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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**North Suburban YMCA's Flying Turtles Celebrate 9th Year
Competing at the Special Olympics Illinois State Summer Games**

Northbrook, IL – September 2025 – The North Suburban YMCA's Special Olympics swim team, *The Flying Turtles*, made a splash at the 2025 Special Olympics Illinois State Summer Games, marking their ninth year of competition since the program was revitalized in 2016. The team's seven swimmers delivered outstanding performances, earning a total of **18 medals—including nine golds**. The highlight of the weekend came with the Flying Turtles' thrilling victory in the **4 x 100 relay race, where they captured first place**.

The three-day June event began on Friday evening with the Opening Ceremonies and parade of athletes, where teams were welcomed onto the field by law enforcement officers who helped raise over \$5 million for Special Olympics Illinois through their annual Torch Run. The Flying Turtles joined over 70 swim teams from across Illinois, competing in full-day events on Saturday and concluding on Sunday afternoon.

"This team embodies the heart of the Y—perseverance, teamwork, and community spirit," said Missy Contri, Director of Aquatics at the NSYMCA. "Our swimmers have trained hard all year, and to see their dedication rewarded at the State level is inspiring for the entire YMCA community."

Head Coach Tom March reflected on the team's growth: "When I became head coach in 2016, we set out to build something special, and these athletes have exceeded every expectation. Next year will mark our 10th anniversary, and it's incredible that some of the swimmers from our very first year are still with us today. That kind of commitment shows the true impact of this team."

As the Flying Turtles celebrate their achievements and look ahead to their 10th year, the North Suburban YMCA continues its commitment to supporting athletes of all abilities with opportunities for growth, competition, and lifelong friendships. The Flying Turtles participants range in age from 8-22 years old and have intellectual disabilities and on the spectrum of autism. The Y offers many special needs programs, with the Flying Turtles Swim Program being one of the longest running programs and most successful.

Other special needs programs at the NSYMCA include, Café Voca Vocational Programs, HAWKS High School and HAWKS inclusion camps, Special Needs exercise & yoga classes, art, dance, personal training and many other opportunities for individuals with special needs to learn and thrive. The Y also partners with NSSD, TruNorth and other agencies to provide well-rounded services to the community.

For more information, contact Ellen Mirochnick at EMirochnick@NSYMCA.org or visit www.nsymca.org.

About the [North Suburban YMCA](#)

The North Suburban YMCA services Northbrook and 15 surrounding communities with programs and tools that help its residents become healthier, more connected, and confident, ensuring that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. The NSYMCA focuses on Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility and is a charitable organization, inclusive and welcoming to all in our community. Learn more at NSYMCA.org.



Left: Eric Woodruff, Nate Freeman, Aidan Kulikowski, & Kai Miller of the NSYMCA Flying Turtles pose with local law enforcement while accepting their medals for first place 4 x 100 relay race at the Special Olympics in Bloomington/Normal, IL.



Caption: The NSYMCA Flying Turtles' Swim Team gather in the Opening Ceremony Parade at the Special Olympics in Bloomington/Normal, Illinois.



Caption: The NSYMCA Special Olympics Flying Turtles Swim Team gather at the Summer Games Opening Ceremony in Bloomington/Normal, Illinois.