SOMO continues to host area competitions in Columbia and has enjoyed a long history of successful games there at the area, regional and state level,” Musso said. “Columbia Parks and Rec’s facilities will continue to be utilized by the local program and SOMO will strongly consider the return of regional and state games to Columbia with the additional Parks and Rec facilities in Phillips Park and Gans Creek Recreation Area.”

The site for the TLC will be located at the northeast corner of U.S. Highway 54 and Missouri Highway 179. It will be the first facility of its kind in the world built for the sole purpose of improving the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. The current capital campaign for the TLC is well on its way to raising the \$12.5 million needed to build the facility.

The SOMO Board of Directors has said from the beginning that construction on the campus will not begin until the full \$12.5 million has been raised. Currently the campaign is more than half way to that goal with the expectation to reach the final goal in 2016 and commence construction thereafter.

With the additional 4-plus acres (compared to the 11.2 acres previously purchased by SOMO south of Columbia on U.S. Highway 63) it will now allow the construction of a full softball field instead of just a softball infield as previously discussed. It will also now have enough space for a walking trail on the outer edge of the campus. Staffing for the new building is expected to grow from 15 people currently to 30.

“We want to thank Farmer Holding Company and Twehous Excavating for donating the land, elected officials, civic and business leaders who collectively came and made clear how much they wanted the campus in Jefferson City, including Chamber CEO Randy Allen and Mayor Eric J. Struempf,” Musso said. “The forming of the Healthy Athletes Steering Committee comprised of hospital and health officials and the president of Lincoln University impressed us with their commitment to the overall health of the athletes and how SOMO is more than just about sports.”

“Another committee formed to bring us to Jefferson City was the Civic Progress sub-committee for the TLC comprised of presidents from Jefferson City banks and an Ameren Missouri executive to help us reach our \$12.5 million goal.”

Special Olympics Missouri is a year-round program of sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. More than 16,500 athletes participate in 21 Olympic-type sports throughout the state. Special Olympics provides people with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, and experience joy as they participate in the sharing of gifts and friendship with their fellow athletes, their family and friends, and communities across Missouri.

Special Olympics Missouri is proud of our financial health returning 90 percent of every dollar back to program services. We are privileged to be recognized with these honors: Better Business Bureau A+ Charity Accreditation, Charity Navigator 3-star rating and Guidestar Gold Level.

Thank you for trusting us with your donations, volunteer time and your goodwill.

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