

SECTION 7

OUTREACH INITIATIVES

OUTREACH & SCHOOL INITIATIVES

UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

GET INTO IT

YOUNG ATHLETES

SO COLLEGE CLUBS

HEALTHY ATHLETES

OUTREACH

Board Resolution of Support - Reaching the Un-reached

Whereas, the mission of Special Olympics worldwide is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for all children and adults who are intellectually disabled or have closely-related developmental disabilities, and—

Whereas, the number of persons who are intellectually disabled currently being served worldwide is only a small portion of the children and adults eligible to be in Special Olympics, and -

Whereas, Special Olympics, Inc. has challenged everyone associated with Special Olympics to reach out and offer this great program to persons who are intellectually disabled not currently being served, now therefore,

Be it resolved, that the Board of Directors of Special Olympics Michigan wholeheartedly

supports the concept of providing the Special Olympics program to children and adults who are intellectually disabled not currently being served, and further,

Be it resolved, that the Board of Directors of Special Olympics Michigan does hereby challenge parents, volunteers, coaches, area program leaders, sponsors, staff and friends of Special Olympics Michigan to ensure that no eligible person who has an intellectual disability in Michigan is overlooked, as together we offer the tremendous opportunities available through sports training and athletic competition in Special Olympics.

Outreach Services

Outreach or athlete recruitment is a never-ending goal of Special Olympics Michigan. It is critical that the opportunity to participate is made available to any interested athlete. The resources listed below are available to assist in the recruitment process. Contact SOMI for outreach materials if you are seeking additional information.

School Initiatives

Unified Champion Schools

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools is an education-based project that uses the sports and education programs of Special Olympics to activate young people across the U.S in order to promote school communities where all young people are agents of change – fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics believes that through sports young people can make a difference in friendships, schools and communities.

Key Characteristics

- Youth Leadership
- Anti-Bullying Message
- Unifying Programming
- Positive School Climates

Core Activities:

Youth Leadership & Advocacy: Each school forms a Youth Activation Committee (YAC) comprised of students with and without disabilities that work with the school staff liaison to make decisions on Unified Champion Schools activities for the year. YACs plan and implement the program together. They also engage in community service projects together.

Whole School Engagement: Through anti-bullying R-word campaigns, students influence their school population to stop using the word retard(ed) as a put down. Campaigns are designed by the YAC and look different in each school. They may include things such as week-long banner signing projects, a week of morning messages or an assembly to name a few.

Inclusive Sports: Unified Sports combine students with and without disabilities on the same team as meaningful partners, creating friendships on and off the field through practice and competition. Students can participate within their school setting, against other schools or at Special Olympics competitions. At the elementary level schools Young Athletes may be used as the unified sports component.

To become a Unified Champion Schools, a school will commit to assign a liaison to work with a core group of students to form the Youth Activation Committee (YAC) for the school. They will plan and implement the Core Activities for the school year. Special Olympics Michigan

Unified Champion Schools staff will work directly with each school providing resources and support to ensure a quality program.

Funding may be available to start Unified Champion Schools in your school. Information can be found on our website – www.somi.org under the Unified Champion Schools tab. Complete a brief application and a SOMI staff member will contact you directly. If you have questions or need further information please contact us at: unifiedschools@somi.org

“Get Into It”

www.specialolympics.org/getintoit

Get Into It® is a set of free, K-12 service learning lessons and resources designed to advance student’s civic knowledge and skill development, while promoting acceptance and understanding to motivate youth to become advocates for and together with all people. The content of these lessons and activities are based on the ability, dedication, and inspiration found in the millions of Special Olympics athletes around the world. - Interactive lessons connecting skills from language arts, social studies, civics and more all available for free download online- A Discussion Board for educators and students to share about their experiences and earn chances to win prizes at www.facebook.com/projectunify- Engaging and powerful youth-oriented videos, and discussion starters on the Resources page: <http://tinyurl.com/GIIResources>- GII Active: A condensed version of the lessons with a focus on physical activities and discussions designed for recess, after-school programs, homeroom, or as a supplement to inclusive sporting activities. - Movies that Move: A collection of short clips from films and TV shows exploring themes of Different Abilities, Acceptance, Power of Words and Youth Leadership. This includes a teacher’s guide.

Young Athletes™ (YA)

Young Athletes is an early childhood sports play program for children ages 2-7 with intellectual disabilities and their peers, designed to introduce them into the world of sports. The benefits to this program have been proven worldwide. First and foremost, these activities help children improve physically, cognitively and socially. This program also raises awareness of the Special Olympics program and serves as an introduction to the resources and support available within Special Olympics Michigan.

Young Athletes is designed to address two specific levels of play. Level 1 includes physical activities focused on developing fundamental motor tracking and eye-hand coordination. Level 2 concentrates on the application of these physical activities through a sports skills activity program and developing skills consistent with Special Olympics sports play. The activities will consist of foundational skills, walking & running, balance & jumping, trapping & catching, throwing, striking, kicking and advanced skills. Special Olympics Michigan designed a training book with 10 lessons that is available to volunteers to run the program. We also provide a free play equipment kit which is filled with everything needed to implement the program.

There are several ways that Young Athletes are run in Michigan. In schools teachers are using our lessons and equipment to supplement what they are already doing. By teaming up with us they are teaching their students from a different perspective – sports. They also are able to enlist volunteers from High Schools or student clubs to partner with their students to provide valuable lessons to both age groups. Parents play groups and afterschool programs are another option. Volunteers use our available free materials to teach our Young Athletes skills and social interaction that will help them both in and out of the classroom. They are on their way to participation in Special Olympics Michigan sports program. We are also teaming up with colleges and universities to engage future leaders in our program. We provide training and materials and they run the program on campuses with the children. To download the Young Athletes Activity and Resource Guide go to <http://www.somi.org/x417.xml>.

SO College Clubs

What are SO College Clubs?

SO College Clubs are programs that connect college students and individuals with intellectual disabilities through sport to build friendships and help lead the social justice movement of Special Olympics. Created by college students for college students, the network seeks the membership of campuses that seek the common goals of enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and building a more accepting world for all. SO College Clubs host programs on campus, but also can support area programs.

Core Elements:

SO College Clubs are made up of three core elements: Inclusive Sports, Youth Leadership, and opportunities for Full Campus Involvement. Together these components can help students work for and with Special Olympics athletes to help transform school campuses into communities of acceptance and respect.

Sports:

Start an inclusive unified sports team comprised of college students and Special Olympics athletes; or host a local or state level Special Olympics event. Unified Sports can be comprised of competitive teams or as recreational sports just for fun.

Leadership:

SO College Clubs can function as a student-led club that is fully recognized by your school; or students can be a part of the Games Organizing Committee for the local or state Special Olympics.

Involvement:

Host an awareness campaign, such as Spread the Word the End the Word®; coach at the local level, or invite students to become Fans in the Stands at local Special Olympics games and cheer on the athletes or take the plunge.

Are you in?

For more information or to get an SO College Club started in your area contact, Dan Ekonen at Special Olympics Michigan
ekone1dk@cmich.edu

Healthy Athletes®

The mission of Healthy Athletes® is to improve athletes' ability to train and compete in Special Olympics. Athletes receive a variety of health screenings and services in a series of clinics conducted in a welcoming, fun environment.

Health care professionals and students are trained to provide the screenings in an effort to educate the professional community about the health needs and abilities of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Michigan provides the following services at various events throughout the state:

Opening Eyes®

- Provides vision screening services for athletes
- Provides refractive testing
- Fabricates eyeglasses as indicated
- Provides sunglasses and protective eyewear

Special Smiles®

- Screens the teeth, gums, tongue and mouth
- Educates about correct brushing and flossing
- Teaches the importance of diet to oral health
- Fabricates custom mouth-guards for contact sports
- Refers to community providers for necessary dental care

FUNfitness

- Surveys general exercise habits
- Assesses flexibility, functional strength and balance
- New assessment of aerobic fitness in 2005
- Educates in home exercises to improve performance
- Provides simple exercise tools
- Facilitates community referral as needed

Healthy Hearing

- Screens hearing acuity
- Creates custom swim plugs
- Makes minor repairs on hearing aids
- Consults on hearing aids, noisy environments
- Recommends medical or audiology evaluations

Health Promotions

- Content varies with the health needs of the population, e.g. U.S. Programs have focused on nutrition (prevention of obesity), hydration, skin protection, tobacco avoidance and bone health.
- Empowers and motivates athletes to make good lifestyle choices that will improve their long-term health-using interactive educational games, literature
- Health screenings at Games include BMI and BMD measurements and Bone Density testing.
- Seeks to find the best way to convey and reinforce key concepts and information to people with ID, to encourage healthy lifestyle choices.

Fit Feet

- Evaluate the skin, nails, bones and joints of the feet
- Examine the function of the foot and gait
- Examine the shoes and socks of athletes

Med Fest®

- Free health exams are conducted for athletes.

