

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



**Special
Olympics**
Ontario





motionball™

FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS
POUR OLYMPIQUES SPÉCIAUX



motionball is a national non-profit that empowers young Canadians to be leaders in their communities, raising funds and awareness for Special Olympics through integrated social and sporting events. To get involved, visit www.motionball.com

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program



CAMPARI



ONE MAN. ONE GROUNDBREAKING VISION. MILLIONS OF LIVES CHANGED.

It was the early 1960s when Dr. Frank Hayden, a sports scientist and Faculty Member at the University of Toronto, began a study of children with intellectual disabilities. Guided by vision, belief, focus and determination, Dr. Hayden proved that, given the right opportunities, people with an intellectual disability could develop the fundamental skills to participate in sport and become physically fit.

**"Sport is a catalyst that
creates a more inclusive
world for all."**

-Dr. Frank J. Hayden

His ground-breaking research and development of a national sports program for people with an intellectual disability captured the attention of Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Kennedy Foundation. Thus, Special Olympics was born.



To honour Dr. Hayden's inspiring legacy and to continue his pioneering and pivotal research, his alma mater, the University of Western Ontario, established the Dr. Frank J. Hayden Chair in Sport and Social Impact within Western's Faculty of Health Sciences. The \$3 million Hayden Chair endowment advances Western's Sport and Social Impact Research Group, an integrated team of scholars, graduate students, and partner organizations who study the social impact of sport and physical activity on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Western's Sport and Social Impact Research Group transfers research and knowledge

to Special Olympics and their communities, athletes, families and supporters. It also propels the Special Olympics movement worldwide to empower people with an intellectual disability to discover their ability within sport and competition, and to apply their capabilities through their schools, communities and workplaces.

26,196 total athletes
participating in 2019

49% of athletes under the age of 21

**SPORT AND SOCIAL
IMPACT**

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Tess Trojan

Athlete Representative



Warren Somers

*President, CTI Working
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DEVELOPING STUDENT AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs) provide athletes with skills and tools to become active leaders in their communities and within the Special Olympics movement. Workshops such as Governance & Social Media, Healthy Lifestyles, and Speaker Training empower athletes with opportunities and experiences beyond sport training and competition.



Toronto athlete, **Callum Denault**, displayed his leadership and presentation skills while interviewing WWE Superstar, Becky Lynch. Callum asked Becky about wrestling, her feelings on being in the WWE, and challenged her for her

championship belt! Callum also paddled with other WWE Superstars during the local canoeing day and proudly shared what being a Special Olympics athlete means to him.

ALPs have given many young athletes the confidence, knowledge, and ability to become public speakers, athlete health advocates, peer

mentors, team captains, community athlete representatives, and members of the Athlete Leadership Council. Most importantly, athletes have an active voice in shaping the movement, and have fun while sharing their personal Special Olympics story.



After completing Athlete Leader training, Ajax athlete **Justin Williams** represented his school and community on the Toronto Football Club (TFC) unified team. It was an incredible opportunity for Justin to compete in Orlando, Florida against teams from across North America, capping it off with a match against Montreal back in Toronto.

ALPs workshops are held regularly in communities throughout Ontario. Athlete participants often attend with a mentor: parent, coach, sibling, or support worker. Mentors assist the athletes with their workshop training and provide ongoing support and encouragement as the athletes put their skills to work and as they explore the many new opportunities now open to them.



ALPs catchphrase for 2020 is MORE. More courses over an expanded network. More ways for athletes to influence their teams and community. Connecting with more high schools to give younger athletes the tools required to grow within the movement. More opportunities for athletes to attend events across the province and execute their new skills with even more support.

REGISTRATION BY THE NUMBERS

107 Community Athletes

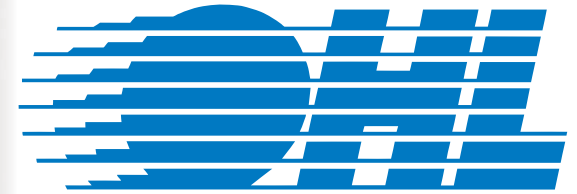
63 Community Mentors

24 High School Athletes

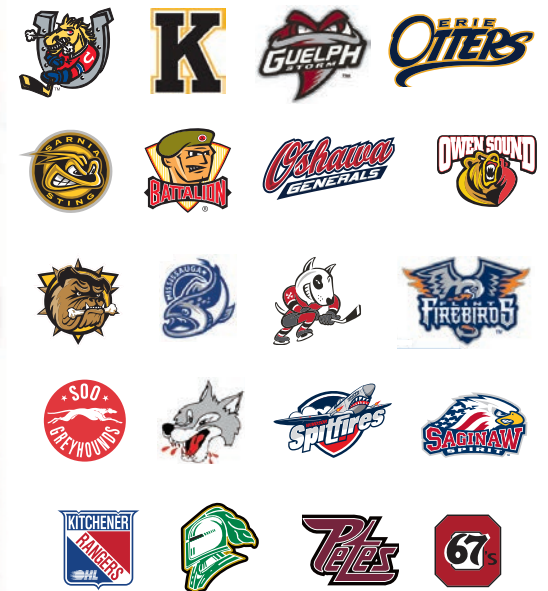
25 High School Mentors

19 Youth Summit Athletes

**ATHLETE
LEADERSHIP**



The Ontario Hockey League has been a proud and enthusiastic supporter of Special Olympics for over 20 years. Their commitment and dedication truly makes a difference in the lives of individuals with an intellectual disability. We look forward to continuing our partnership for many more years to come.



WE ALL SMILE IN THE SAME LANGUAGE

SMILE is a faith-based organization providing a range of support services, programs, and events for children and youth with disabilities and their families. During a conversation at the 2014 SMILE Gala, members of SMILE and Special Olympics Ontario recognized they shared a common goal: to motivate, stimulate, and activate individuals with an intellectual disability, and to create awareness among all Canadians of the importance and value of an inclusive society.

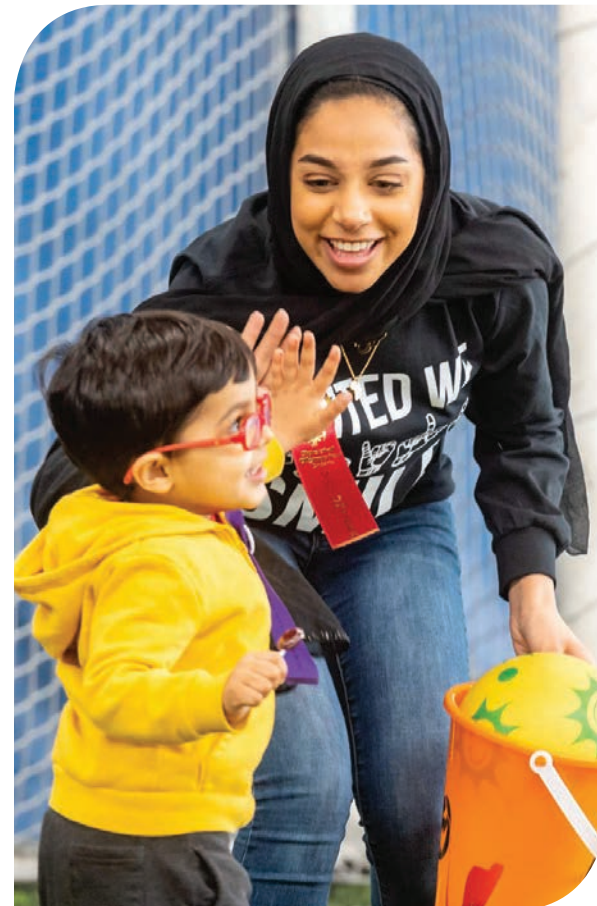
The two organizations began brainstorming ideas and options to advance their shared

goal. After many discussions, REC-FEST was born. The vision was to celebrate diversity in the community by hosting the ultimate social gathering, with a strong emphasis on sports and physical activity for people of all abilities. Athletic games and activities at this event include basketball, soccer, curling, floor hockey, mini putt, a bouncy castle obstacle course, a fun photobooth, and more.

200 people attended the first REC-FEST in 2014. In 2019 attendance more than tripled to 700, plus 50 volunteers. Attendees included Toronto Argonauts players, Mississauga Fire Fighters, Mississauga Sports Council, Mississauga Power Basketball, the Mississauga Hall of Fame,

"There is no question that Canada is a country with an increasingly diverse population. Communities are being challenged as never before to respond to a complex range of needs, while building resources and tools that are welcoming and inclusive. It has been a great honour and pleasure to partner with Special Olympics in raising awareness about the challenges and strength of diversity, and the critical need for mutual respect and understanding. This partnership enables both our organizations to foster compassion, connection, and belonging. We bring people together, break down barriers, dispel myths, create opportunities, and change attitudes."

-Mazlina Khan, Program Coordinator SMILE



Peel Police, SMILE members, and Special Olympics athletes, coaches, family, and friends. It is true evidence of inclusion from all walks of the community.

**SMILE
REC-FEST**



Special thanks to our partners
for their support in bringing the
2019 Special Olympics Ontario
Invitational Youth Games to life:

HOSTED BY:



"Special Olympics Ontario is the gold standard for what a charity should be, and it's because of the amazing people who lead the way. I cannot thank you enough for all that you do."

- Coach Jaimen Allison, Woodstock, Ontario

THE GREATEST EXPERIENCE OF OUR LIVES

Toronto was proud host to the inaugural Special Olympics Ontario Invitational Youth Games, from May 14-17, 2019. This international event focused both on sport competition and ancillary legacy programs for youth leaders, educators, sport developers, and partners from around the globe.

The Invitational Youth Games (IYG) were created with a vision of sharing the successes of Ontario's School Championships program. Launched in 2011, the School Championships program provides opportunities for high school athletes with an intellectual disability to compete on a team with like-ability school peers, compete against other schools in their communities, and to qualify for provincial competition.



"We experienced an "Olympic Dream!" Special thank you to Special Olympics Ontario, Toronto Law Enforcement, and the volunteers. What you did for all of the participants in the 2019 Special Olympics Invitational Youth Games was pure greatness!"

- Sonya Lee, Ascension Collegiate, Newfoundland

**INVITATIONAL YOUTH
GAMES**

The IYG acted as International Games for athletes aged 13-21, many of whom represented their home school as opposed to their home country, as is traditional.

Schools from Canada, the US, and around the world were invited to compete, and left with a network and the tools to continue to grow programming in their home communities. Within Ontario, the IYG boasted participation and volunteerism from every corner of the province.

The games, their qualifying competitions, and the multitude of local send-off and fundraising events throughout 2019 have recruited future athletes and volunteers, activated returning and new local funders and supporters, motivated youth leaders of the future, and most importantly, brought awareness to all Special Olympics programming and the organization to communities across Ontario and the world.

LARGEST SPECIAL OLYMPICS GAMES
HOSTED IN CANADA

4 days **5** sports **500** coaches **2,000** athletes

COUNTLESS MEMORIES

INVITATIONAL YOUTH GAMES



"My students are a changed group with so much more confidence. The whole experience was fantastic for students, coaches, and teachers. The games opened my eyes and I feel I am a better person for it. I am so looking forward to attending future games. Thank You!"

*- Kevin Robinson, Iroquois Falls
Secondary School*

2019 PROVINCIAL FLOOR HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2019 Provincial Floor Hockey Championships were a world-class competition that every athlete, coach, family member, and spectator enjoyed. Hosted in conjunction with the Invitational Youth Games, 44 teams competed at the Toronto International Centre. Twenty-three Intermediate Division teams, 14 School Traditional Division teams, and seven School Unified Division teams from Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Ontario, and Chicago played the sport they love over three days of competition.

Games in all divisions ended in tie-breakers. After the competition, teams met with NHL Alumni players to honour the Humboldt Hockey team during a memorial hockey stick presentation. It was an unforgettable evening, as the athletes then visited the Hockey Hall of Fame for a victory celebration in their honour.





WIZARD FOUNDATION

Since 1988, the Wizard Foundation - with the generous support of sponsors and participants - has raised over \$1.7 million from their events benefiting Special Olympics Ontario.

Your continued support of the movement has made a lasting impact in thousands of lives. On behalf of athletes from across the province, thank you!

2019 PROVINCIAL WINTER GAMES

Sault Ste. Marie Police Service proudly hosted the 2019 Provincial Winter Games from January 31 to February 3. The weather was frigid, but that didn't discourage Special Olympics athletes and volunteers! Over 400 athletes, coaches, and team managers participated in the event.



The opening ceremony introduced Indigenous culture to the captive audience. Drummers and dancers led each team in the parade. The first medal of the Games was presented to Robbie Lewis by his brother, Chris Lewis, Commissioner (Ret.) Ontario Provincial Police. Robbie won gold for the cross country skiing 10km race. Another 700 medals were presented throughout an incredible three-day event.

Congratulations to all athletes who qualified to compete at the 2020 National Winter Games. High five to everyone who participated!

2019 PROVINCIAL BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

250 bowlers competed in single and team competitions at the 2019 Provincial Bowling Championships, held from June 6-7 at Neb's Funworld in Oshawa. Well done to all the athletes for their excellent performance, with a special shout-out to the bowlers with the highest scores: Ryan Kulikowski with a 359 and Jessica Benard with a 255. Sixty bowlers will advance to the 2020 National Winter Games in Thunder Bay.



**MAJOR
GAMES**

2019 WORLD GAMES

7000 athletes from 190 countries came together in Abu Dhabi and Dubai for the 2019 Special Olympics World Games, from March 14 to 21. Among them were 109 athletes from Canada, along with 37 coaches and 17 mission staff. Abu Dhabi hosted competition for: 10-pin bowling, basketball, bocce, golf, powerlifting, rhythmic gymnastics, and soccer; while Dubai hosted athletics and swimming. Team Canada brought home an astounding 155 medals!



"The 2019 World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi were amazing! Special Olympics has changed my life and helped me overcome social challenges and accomplish many sporting feats and public presentations I never thought possible."

-Tess Trojan, Athlete

**MAJOR
GAMES**

THANK YOU



For over five decades, the Knights of Columbus has contributed endless support that has been fundamental to the success of Special Olympics. This commitment and dedication has helped to impact thousands of athletes while spreading our values of inclusivity and respect, for which we are deeply grateful.

ontariokofc.ca

"THANK YOU FOR GIVING US FUNDAMENTAL HOPE ...

... you've given Alma joy in achievement, encouragement to explore, and belief for what she'll do next."

Special Olympics Ontario is proud of the 'Building a Bridge for Alma' campaign as part of the first Invitational Youth Games. The Special Olympics Ontario School Championships program initiative launched in 2011 to address a concern for Special Olympics Ontario athletes who were not discovering local programming until after high school. The program's goal was to cover the bridge between Active Start,

"Special Olympics Ontario has invested in my child's potential since she was two years old. From Active Start to the Invitational Youth Games, I know what is possible for my daughter, what she can achieve. Thank you."

**-Melanie Cote,
Alma's Mom**



a family-centric activity program for children aged 2-6, and for Special Olympics Ontario's many other programs for athletes 21 and over.

The Unified Sport Program and the Special Olympics Ontario School Championships program provides opportunities for high school athletes with an intellectual disability to compete on a team with school peers, and to have opportunities to compete against other

schools in their communities with the chance to qualify for a provincial competition, similar to the opportunities available to their mainstream student peers. The Invitational Youth Games brought the Special Olympics Ontario School Championships program to an international level.

**BUILDING A BRIDGE
FOR ALMA**



Sobeys Inc. is a proud national partner of Special Olympics Canada. This partnership is the first of its kind, addressing the need for increased nutrition education and resources for Canadians with an intellectual disability.

Since 2016, Sobeys has contributed over \$3.8 million in support of nutrition education, food access and local community programming.

Thank you Sobeys for your continued support of Canadians with an intellectual disability.

[sobeys.com](https://www.sobeys.com)



LIGHTING THE WAY FOR ACCEPTANCE AND INCLUSION

Many Special Olympics volunteers and supporters become involved through family or friends. Many others find a different path to inclusion. The Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) is one of them.

"I've been blessed most of my life with the company of special people. From a childhood playmate to summer jobs, I always gravitated to roles where I worked with special people. The countless benefits included lessons in humility, shared achievements, and the endless laughter. I was always happy then and when I became a cop, things changed.

The first twenty years, I had a great career. I worked in all areas of police work that interested me. I had cool hair, a cool suit and a shiny Detective's badge, but something was missing, I just didn't know what.

Then I found Special Olympics, and during the "high fiving" of my first LETR event, I knew. I found what I had been missing. I saw how the athletes appreciated us, unconditionally. They didn't care about race, creed or what colour our skin or shirts were, and we weren't labeled any



of the horrible terms that police are subject to. The athletes loved us, and we loved them back.

It was a remarkable turning point and refocused my purpose. LETR and Special Olympics Ontario gave me a place where I could belong, bring that positivity back in my life, and gave me a vehicle to help others. In Peer Support, I see jaded coppers and civilians suffering from the negative effects of law enforcement, as well as carrying the weight of everyday life.

I always say: 'You obviously need some positivity in your life to balance the negative. You should

volunteer with Special Olympics Ontario.' Many took my advice and jumped onboard. As soon as they interacted with the athletes, the transformation was immediate. They came from a dark place and saw the light."

- Staff Sergeant Shawn McCowell (RET)
Peer Support Consultant/Trainer
Boots on the Ground
The Centre for Trauma Recovery & Growth

**LAW ENFORCEMENT
TORCH RUN**



Helping to make a difference

The "Special Supporter Golf Series" provides golf tournaments with a "Hole-in-One" program that brings added value and excitement to their event by providing them with contests and prizes for a "Hole-in-One", "Closest to the Pin" or for just "Landing on the Green". By making a donation to Special Olympics Ontario, events receive the services of this program for *FREE*, plus they also receive an invitation to play in the "Tournament of Champions" golf event held at a prestigious ClubLink facility. This year's event took place on Monday, September 30th at The Country Club in Woodbridge.



**To learn more about this program,
please contact John Bonis at 416.801.8023
or visit: www.goforthegreen.ca**

THANK YOU to the following sponsors of the "Special Supporter Golf Series"



PRODUCT OF CALIFORNIA



LETR is one of the largest public awareness and grassroots fundraising organizations for Special Olympics worldwide. Over 10,000 active Law Enforcement personnel in Ontario participate in LETR events every year.

2019 was a banner year for the Ontario LETR. LETR members, known as the "Guardians of the Flame," ran the torch from Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario to open the 2019 Special Olympics Ontario Provincial Winter Games. In May, the "Flame of Hope" was lit in Chicago, Illinois (the home of the first ever Special Olympics Games) and proceeded to light the cauldron to open the inaugural Invitational Youth Games in Toronto.

This year marked the 15th Anniversary of the Paris, Ontario Truck Convoy for Special Olympics supported by LETR. The event raised \$133,000, which makes it the first Truck Convoy in the world to raise over \$1 Million for Special Olympics since its inception. This year also saw 23 Polar Plunge events across the Province raise a record \$500,000.

Thank you to all members of Law Enforcement for your continued support and dedication.

\$3,300,000 raised in 2019

\$10,750,000 raised since 2015

Over 80 cents of every dollar raised directly supports Special Olympics athletes



**LAW ENFORCEMENT
TORCH RUN**



POSITIVELY INFLUENCING THE HEALTH & OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE OF ATHLETES AND FAMILIES

People with intellectual disabilities and their families face many barriers to health care. Special Olympics Health Programs provide important health promotion resources, working with athletes, coaches, and families to co-create strategies and tools to improve their overall health and well-being. The programs also collect valuable research on the health disparities experienced by people with intellectual disabilities, to learn what changes need to be made.

Special Olympics Health Programs work to connect athletes and their families to healthcare professionals in their communities who have experience providing care to people with intellectual disabilities. In addition, hundreds of health care professionals have received training on how to care for these patients and their unique needs, in hopes that they will be better able to treat this population in the future.

Healthy Community Healthy Eyes launched in 2019. The aim of this pilot program is to connect athletes and their families to one of four optometrists in the Greater Toronto Area with experience providing care to people with intellectual disabilities. The Healthy Communities Healthy Eyes pilot is being evaluated throughout implementation to monitor success and identify areas for improvement, with an ultimate goal of scaling the program and partnerships throughout Ontario.



"Healthy Communities Healthy Eyes is a fantastic initiative. It is wonderful Special Olympics Ontario is working to connect athletes and families to health care professionals in the

community, including optometrists and dentists, who have experience providing care to people with intellectual disabilities. This will help athletes perform at their best, both on and off the playing field" – Elisaveta, mother of Special Olympics Ontario Athlete.

Healthy Athletes at Invitational Youth Games

Over 100 health care professionals and 400 volunteers, across seven different medical disciplines, delivered 1,080 athlete health screenings over two days at the inaugural Invitational Youth Games. This initiative exposed both athletes and clinicians to a group many were previously unfamiliar with. The volunteer base included medical professionals and students in physiotherapy, medicine, optometry, dentistry, podiatry, nursing, health promotion, social work and more.



**ATHLETE
HEALTH**

Screening identified over 200 athletes who required follow-up care. These cases had either gone undetected by the athletes' regular healthcare provider, or the athletes had been unable to receive this type of healthcare prior to the Healthy Athletes screening. Athletes were also educated on techniques and practices for improving or maintaining their health at home.

DEVELOPMENT OF MYPAHL



MyPAHL is a fun, interactive, online health and fitness program that guides Special Olympics athletes on a personal wellness journey. Athletes receive a personalized health action plan and earn reward points for monitoring, learning, and improving their health. As points accumulate, athletes may bid on great prizes for their chance to win.

Partnerships, placements & positive outcomes

During a placement with Special Olympics Ontario, two occupational therapy students from the University of Toronto developed an occupational therapy screening/education program for athletes, and developed a course for occupational therapists: The Role

of Occupational Therapists in Supporting Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities Across the Lifespan. The course is available at no cost on Special Olympics Canada's online learning portal.

The health team worked with a professor at the University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy on a scoping review, examining what is known about the roles of pharmacists in supporting medication use amongst people with intellectual disabilities. The manuscript has been completed and submitted to a professional journal.

In collaboration with two researchers from the University of Toronto, Special Olympics Ontario received funding to complete a three-year study examining how participation in Special Olympics can contribute to a sense of belonging for athletes. Three Special Olympics athletes are on the research team, participating in regular meetings, contributing to decision making, and aiding in the development of research material.

Special Olympics Ontario's health team regularly engages with the University of Toronto School of Medicine to host second and third year medical students. In 2019, the health team hosted two medical students who contributed to developing educational sexual health resources for people with intellectual disabilities and their families. Research demonstrates that people with an intellectual disability and their families



Health, Wellness and Fitness Coordinators provide a stronger focus for community-based health programs.

experience barriers when trying to access appropriate supports and sexual education resources. Two new medical students will continue this important work in the coming year.

11 Healthy Athlete events in 2019

2,505 health screenings delivered

520 volunteer participants (including medical professionals and students)

555 athletes flagged as requiring follow-up care after a Healthy Athletes screening

**FAMILIES & YOUNG
ATHLETES**

PLATINUM



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staples
work. learn. grow.

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Coca-Cola Canada

GREY
Famously effective since 1917

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SILVER



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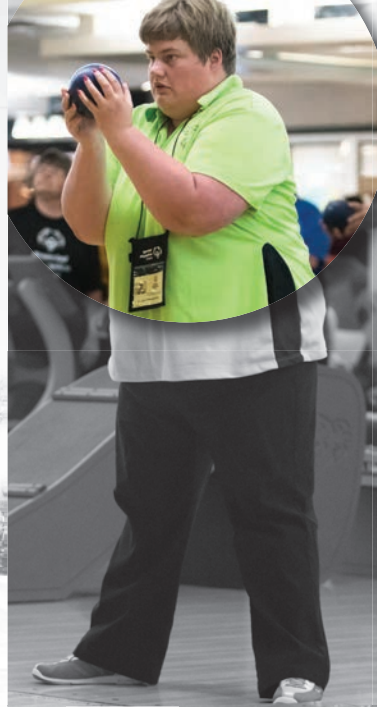
Canadian Progress Club
Club Progrès du Canada

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HEALTH GROUP

FRIENDS



NATIONAL
PARTNERS



staples TM
work. learn. grow.

For 23 years, Staples Canada has been an invaluable partner with Special Olympics Canada, raising close to \$7 million in support of Canada's Special Olympics athletes. Over the two decade partnership, Staples has donated generous gifts and other fundraising.

Special Olympics Ontario is grateful for the long-lasting partnership with Staples Canada, who have made the mission of Special Olympics a part of their belief system. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts, but more importantly so do the athletes that you support.

staples.ca



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PASSION AND DEDICATION!

PRESIDENT'S AWARD: JANET ANNING - MINDEMOYA

Janet has been actively involved with Special Olympics since 2006, when she recognized a need in her community and convinced family and friends to join her in the movement.

As Community Coordinator and Coach for Special Olympics Manitoulin, Janet has seen her chapter grow from one sport to seven. She has coached athletics, 5-pin bowling, nordic skiing, golf, curling, floor hockey, and snowshoeing.

Reflecting on her 13 years in full, Janet says she has been blessed with many great opportunities, from attending multiple Regional, Provincial, and National Games to the very proud moment when four of her athletes attended World Games.

"We have a great Community Group on Manitoulin Island. We are a second family. I couldn't imagine my life without being involved in Special Olympics." - Janet Anning



ATHLETE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: STEPH SMITH - WASAGA BEACH

Steph became a Special Olympics athlete in 1993, when a friend invited her to join the softball team her father was organizing. Since then, Steph has participated in many different sports and always tries her best to excel. She respects her coaches, tries to follow their instructions and recommendations, and arrives fully prepared for training and competitions. She is always willing to help with set up or tear down. When Steph does well in a competition, she gives personal letters of thanks to her coaches for helping her develop the skills she needed for that success.

Steph is very involved in the Law Enforcement Torch Run. She represented Canada in the Final Leg in 2011, running throughout the Greek Islands with officers from all over the world, and speaking about Special Olympics. Steph regularly participates in the Race for Plunkett, dedicated to York Regional Police Officer Rob Plunkett who was killed in the line of duty in 2007. Officer Plunkett was a very special person in Steph's life, and she feels a responsibility to honour his memory.



Steph is also a great mentor for newer athletes and for those just developing their skills. Steph has been an athlete representative on three different local councils. This spring, Steph was awarded Female Athlete of the Year by the Town of Wasaga Beach, in recognition of her achievements in alpine ski racing at the 2019 Provincial Winter Games.

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS ONTARIO 2019
PROVINCIAL AWARD RECIPIENTS**

FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR: SOPHIE ANNE LACOURSE-PUDIFIN - *CHELSEA*

Sophie has been enjoying Special Olympics for over 11 years, competing at progressively higher levels of competition in rhythmic gymnastics and alpine skiing. She excelled in rhythmic gymnastics at the Special Olympics National Summer games in Antigonish, Nova Scotia in 2018. In March 2019, Sophie proudly placed first overall in Level 4, winning seven gold medals for Canada at the 2019 World Games in Abu Dhabi.



Always willing to mentor and encourage others, Sophie leads warm up exercises and helps less experienced athletes learn new skills. Her goals this year are to revise her rhythmic gymnastics routines to new music, while adding a few new sports to her training plan. She also plans to help an Active Start group (ages 2-6) learn gymnastics skills.

Sophie recently joined a golf program, and just finished her first regatta this year in kayaking. She participates in fundraising events for Special Olympics whenever she can. Having just finished high school, she has started job hunting while waiting to get into college. She is also an avid photographer, and is working on building her portfolio.

MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR: MATTHEW BEDARD - *MANITOWANING*

If you think he is fast now, you should have seen him at birth. Matt came on the scene so fast, his father had to deliver him on Manitoulin Island, thereby making him an official "Hawearer", a term reserved for those born on the island.



Matt is heavily involved and dedicated to both summer and winter sports. He competed in the 2017 World Games in Austria, and will proudly inform anyone of his times. He also received his black belt in karate in 2010. Matt lives with his father, Michael, on Manitoulin Island, and helps with maple syrup production, wood milling, and carpentry. Matt attended the CICE program at Sault Ste. Marie College and received certification in culinary arts. He remains active on the cooking scene: Matt works at the Anchor Inn Restaurant in Little Current; operates a sausage cart at the popular Cup and Saucer hiking trail on the island; helps his father with the wood-fire pizza oven at the camp; and caters private functions to help raise money for Special Olympics events.

"Matt remains a gentle, strong soul in a turbulent world, and has, along with his sister, made me extremely proud. I would like to thank the greater Special Olympics community from the bottom of my heart, for giving him this incredible, life-changing opportunity."

- Michael Bedard

MALE COACH OF THE YEAR: ALBERT SEALE - *TIMMINS*

Albert has five children - his youngest is autistic and his second youngest has special needs. His older brother also has special needs, and this is what inspired Albert to begin his long coaching career.

Albert played floor hockey with his brother and his team from the late '80s to the mid '90s. Albert entered their team in a ball hockey league, where they took second place in the finals. In the mid '90s he coached a group of 12-16-year-olds in generic select soccer.

Albert became Head Coach for Timmins Special Olympics soccer in 2007, taking his team to the 2010 National Games in London and the 2017 National Games in British Columbia. In 2008, he also took over as Head Coach in floor hockey. He was Head Coach for Team Ontario at the 2018 National Games in Nova Scotia, where Brampton qualified for the World Games. Albert has travelled to many Provincial Games, and assists with coaching basketball as well. He is also involved in the Timmins FUNdamentals Program (ages 7-12) for floor hockey and soccer.



FEMALE COACH OF THE YEAR: DONNA EDWARDS - *AJAX*

Donna Edwards is a parent of two children with special needs. She coaches rhythmic gymnastics in the Greater Durham community, and is the Provincial Convener for rhythmic gymnastics.

Donna began volunteering with Special Olympics Ontario over 19 years ago, when her daughter Victoria started figure skating with the Ajax Rising Stars. Her son Jonathan also skated with the club. Donna has volunteered in various roles over the years: coach, Community Council Treasurer, local club fundraiser, Community and Regional Secretary, Regional Chair, and Team Manager of Region 12 for the Special Olympics Winter Games in 2011, to name a few.

Donna's passion for rhythmic gymnastics (RG) started in 2001 when Victoria joined the team. When the Head Coach retired, Donna would not let the club fold, as she saw first-hand the many benefits her daughter and other athletes received from participating. She became National Coaching Certification Program certified in 2003 and then RG certified, enabling the club to continue. She attended her first Summer Provincial Games in Niagara in 2005. She has coached at four Provincial, three National, and two World Games: Assistant Coach in Los Angeles, 2015 and Head Coach in Abu Dhabi, 2019.

Donna continually strives to increase her knowledge to provide the strongest programs for her athletes, and to share her experience and expertise to help programs continue to grow in Ontario and across Canada.



TOGETHER WE ARE CHANGING LIVES



**Special
Olympics**
Canada Foundation

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: KRIS NYHOUT - LONDON

Armed with a background in public relations and feature writing, Kris enthusiastically took on the role of Public Relations Coordinator on London's Community Council. For the past eight years, she has worked in this role to raise the profile of the athletes and the Special Olympics movement. In 2011, Kris approached the London Council to hold a gala to educate more people in the community about the importance of Special Olympics. Eight annual galas later, Kris still chairs this event that has become more than just a public relations initiative - it is now London's largest fundraiser, having raised well over \$200,000 for their programs. Each year Kris works with a group of athletes to present a fun skit at the gala. For regular attendees, the athlete portion of the evening is always the highlight and is yet another way to showcase the abilities of Special Olympics athletes.



Kris is also passionate about improving the health and wellness of athletes. In 2011, she encouraged a small group of athletes to begin a fitness class. This has since developed to become a weekly dance fitness class, which is enthusiastically enjoyed by a large contingent of "regulars". This past spring, Kris initiated a trial walking club, which is now on the regular list of Special Olympics London's programs.

Kris has also conceived and helped stage a few unique events, including a city-wide fitness day and a Pay-it-Forward day. Both events created great buzz around Special Olympics on social media.

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR: STÉPHANE LEVERE, ECOLE SECONDAIRE CATHOLIQUE CASSELMAN - EMBRUN

Stéphane has been teaching for 17 years, 15 of them at École Secondaire Catholique Casselman. He is enjoying his eighth year as a physical education teacher. Stéphane has been a goalie coach for the Ottawa Junior A Senators for the past six years, and his team has made it to the National Championships the past two years.



Stéphane says he has been fortunate to work with tremendous goalies and kids who have gone on to play Division 1 college hockey in the States and in the OHL. He has also had the privilege to coach the school's volleyball and hockey teams, which gives him the chance to work with incredible students outside of a classroom environment.

"This is my fourth year participating with Special Olympics and it seems like every year it gets better. It's just exciting seeing my students grow because of Special Olympics."

Kelly Santini LLP have been enthusiastic supporters of Special Olympics for over 15 years. Their continued support of Ottawa Special Olympics Festival Breakfast is one of many ways in which they support the local community. Special Olympics athletes, coaches, volunteers and staff are truly grateful for their kindness and generosity.

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SCHOOL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR: ALI CURRIE, DELTA SECONDARY SCHOOL - *HAMILTON*

Ali is a remarkable Grade 12 student at Delta Secondary School. He demonstrates strong leadership and collaborative skills. His empathy and understanding of others are rare qualities, and something few students possess. Ali is always keen to support his peers in the classroom and on the playing field. He is an incredible Special Olympics athlete who has made many great friends in high school through the Special Olympics Unified Sports Programs.



Ali demonstrates his athleticism both in gym class and outside of the classroom. Some of his highlights include: Provincial School Championships; 2016 Bronze Medal in Bocce; 2017 Gold Medal in Bocce; 2018 Silver Medal in Unified Soccer; and fourth place at the 2019 Special Olympics Ontario Invitational Youth Games for Unified Soccer in Toronto. Ali excels in soccer and is captain of Delta's Unified Soccer Team. He also has excellent basketball skills - his three-point shots are incredible!

Each September, Ali is keen to know when the regional competitions will be held, as he looks forward to competing in a variety of sports, whether on a traditional or a unified team. "Ali is a joy to coach, his enthusiasm and positive attitude is infectious," commented Ali's coach, Grant Darby. "He brings the best out of himself, his teammates, and the other team when he competes." Ali hopes to qualify for the 2020 Provincial School Championships.

SCHOOL TEAM OF THE YEAR: ROCKHAVEN SCHOOL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN, BASKETBALL TEAM

The Rockhaven School for Exceptional Children basketball team proudly represented their school at the 2019 Invitational Youth Games. Team members include Brooke Berube, Zachery Olmstead, Kaley Gionette, Brandon Drakes-Kalaw, and coaches Pat Cook and John Clayton.



After qualifying for the Invitational Youth Games (IYG), the team worked on their skills, teamwork, and sportsmanship daily. They would often ask to practice basketball during their gym time to prepare for the tournament. During this time, players displayed their leadership skills by teaching other students various basketball skills. Rockhaven demonstrated hard work, dedication, and sportsmanship throughout the year.

At the IYG, the team displayed great teamwork, ensuring that all players were accepted and included. They cheered on other basketball teams during breaks, made sure to congratulate other teams whether they won or lost, and made many new friends along the way.

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS ONTARIO 2019
PROVINCIAL AWARD RECIPIENTS**

Over \$1 Million

On this, our 15th anniversary, we have exceeded this incredible milestone

Over 140 Trucks

A record-breaking turnout, exceeding our previous best by 25 trucks

80,000 Miles

Total miles driven over the 15 years of the Paris Truck Convoy



Look How Far We've Come!



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THANK YOU

Thank you for your continued support and providing safe travels for Special Olympics athletes, coaches, and their families.

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TEAM OF THE YEAR: SUDBURY KGHM MINERS - BLUE FLOOR HOCKEY

The Sudbury Miners are a dedicated team that always work together to reach their goals. The team had an amazingly successful season involving extra practice sessions, mental training sessions, and personal training plans. They capped off the season by winning their division at the 2019 Provincial Floor Hockey Championships.



When the team failed to qualify for the 2015 Provincial Championships, the Miners emerged with a new focus and determination. Coaches noticed a change in their personal pride, their attitudes, and their willingness to improve those around them both on the floor and in the community.

The Miners also had to overcome some adversity on the way to their Provincial title. Coach Todd Lefebvre was diagnosed with cancer and had to take a lesser role with the team. Rather than letting this become an obstacle, they doubled down their efforts and dedicated the season to him.

Team members include athletes:

Amanda Mainville, Brandon Brown, Gary Thompson, Jared Ladouceur, Jesse Gascon, Kole O'Malley, Krystin Albert, Mathieu Bouillon, Mathieu Gervais, Matthew Muise, Shawn Duguay and William Lang, and coaches Billy McCreight, Lynn Bouillon, and Todd Lefebvre.

RIP Todd Lefebvre (1968-2019)
Apart from being a beloved Coach, he was also a respected and valued member of the Greater Sudbury Police Service. He will be greatly missed!

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS ONTARIO 2019
PROVINCIAL AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**"WHAT I ENJOY MOST IS
BEING PART OF THE ATHLETES'
LIVES, AND SEEING THEM
GROW AS INDIVIDUALS."**

- DUANE CARSON

Duane Carson has been involved with Special Olympics for close to 40 years. He started as a teenager, as an "in-water helper", working with individuals who were not comfortable being in a pool. His two older brothers, both Special Olympics athletes, had been on a swim team for a few years at that point. His dad Ken, a long-time volunteer, was very instrumental in establishing this team, and was a coach. At that time, Duane instructed and encouraged people to become more confident in the water and to

**"Remember that the happiest
people are not those getting
more, but those giving more."**

-H. Jackson Brown Jr.

work toward being able to swim on their own – he has continued to be involved ever since. That is when and where this journey really started.

There have been numerous highlights for Duane over the years, but having the honour of being the Head Swim Coach of Team Canada at the 2019 World Games in Abu Dhabi is one for the books. Almost every day, he talks about how it felt to parade into the Opening Ceremony as part of Team Canada, among so many other teams from all over the world, wearing the Canadian colours and the maple leaf on their uniforms.

Another personal highlight for Duane was helping his older brother Darrell train for the 2014 National Summer Games. He then watched him compete in four events as part of Team Ontario at the Games in Vancouver. Duane was very proud of Darrell, who showed so much dedication and determination to succeed at his third National Games, and ultimately returned home with two medals.

Duane always encourages people to get involved with Special Olympics at whatever capacity they can. Communities are always looking for people with new ideas to bring to the table. Although Special Olympics is primarily about sport, there are many other volunteer



roles that exist within communities, which is where the roots are established. Communities are always in need of support from volunteers to manage teams, fundraise, organize events, participate on committees, and assist in developing programs.

**Volunteering for Special Olympics WILL
change your life - join us today!**

111

Active Communities

1,165

Community Clubs

12,201

total coaches & volunteers

**COMMUNITY AND
VOLUNTEERS**

Tim Hortons®



GLOBAL DAY OF INCLUSION

JULY 20, 2019

On Saturday July 20th, Canadians rallied together for inclusion, raising \$150,000 for Special Olympics athletes in a single day through the sale of more than 97,000 donuts at Tim Hortons restaurants across Canada.

Thank you Tim Hortons for your continued support of Special Olympics and belief in the power of inclusion.

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