

Iowa Plane Pull Pushes Athletes Toward Special Olympic Dreams

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DES MOINES, Iowa -- Faith may move mountains, but determination and competition for a positive cause moved airplanes at the Des Moines International Airport on Saturday.

"It is the fastest pull. They pull the airplane 12 feet for the fastest time," said Plane Pull event coordinator Steve Palmer about the competition's objective.

Well over 300 people competed on 30 teams to raise money for Special Olympics Iowa and Iowa athletes like Lisa Spencer. Spencer is a silver medalist from the 2015 Special Olympics World Games. "It makes me feel like I'm not the only one with a disability and that I can compete in sports also," said Spencer.

Sponsored by the Lohse Family Foundation, competitors flexed their muscles in divisions of public safety, high school/collegiate, civic and

an open division. Spencer said, "It's so much fun. We have to work together as a team. You can pull a plane and it brings so much awareness to Special Olympics."

The effort on the runway and increased awareness helps pull the athletes throughout the year with various costs. "It is approximately 16,000 athletes for training, housing and uniforming," said Palmer.

Through events like Cop on Top, Plane Pull and the Polar Plunge, the Law Enforcement Torch Run in Iowa raised over \$800,000 last year for Special Olympics Iowa. It gives these athletes all they need to fly high in the athletic arena. Spencer said, "It's a special part of my heart, so it's great to see all these people want to raise money for it."

This is the Plane Pull's sixth year at the Des Moines International Airport. The cost per participant is \$50. More information about Special Olympics Iowa fundraisers can be found at their website www.soiowa.org.