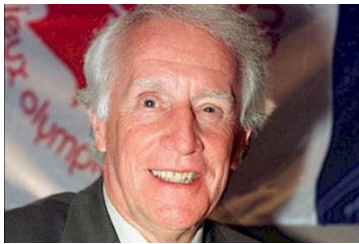


What is Special Olympics?

Special Olympics is a world-wide program providing sports training and competition for people with an intellectual disability. Sport Canada recognizes the Special Olympics organization as the main provider of these services to people whose primary diagnosis is an intellectual disability, although some participants also have physical challenges. Ontario is the largest program in Canada with over 16,000 athletes in programs across Ontario

The Birth of Special Olympics in Canada



In the early sixties, testing of children with intellectual disabilities revealed that they were only half as physically fit as their non-disabled peers. It was assumed that their low fitness levels were a direct result of their disability. A Toronto researcher, Dr. Frank Hayden, questioned this assumption.

Dr. Hayden conducted research, which concluded that given the opportunity; intellectually disabled people could become physically fit, and acquire the physical skills necessary to participate in sport.

Inspired by his discoveries, Dr. Hayden began searching for ways to develop a national sports program for people with an intellectual disability. His work came to the attention of the Kennedy Foundation in Washington, D.C. and led to the creation of Special Olympics. The first sports competition organized under the Special Olympics banner was held at Soldier's Field in Chicago in 1968.

Dr. Frank Hayden

Professor Emeritus at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada, Dr. Hayden has also served on the faculties of the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario. From 1975 to 1981 he was Director of the School of Physical Education and Athletics at McMaster.



He has a special interest in sport and fitness programs for children, particularly for those classified as developmentally disabled.

A graduate of the University of Illinois' Physical Fitness Research Laboratory, he has spent over 40 years designing and evaluating exercise and sport programs. In 1966, he co-authored the first national study of the fitness of Canadian children, a project which involved 11,000 boys and girls from coast to coast and provided the basis for the Centennial Fitness Program and, later, the Canada Fitness Awards. He also co-developed and co-authored the R.C.A.F.'s famous 5BX Program.

For seven years, Dr. Hayden served as a Director at the Kennedy Foundation in Washington, D.C. His work there ranged from developing new concepts in playground design to the establishment of federal legislation to assist persons with a disability. Perhaps his most significant accomplishment was the creation and development of "Special Olympics". This program of sport



training and competition for people with an intellectual disability currently involves 1.3 million participants in 150 countries. The tenth World Summer Games were held in June, 1999, in North Carolina, USA and involved 7,000 competitors from those countries. 2000 athletes from 80 countries competed in the Sixth World Winter Games in Toronto and Collingwood in February of 1997.

From 1981 to 1984, Dr. Hayden took leave from McMaster, established Special Olympics' Office of International Development, and served as its first Director. He designed and directed international growth of the program from 15 national organizations to 50. His travels have taken him across Europe, South and Central America, Asia and the South Pacific, Africa and the Middle East, North America and the Caribbean.



In 1988, Dr. Hayden took early retirement from McMaster and moved to Paris to establish and direct the Office of European Affairs for Special Olympics International. In the two years which followed, 13 new national organizations were created in Europe, making a total of 30, stretching from Moscow to Reykjavik and Oslo to Nicosia. A total of 2,300 athletes from those countries competed at the European Summer Games in Glasgow, Scotland in July, 1990.

The Paris Office became the focal point of promotion, communication and technical assistance for sport training and competition for the mentally handicapped in Europe. In October, 1990, Dr. Hayden turned over the office and European affairs to European personnel and returned to Canada. From 1994 to 2000 he served as Special Consultant to Canadian Special Olympics.

In December, 1994, citing "his outstanding and lasting contributions to the lives of people with intellectual disabilities through sport", MacLean's magazine named Dr. Hayden to its Honour Roll of 12 Outstanding Canadians.

In 1996 Dr. Hayden was the recipient of the prestigious Royal Bank Award for "Canadians who have made an important contribution to human welfare and the common good".

In March, 1997, as part of its 20th Anniversary celebration, The Toronto Eaton Centre included Dr. Hayden among the distinguished group of individuals they honoured for having achieved excellence in their fields and for having made substantial contributions to the civic life in Toronto. That same month he was made an Honorary and Permanent Member of the Canadian Olympic Association.

On April 22, 1997, Dr. Hayden was introduced in the Canadian House of Commons in Ottawa and honoured at a Parliamentary reception hosted by the Speaker. Later that year he was presented with the Alumni Community Service Award by the University of Western Ontario Alumni Association. He was awarded the honorary degree, Doctor of Laws, by McMaster University in 1997, the University of Calgary in 1998 and the University of Toronto in 1999. Also in 1999, he was named an Officer of the Order of Canada and in 2000 was appointed a Citizenship Judge by the Privy Council of Canada.

