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CONTACT: Sgt. Mark Horner, Missoula Police Department

PHONE: 552-6330

E-MAIL: mhorner@ci.missoula.mt.us

EAT A BURGER, TIP A COP

Saturday Event at Red Robin to Help Police Raise Money for Special Olympics Montana

Missoula Police Department officers will volunteer their time as celebrity waiters at Red Robin Gourmet Burgers at Southgate Mall on Saturday, April 17, to raise money for Special Olympics Montana.

The officers will work alongside Red Robin wait staff members from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Mayor John Engen will help launch the day as a celebrity host at 11 a.m.

Tip-A-Cop is an official Law Enforcement Torch Run fund-raising event. Here's how it will work: Officers will assist Red Robin staff waiters by filling water glasses, serving beverages and talking with restaurant patrons. After diners have ordered, officers will give them envelopes for Tip-A-Cop donations to Special Olympics Montana. They'll explain that the Tip-A-Cop donation is in addition to the real servers' tips. Donations can be made by cash, check or credit card.

"This is a great time to interact with officers outside their normal work week and get to know them," said Sgt. Mark Horner, Law Enforcement Torch Run coordinator. "And it's a great way to send Special Olympics athletes to the games at no cost to them."

The Law Enforcement Torch Run is a grassroots program that raises millions of dollars each year to benefit Special Olympics programs in the United States and other countries. The Torch Run began in Montana in 1985 and has raised thousands of dollars each year for Montana Special Olympics athletes. In Missoula, it's a collaborative effort of the Missoula Police Department and the Missoula County Sheriff's Department.

The national goal of the 2010 Red Robin Tip-A-Cop event is to raise at least \$850,000 to benefit Special Olympics programs. On Saturday, Missoula police officers will be joined in the effort by U.S. Forest Service law enforcement officers.

News reporters are welcome at Saturday's event.

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Ginny Merriam, Public Information/Communications Officer
552-6007 office
546-7692 cell