



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**OVER 4, 000 ATHLETES COMPETE IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS ILLINOIS SUMMER GAMES**

**NORMAL, III.** –Special Olympics Illinois athletes from across the state will compete in the annual Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games on June 7-9. The weekend of competition is held at Illinois State University and Normal West High school campuses in Normal Illinois. Sports competition begins at noon Friday, June 7, and concludes by noon Sunday, June 9.

More than 4,000 athletes and Unified Partners are competing in 7 different sports, along with 1,700 coaches, 2,000 volunteers, and 3,300 family members. That totals over 10,000 people who attend Summer Games annually.

**Volunteers are still needed. Please visit <https://www.soill.org/event/summer-games/> to learn more or register.**

Special Olympics Illinois hosts over 200 competition events a year. Summer Games is the largest Special Olympics competition held throughout Illinois.

**Tentative Competition Times:**

Athletes compete in one of seven sports at various locations in Normal Illinois.

**Artistic Gymnastics @Horton Field House**

- Friday, Afternoon
- Saturday, All Day

**Athletics- @ ISU Track**

- Friday, Afternoon
- Saturday, All Day
- Sunday, Morning

**Bocce @ISU Soccer Stadium**

- Friday, Afternoon
- Saturday, All Day

**Powerlifting @Kingsley Jr. High**

- Friday, Afternoon (Weigh-Ins at Redbird Arena)
- Saturday, All Day
- Sunday, Morning

**Rhythmic Gymnastics @ Normal West High School**

- Saturday, All Day
- Sunday, All Day

**Soccer @ ISU Intramural Fields**

- Friday, Afternoon
- Saturday, All Day

**Swimming @ Normal West High School**

- Saturday, All Day
- Sunday, Morning

Special Olympics Illinois is offering a Unified bocce competition with about 140 people competing. Unified Sports® combine equal numbers of Special Olympics and non-Special Olympics athletes of similar age and ability on teams that compete against other Unified Sports® teams. In addition, there will be a Special Olympics Young Athletes Culminating Event on Friday, June 7. Special Olympics Young Athletes is a sports play program for children with intellectual disabilities and their peers (ages 2-7), designed to introduce them to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics eligibility at age 8.

**Special Olympics Illinois**

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Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation for the benefit of persons with intellectual disabilities



Young Athletes ages 6 & 7 with a valid medical application, will have the opportunity to choose between two transitional exhibitions. The 50-meter race (10 a.m. Saturday), tennis ball throw (12:20p.m Saturday) or soccer skills (1p.m. Saturday) will be held on Saturday (times tentative).

In the best Olympic tradition, the Opening Ceremony begins with the Parade of Athletes and Honorary Coaches into ISU's Hancock Stadium at 8 p.m. on Friday, June 7. The ceremony continues with the entry of the Final Leg of the Law Enforcement Torch Run®. With lit torches held high, officers representing each of the 23 legs of the Torch Run will enter the stadium and pass the torch to Special Olympics athletes who will light the cauldron holding the Flame of Hope, signifying the official opening of Summer Games.

The Victory Dance will be held in Uptown Normal from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Saturday, June 8. The dance gives the athletes a chance to celebrate their accomplishments.

The Healthy Athletes program offers health services and education to athletes, coaches and families in need. Athletes are encouraged to attend this **FREE** event! Healthy Athletes is located in Redbird Arena on the lower level concourse. All screenings are free and open to all Special Olympics athletes whether competing or not. This year, the following screenings will be offered:

- **Opening Eyes** - Vision Screenings – Friday: 12pm – 4pm; Saturday: 8am – 4pm
- **Healthy Hearing** Screenings – Friday: 12pm – 4pm; Saturday: 9am – 4pm
- **FunFitness** - Physical Therapy Screenings – Saturday: 9am – 3pm
- **Health Pavilion – Olympic Town** – Friday: 12pm – 3pm; Saturday: 9am – 3pm

\*The Health Pavilion consists of health education stations including Blood Pressure Screenings, Healthy Food Samples, Fitness Challenges, Fruit Infused Water & more.

Throughout the month of June, Casey's General Stores in Illinois will offer in-store promotions. Casey's will introduce the opportunity to "Round-Up" for Special Olympics at the register upon customer checkout. Special Olympics Illinois encourages you to stop by your local Casey's General Store to pick up your Law Enforcement Torch Run branded souvenir cup.

#### **Sponsors of 2019 Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games are:**

**2019 Gold Medal Sponsors:** Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Casey's General Stores, Illinois Knights of Columbus, Law Enforcement Torch Run, and United Airlines

**2019 Bronze Medal Sponsors:** American Legion and Auxiliary, Bloomington-Normal Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Jewel-Osco, Normal Firefighters IAFF Local #2442, and State Farm Insurance Companies

**2019 Venue Sponsors:** Alexander's Steak House, Avanti's Italian Restaurant, Heartland Coca Cola-Bottling, Hy-Vee, Illinois Secretary of State ABLE Program, Town of Normal, Uptown Normal, and Xfinity/Comcast

**2019 Media Sponsors:** Lamar, The Pantagraph, Radio Bloomington, and WMBD-TV

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Casey's General Store, Knights of Columbus, Law Enforcement Torch Run and United Airlines are all Official Partners of Special Olympics Illinois.

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. If you are interested in learning more about Special Olympics Illinois, volunteering or providing financial support to help make Special Olympics programs possible, contact your local Special Olympics agency, call 800-394-0562 or visit our website at [www.soill.org](http://www.soill.org). Follow Special Olympics Illinois on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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