Special Olympics Ontario

Supporting Athlete Health as a Volunteer

Introduction to Special Olympics Ontario Health Programs and Resources

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Supporting Athlete Health

Supporting Athlete Health Through Special Olympics

- Simple ways to support athlete health
- Programs, resources and leadership opportunities
- How volunteers can make a difference
- No health background required



What Does Athlete Health Look Like At SOO?

MOVEMENT
Fitness, physical activity and healthy habits

LEARN
Health education and health literacy

CONNECT
Resources, programs and health professionals

LEAD
Athlete leadership and peer support



Health Role as a Volunteer

NOTICE
Recognize an opportunity or need.

SHARE
Talk about available programs and resources.

CONNECT
Help athletes find the right person or opportunity.

ENCOURAGE
Support participation and follow-up.

The Health Dashboard: Your Resource Hub

Find resources you can use with your athletes.

The Special Olympics Ontario Health Dashboard brings together health and wellness resources for athletes and coaches:

- Health education and wellness information
- Resources to support athletes and coaches
- Information you can share with your team
- A starting point when you aren't sure where to look



Healthy Athletes Activation Booths

Bring health into the events athletes already attend.
Healthy Athletes Activation Booths offer opportunities for:

- Interactive health education
- Engaging, accessible activities
- Healthy living information
- Athlete participation and connection

Volunteers can:

- Help bring booths to competitions
- Encourage athletes to attend
- Support activities and engagement
- If interested, Brock will work with you for all supplies and resources





Fitness Captains

Know an athlete who inspires others?
They could be a Fitness Captain.

Fitness Captains help:

- Promote physical activity and healthy habits
- Encourage other athletes
- Lead by example
- Bring fitness into their communities

Volunteers can:
NOMINATE → ENCOURAGE → SUPPORT

Who Would Make a Great Fitness Captain?

Look beyond athletic ability.

A potential Fitness Captain might be someone who is:

- Enthusiastic about fitness
- Encouraging toward teammates
- Interested in healthy living
- A positive role model
- Motivated to learn and lead





Fitness Captain Training

Training prepares athletes to promote fitness, encourage healthy habits and lead by example in their communities.

- Training focus
- Fitness and physical activity
- Leadership and motivating others
- Promoting healthy habits
- Putting their role into practice

2hr training online with Brock

Help Identify Health Leaders

Who is the...
Encourager? Always supporting teammates.

Communicator? Loves talking with others.

Leader? Naturally takes initiative.

Advocate? Speaks up about what matters.

Health enthusiast? Interested in fitness and wellness.



Free Glasses and Sports Frames Program

Help athletes connect with vision support.
We offer free glasses and frames to athletes with a provided prescription and frames measurement

Volunteers can:

- Let athletes know support may be available
- Share program information
- Connect athletes with the Health team
- Encourage follow-up when support is needed

You don't need to determine eligibility. You just need to know where to refer (Brock and sign up link)



Health & Wellness Coordinators

Want to take a bigger role in athlete health?
Health & Wellness Coordinators help bring health opportunities into their local Special Olympics community. Sit on Community Councils.

They may help with:
- Promoting health programs and resources
- Connecting athletes to opportunities
- Supporting local health events
- Recruiting volunteers
- Building community relationships

You can become a coordinator — or refer someone.





You Don’t Need a Healthcare Background

Health volunteers come from many backgrounds.

- Coaches and sport volunteers
- Students and educators
- Healthcare and fitness professionals
- Family members and community members
- Anyone passionate about supporting athlete health

5 Ways You Can Support Athlete Health

ACTIVATE

Help athletes participate in Healthy Athletes Activation Booths.

SHARE

Use the Health Dashboard to find and share resources with athletes and coaches.

NOMINATE

Identify a potential Fitness Captain.

EMPOWER

Encourage health leadership among athletes

CONNECT AND LEAD

Share the free glasses and frames program, or become a Health & Wellness Coordinator or refer someone.



Survey for New Athlete Resource

Fourth-year Kinesiology student at Western university completing practicum with Special Olympics Ontario.

Would love to hear from athletes and coaches about what health topics they are interested in, what information would be helpful, and what type of resources they would enjoy learning from.

This feedback will help create a health promotion tool that athletes can enjoy.



What's Next?

- **Before you leave today, think of…**
- One athlete you could nominate as a Fitness Captain
- One resource you could share from the Health Dashboard.
- One athlete who could benefit from learning about the glasses and frames program.
- One person who could be a great Health & Wellness Coordinator.
- One event where you could help promote a Healthy Athletes Activation Booth.

Glasses and Sports Goggles Progra



Health Dashboard

