



820 S. Kansas Ave. • Topeka, KS 66612  
(785) 235-2295 • Fax (785) 235-1308

## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Mitch Gross  
Executive Director  
(785) 235-2295  
[sunflowered@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sunflowered@sbcglobal.net)

### **Sunflower State Games Announce 2010 Athletes and Volunteer of the Year**

TOPEKA, KAN. – The Sunflower State Games is pleased to announce its annual Athlete and Volunteer of the Year Awards for 2010. Each year, one male and one female are selected by the organization for their outstanding achievements on and off the field of play. The Athlete of the Year recipients are role models for Kansans of all ages and represent the spirit of the Sunflower State Games, which embody leading a healthy lifestyle through participation in sports. The Volunteer of the Year awards is given to an individual who contributes their time and talent above and beyond the call of duty to assist in hosting the annual sports festival.

Justin Garrard, 23 from Overland Park, is named the 2010 Male Athlete of the Year after capturing four gold medals and one bronze medal in the 2010 Games. Garrard crossed the finish line first as the overall winner in the Governor's Cup 5K Run with a time of 15:47. The former Cross Country and Track standout at Ottawa University also won gold in the 800M, 1500M and 3000M in the Track and Field portion of the Sunflower State Games. In addition, Garrard competed in the 1500M Race-walk for the first time ever and took the bronze. "I am extremely excited to represent the Sunflower State Games as the Male Athlete of the Year," said Garrard. "The competition is great and I love the camaraderie that the Games provide. It is just plain fun." Garrard is currently a Graduate Assistant for the Cross Country and Track teams at Ottawa University.

Nikki Barrett, 29 from Waverly, is named the 2010 Female Athlete of the Year after leading her Soccer team to the Gold Medal in the Women's Open division. Barrett, a former soccer star at the University of Kansas, has been participating in the Sunflower State Games for seven years, winning Gold three times. Nikki uses the Sunflower State Games as motivation to stay in shape throughout the year and an opportunity to remain competitive at the age of 29. "I am shocked and humbled to be recognized as the Female Athlete of the Year. It is my hope that others will take this as motivation to follow in my footsteps to lead a healthy lifestyle and set a good example for their family," said Barrett, who is married with two children. Barrett's two year old daughter, Brooklyn, suffers from the rare pediatric condition known as Kabuki Syndrome. "I am driven to stay active and eat healthy to be a good role model for my family as we work together to overcome Brooklyn's condition," said Barrett.

Cheryl Evans, 48 of Topeka, is named the Volunteer of the Year after serving as a gym supervisor for the third consecutive year in the Sunflower State Games. An Environmental Scientist for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Evans volunteers because she enjoys working with kids and views it as an opportunity to give back to the community. "I like to see kids gain experience in such a positive setting. The Games provide these children an opportunity to participate in a professionally run event," said Evans. An avid basketball fan, Cheryl volunteered 50 hours over the two weekends of Adult and Youth Basketball. Evans also serves as a math tutor for students in her spare time.

The 2010 Sunflower State Games were held July 9-25 in Topeka with 7,616 athletes participating in 44 sports. Participation records were set in 21 of the 44 sports. Results for all sports are available at [www.sunflowergames.com](http://www.sunflowergames.com). The Sunflower State Games is a non-profit organization headquartered in Topeka. The Mission of the annual event is to promote physical fitness, personal health and well-being for Kansans of all ages and skill levels.

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