



## **MEDIA CONTACT:**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **2011 Special Olympics USA Scarf Project Receives 26,000+ Handmade Scarves**

*Clubs, schools, young and elderly alike – knitters and crocheters across the USA unite for Special Olympics*

**WASHINGTON D.C., April 6, 2011** – Between November 2010 and March 2011, knitters and crocheters from across the USA contributed over 26,000 handmade scarves to the 35 participating Special Olympics Programs of the 2011 Special Olympics USA Scarf Project. The scarves were created and donated by thousands of participants including school children and community centers, knitting and church groups, school bus drivers, a 102-year old woman from Wisconsin, a woman's correctional facility who adopted the project, and many more.

In honor of the success and meaning of the 2011 Special Olympics USA Scarf Project, and looking forward to 2012, sponsor Coats & Clark/Red Heart Yarns will donate \$50,000 to Special Olympics North America. "Red Heart is thrilled to have been a supporter of the 2011 Special Olympics USA Scarf Project and we are excited about the inspiration it has given knitters and crocheters," said Alyson Bell, Vice President of Marketing at Coats & Clark. "We believe in the power of this initiative and will continue to find ways to grow participation and support for Special Olympics."

"We are truly overwhelmed with the generosity of the knitting and crocheting communities, and for the 35 Special Olympics Programs who participated in this project, it proved to be a tremendous opportunity to bring a greater sense of community to our athletes and Programs throughout the United States," said Bob Gobrecht, President, Special Olympics North America. "We look forward to the future growth of this initiative in reaching our Programs in every state, and we thank our sponsor Coats & Clark/Red Heart Yarns for their generous contribution and collaborative efforts in making the project possible."

The 2011 Special Olympics USA Scarf Project was a nation-wide initiative that gave knitters and crocheters the opportunity to contribute a handmade scarf to the participating Special Olympics Program or Programs of their choice. Participants followed specific project guidelines including official colors and size, and could create their own pattern or use one of five free patterns provided by Red Heart Yarns. An important aspect of the project was the ability to share information, ideas, photos, progress and questions via a variety of social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Wordpress; and for 2012 these communication platforms will feature expanded interactive programs and promotions.

The 2012 Special Olympics USA Scarf Project will officially launch in late April 2011 with scarf donation deadlines between late November 2011 and early March 2012. Knitters and crocheters interested in supporting the project will find all colors, guidelines and details at [ScarvesForSpecialOlympics.org](http://ScarvesForSpecialOlympics.org).

Follow the Special Olympics USA Scarf Project on the website ([ScarvesForSpecialOlympics.org](http://ScarvesForSpecialOlympics.org)), Facebook (@ScarvesForSpecialOlympics), Twitter (USAScarfProject) and the blog ([Special Olympics Scarf Project](http://SpecialOlympicsScarfProject)).

*About Special Olympics*

Special Olympics is an international organization that changes lives by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities, promoting acceptance for all, and fostering communities of understanding and respect worldwide. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown from a few hundred athletes to more than 3.5 million athletes in over 170 countries in all regions of the world, providing year-round sports training, athletic competition and other related programs. Special Olympics now takes place everyday, changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities in places like China and from regions like the Middle East to the community playgrounds and ball fields in every small neighborhood's backyard. Special Olympics provides people with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy and friendship. Visit [Special Olympics](http://SpecialOlympics).

*About Red Heart Yarns/Coats & Clark*

Coats & Clark is one of the most recognized names in yarn, sewing and needlecraft products in America. First marketed in 1936, the Red Heart® brand today continues to exude its founding principles; quality, value and inspiration for the knitting and crochet enthusiast.

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