



# Special Olympics Illinois

Special Olympics is a global organization that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sport, every day around the world. Special Olympics Illinois is a not-for-profit organization offering year-round training and competition in 18 sports for more than 23,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities and over 17,000 Young Athletes ages 2-7 with and without intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics transforms the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, allowing them to realize their full potential in sports and in life. Special Olympics programs enhance physical fitness, motor skills, self-confidence, social skills and encourage family and community support.

Special Olympics began in Illinois with the first games at Soldier Field in July 1968 thanks to the efforts of Eunice Kennedy Shriver and her peers. There are now more than 5 million athletes in 174 countries. Special Olympics is financially sound with diverse revenue streams, a thorough annual budget process and increasing organizational revenue streams. Special Olympics Illinois does not charge athletes or their families to participate in the program.

## OUR MISSION

Provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

## OUR REACH

- 23,197 athletes (children and adults) with intellectual disabilities
- 17,233 Young Athletes ages 2-7 with and without intellectual disabilities
- 48,100 volunteers and coaches
- 200 competitions each year
- 18 Olympic-type sports
- Programs in 11 Regions, each coordinated by a Region Director and a volunteer committee
- Dynamic sports and corporate partnership

## OUR SOLUTION

- **REAL SPORTS:** Deliver high-quality training and competition in an inclusive culture that stresses athletic excellence, rewards determination, emphasizes health and celebrates achievement.
- **ATHLETE HEALTH:** Promote the overall well-being of people with intellectual disabilities via programs that ensure ongoing access to quality, community-based health care services, highlighted by free health screenings at Special Olympics competitions, games and other venues.
- **TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION:** Equip young people and adult influencers with effective tools and training to create sports, classrooms and community actions that produce friendships and acceptance, driving positive attitude and behavioral change.
- **BUILD COMMUNITIES:** Marshal resources, implement diverse programming and act as a convening power of stakeholders to drive positive attitudinal and behavioral change toward people with intellectual disabilities in communities statewide, strengthening the fabric of society