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The Special Olympics Torch Run for the Southern California Special Olympics Summer Games made its way through downtown Santa Barbara Wednesday.

The Santa Barbara Police Department rounded Anapamu Street, with the "Torch of Hope" in hand, before passing it off to the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office.

"You guys look fabulous," District Attorney Joyce Dudley told her colleagues before the run. "The only guys who look better than you is them," she said, pointing to the Special Olympic athletes who had arrived with the police department.

Ms. Dudley, three local chiefs, chief investigators, and other heads of the district attorney's office were present. Five of the eight executive staff members ran with the group.

Over 1,100 athletes will participate in the games, which take place in Long Beach this weekend.

The D.A.'s office hosted the Law Enforcement Torch Run before setting off to complete their leg of the journey to Long Beach.

Ms. Dudley led the group of 22 employees from the three office locations in Santa Barbara, Santa Maria and Lompoc.

"She'll be leading the pack - how far that lasts I don't know," District Attorney Investigator Patrick Adams said, joking with his boss before the run.

The District Attorney's Office ran the first five miles together as one large group, rather than running the stage in legs. The decision to run together is one the D.A.'s Office has made for at least the past seven years, Mr. Adams said.

"Most of these guys (in other offices) we don't see," he said. "And the type of people that work here, they won't give up, they keep pushing themselves and saying 'I've never run this distance before,' but they do it."

After running a 10-minute pace five miles to Toro Canyon, those running for the D.A.'s office had the chance to continue for another four miles before finishing in Carpentry. From there the torch continued with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department.



Probation Officer Brett Kohler carries the torch through downtown Santa Barbara as the procession leaves the D.A.'s office.

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Law enforcement agencies produce the largest number of donations for the Special Olympics. The money goes to the purchasing of equipment and other expenses for the athletes.

"It's a good little fundraiser," Mr. Adams said, adding that the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office raised more than \$12,000 this year.

The majority of that money comes from Tip-a-Cop. Officers serve at restaurants, collecting tips that they donate at the end of their shift to the local chapter of the Special Olympics.

"There's a connection between a Special Olympian and law enforcement," Ms. Dudley said to the crowd. "We expect society to be just, and people in law enforcement love a challenge. I think that's why we do what we do."

Regional Director for the Special Olympics in Santa Barbara County Sara Spataro also spoke, emphasizing the importance of law enforcement in helping the Special Olympics.

"They not only protect but they serve our community," she said. "All their efforts today really helped encourage the 1,100 athletes that will be in Long Beach this Saturday and Sunday."

Last year, law enforcement throughout Southern California raised \$1.2 million for the Special Olympics, according to the nonprofit's web site. That number is expected to increase this year.

The District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department, Santa Barbara Police Department, Santa Barbara County Probation Department, California Highway Patrol, UCSB Police Department and California State Parks were some of the departments that raised money and participated in the run.

"We're inspired by you and we're there for you," Ms. Dudley said before setting off on her torch run.

The games will be [from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday](#) and [9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday](#).

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