

Trio of Murals Immortalize Special Olympics Athletes' Journeys into Los Angeles History

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LOS ANGELES (July 7, 2015) – Today, and decades from now, Los Angeles residents and visitors can discover the spirit of Special Olympics. As part of Toyota’s “Share the Journey” campaign for the [2015 Special Olympics World Games](#), athletes’ uplifting journeys inspired three public murals dedicated today. City leaders joined Toyota executives, artists and Special Olympics fans at the freshly painted Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum mural to ask for participation and a celebration of athletes’ joy and courage.

Like the original freeway murals created for the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, the Special Olympics-inspired artwork is intended to stand the test of time. Working with the [Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles](#), the internationally recognized muralist and original 1984 Olympics artist [Kent Twitchell](#) returned to create one of his famous realistic portraits. Twitchell’s piece and the two other murals mark the upcoming global event and build on the city’s storied history of outdoor art.

“The murals are a lasting gift to Los Angeles to celebrate the life-changing power of Special Olympics and also honor the rich, artistic history of this city that has embraced us,” said Jim Lentz, CEO of Toyota North America. “Special Olympics is not only an important global sports movement, but also an organization that touches individuals every day around the world. We hope everyone gets to experience the impact and help us cheer on the athletes.”

Fans can cheer during 25 Olympic-style events throughout the region, tune into ESPN coverage or send support through social media that will be displayed on-site. Toyota is collecting athlete encouragements and stories with the hashtag #sharethejourney and at [sharethejourney.toyota.com](#). Competition events are free and open to the public, and tickets for the Opening Ceremony are available for purchase at [LA2015.org](#) via Ticketmaster.

All three murals are just blocks away from venues hosting Special Olympics World Games events July 25-August 2. Each weaves in the spirit of Special Olympics through the individual artist’s own iconic vision. Discover stories around each piece at [sharethejourney.toyota.com](#).

- Located at 1147 S. Hope St. in Los Angeles, [Twitchell](#)’s piece **Special Olympics Monument** is a double portrait. Rafer Johnson, an LA icon and Olympic gold medalist as well as founder of Special Olympics Southern California, stands alongside Loretta Claiborne, a successful Special Olympics athlete and motivational speaker.
- Located at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, **World Stage Legacy** by well-known muralist [David Flores](#) pays tribute to the 2015 Special Olympics World Games and events that have taken place at the Coliseum throughout its more than 90-year history. Figures include Special Olympics athlete and World Games Global Messenger, Ramon Hooper alongside iconic figures with a connection to the site.
- Located at 1248 South Figueroa in Los Angeles, **The Greatest** from the artist [Cryptik](#) features a large-scale portrait of boxing legend Muhammad Ali and multiple plaques with inspirational quotations from Special Olympics athletes and advocates. Visitors can move up close to the piece to explore the words and connections.

“Long after the 2015 Special Olympics World Games end in Los Angeles, the mural project leaves a historical monument to our athletes’ spirit, determination and courage,” said Patrick McClenahan, president and CEO of LA2015, the Games Organizing Committee for this year’s event. “Toyota’s partnership and support of the mission of Special Olympics has helped us reach further in spreading the message of acceptance and to make a lasting impact.”

The Special Olympics World Games will be the largest sports and humanitarian event anywhere in the world in

2015, hosting 177 countries, 7,000 athletes and 3,000 coaches. It is the single biggest event in Los Angeles since the 1984 Olympic Games.

For more information about the Special Olympics World Games, visit www.LA2015.org. For information about Toyota's philanthropy programs, visit www.toyota.com/usa.