

Special Olympics Texas Faces Financial Hardship Due to Hurricane Harvey

The nonprofit organization launches #SOTXSTRONG, a campaign to combat a substantial shortfall for 2017.

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AUSTIN – Hurricane Harvey’s aftermath has forced Special Olympics Texas (SOTX) to cancel and postpone several competitions and fundraisers not only in the affected Houston and Coastal Bend areas, but across the state of Texas. Due to the significant loss of income from those fundraising events, the 501(c)3 nonprofit organization is forecasting a shortfall of hundreds of thousands of dollars for its 2017 budget and it is now asking for the public’s help. [\(http://www.sotx.org/events/sotx-strong/\)](http://www.sotx.org/events/sotx-strong/)

SOTX
STRONG

The logo for SOTX STRONG features the words "SOTX" in large, bold, black capital letters on the top line, and "STRONG" in large, bold, red capital letters on the bottom line. In the center of the word "STRONG", the letter "O" is replaced by a red circular icon containing stylized human figures with arms raised, representing the Special Olympics logo.

"In less than a month, Harvey has greatly impaired SOTX's financial health and we project that we will face a large shortfall as we close out the fiscal year," said Dr. Richard Brown, SOTX's Vice President of Resource Development. "We have had to cancel fundraising events due to venues being flooded out. At the same time, some prepaid fundraising participants have requested refunds and sponsors have redirected their SOTX contributions to Harvey relief efforts. Most charitable dollars are going to disaster relief efforts right now – as they should be. However, one of the consequences of Hurricane Harvey is that all nonprofit organizations that rely on charitable contributions have been financially hit."

To combat the deficit, Special Olympics Texas has launched **#SOTXSTRONG**, an aggressive social media and online fundraising campaign. The organization, which does not receive government aid, has set an ambitious goal of raising \$100,000 in the first 30 days of this campaign.

Donations of any amount can be made at www.sotx.org/strong (<http://www.sotx.org/strong>) and anyone is welcome to join the campaign as an ambassador, which would enable one to solicit funds for SOTX on their own through an official fundraising page. For those unable to make a contribution at this time, you can still help the movement by spreading the message to your personal networks via social media.

Without the needed funds, SOTX will struggle to provide Olympic-type sports as well as other programs and services for its 58,333 athletes statewide. In response to its sudden critical need for funding, SOTX has taken steps to cut operational costs as much as possible – without sacrificing the programs and competitive events that its athletes and families depend on to improve their quality of life.

"Our organization is doing everything it can to reduce expenses, but for us to be able to put on the high-quality service that we provide for our athletes, we need help more than ever."

For SOTX to provide a year's worth of competitions, programs and services for one athlete it costs the organization \$150. Ninety-two cents of every dollar pledged to SOTX goes directly into programming.

SOTX's next statewide competition, Fall Classic, is expected to run as planned next month in Bryan/College Station for more than 1,600 athletes, who will be competing in Aquatics, Bocce, Golf or Softball.

For more information about the #SOTXSTRONG campaign or about Special Olympics Texas, visit www.sotx.org/strong (<http://www.sotx.org/strong>).

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About Special Olympics Texas

Special Olympics Texas (SOTX) is a privately funded non-profit organization that changes lives through the power of sport by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities, promoting acceptance for all, and fostering communities of understanding and respect. SOTX provides continuing opportunities for more than 58,300 children and adults with intellectual disabilities throughout the Lone Star State to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy and friendship. To learn more, visit www.specialolympicstexas.org (http://www.specialolympicstexas.org/), or call 800.876.5646. Engage with us on:

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