

Special Olympics WV

General Orientation

Special Olympics
West Virginia



Welcome!



Thank you for learning about Special Olympics West Virginia (SOWV).

We serve nearly 4,400 athletes with the help of over 400 coaches and 2,000 volunteers

We hope that you will:

- Understand the Special Olympics mission.
- Learn the differences between Special Olympics and other sports organizations.
- Find the ways you can get involved.
- Advocate for persons with intellectual disabilities

Mission

Special Olympics
West Virginia



Special Olympics Mission



Special Olympics provides *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 the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Components

- Year-round
- Sports training & competition
- Olympic-type sports
- Individuals with intellectual disabilities

Outcomes

- Physical fitness
- Courage & joy
- Sharing gifts & skills
- Friendship
- Families
- Athletes
- Community

Vision and Goal



Our Vision

The vision of Special Olympics West Virginia is to help bring Special Olympics athletes into the larger society under conditions whereby they are accepted, respected and given the chance to become useful and productive citizens.

Our Goal

To enhance the quality of life for the athletes that we serve.

Philosophy and Goal



If individuals with intellectual disabilities can:

- Receive appropriate instruction and encouragement
- Receive constant training
- Compete among those with equal abilities

The results are:

- Personal growth
- Stronger families
- United communities
- An environment of equality, respect and acceptance



History

Special Olympics
West Virginia



History



Created by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1968.

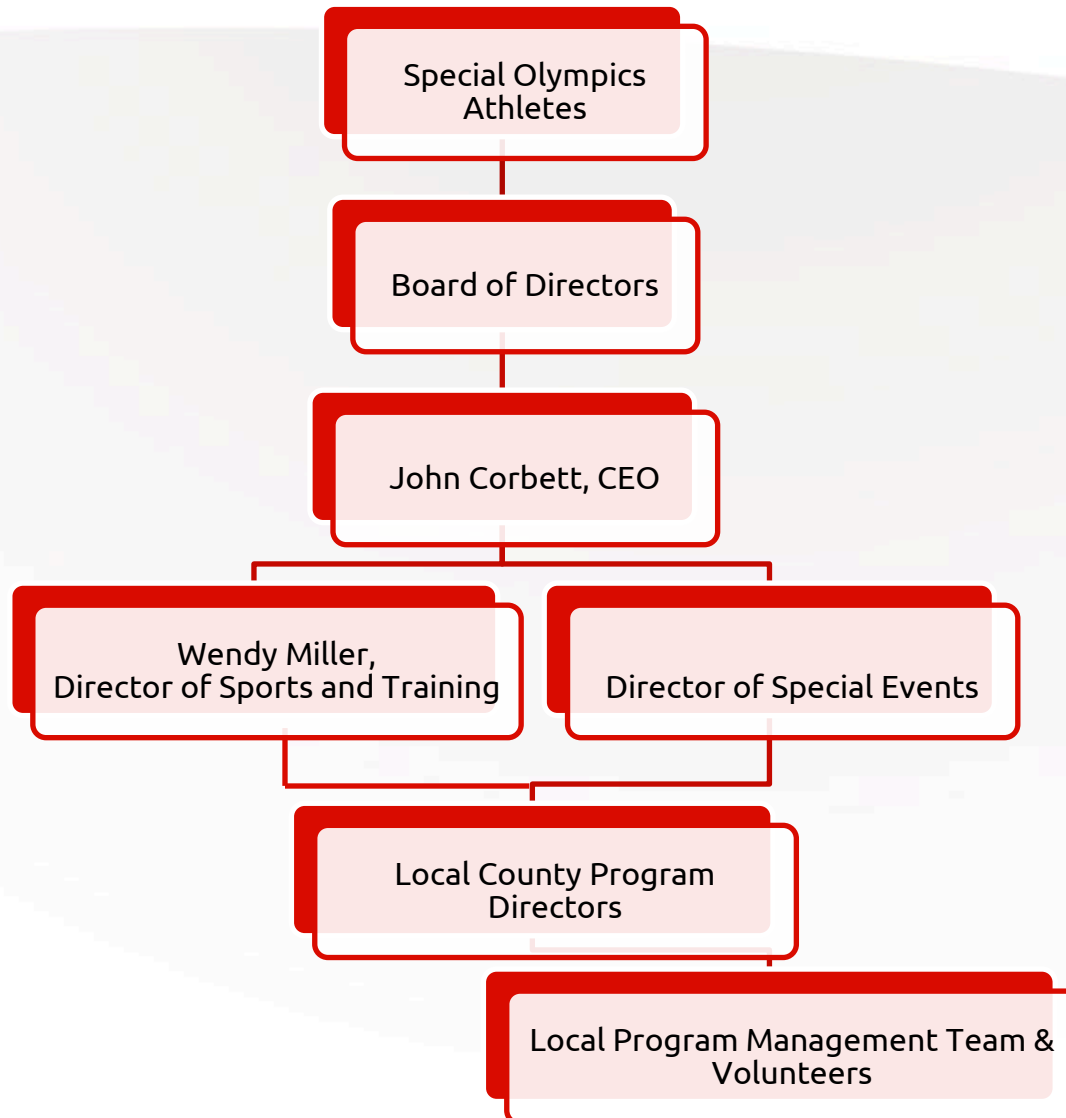


First International Games held in July 1968 in Soldier Field, Chicago, with 1,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities from 26 US States and Canada competing in athletics, floor hockey, and aquatics. *SOWV sent four athletes to those first games.*

In 1971, Special Olympics given the official approval to use the name “Olympics” by the IOC; one of only three global organizations (Junior Olympics, Paralympics and Special Olympics)

Special Olympics West Virginia (SOWV) was incorporated in 1977.

Special Olympics Overview



Athlete Oath



Let me win,
But if I cannot win,
Let me be brave in the
attempt



Coach's Oath:

“In the name of all coaches and in the spirit of sportsmanship, I promise that we will act professionally, respect others, and ensure a positive experience for all. I promise to provide quality sports and training opportunities in a safe environment for all athletes.

Special Olympics Athletes



Training and competition is open to:

- Children and adults with intellectual disabilities (for example, Autism, Down Syndrome, Fragile X Syndrome, etc.)
- Athletes age 8 and older; there is no age maximum
- Athletes age 2-7 may train as part of the [Young Athletes Program](#)

Special Olympics refers to all of these participants as “athletes”

Athlete Eligibility



- Eligibility comes from being identified by an agency or professional as having one or more of the following conditions: intellectual disabilities, cognitive delays as measured by formal assessment, or significant learning or vocational problems due to cognitive delay that require or have required specially designed instruction.
- Must be registered, which means they must have a current Athlete Participation and Release on file with Special Olympics WV.

Sports

Special Olympics
West Virginia



SOWV Offers 18 Sports



Summer

- Aquatics
- Athletics (track & field)
- Baggo (cornhole)
- Bocce
- Golf
- Unified Softball
- Tennis

Fall

- Flag Football
- Football Skills
- Volleyball (traditional & Unified)

Winter

- Bowling
- Alpine Skiing
- Snowboarding
- Cross Country Skiing
- Snowshoeing

Spring

- Basketball (traditional & Unified)
- Basketball Skills
- Cheerleading



Special Olympics Unified Sports®



Special Olympics West Virginia offers *Special Olympics Unified Sports®*, an inclusive sports program where those with intellectual disabilities (*Special Olympics athletes*) and those without intellectual disabilities (*called Unified Partners*) compete on a team for training and competition.

- Persons whose functional limitations are based solely on physical, behavioral, or emotional disability or a specific learning or sensory disability are not eligible to participate as Special Olympics athletes. However, these individuals may be eligible to be Special Olympics Unified Sports® Partner.
- There are varying levels of Special Olympics Unified Sports, from a competition model where athletes and Unified Partners have similar abilities, to recreational models without training guidelines.
- Through Unified Sports, athletes improve their physical fitness, sharpen their skills, challenge the competition and become further involved with their non-intellectually disabled peers.

How Special Olympics is Unique



Special Olympics is more similar than different from other sports organizations. However there are 5 areas that make us unique:

We:

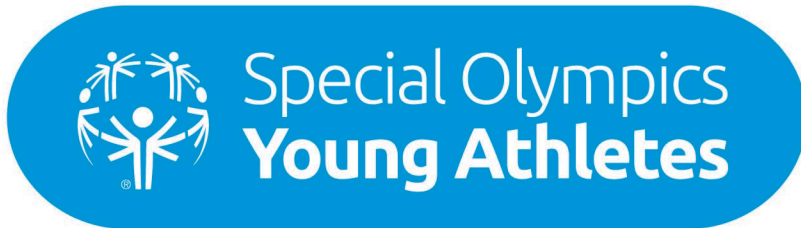
- *Do not charge a fee to athletes or their families to train or compete.*
- *Offer sports opportunities for athletes of all ability levels.*
- *Group athletes based on ability for equitable competition; a process called divisioning. Age and gender are also considered for divisioning.*
- *Award all participants for their efforts.*
- *Advance athletes to higher levels of competition (like National, World) based on performance in each division, and random draw.*

Sports for All Ability Levels



For athletes who are not up for full team play in sports like softball and volleyball, Special Olympics offers Individual Skills Contests for that sport which allows athletes to score points through skills stations.

The [Motor Activity Training Program](#) (MATP) is designed for athletes with a severe or profound intellectual disability who are unable to participate in Official Special Olympics sport competitions because of their skill and/or functional abilities.

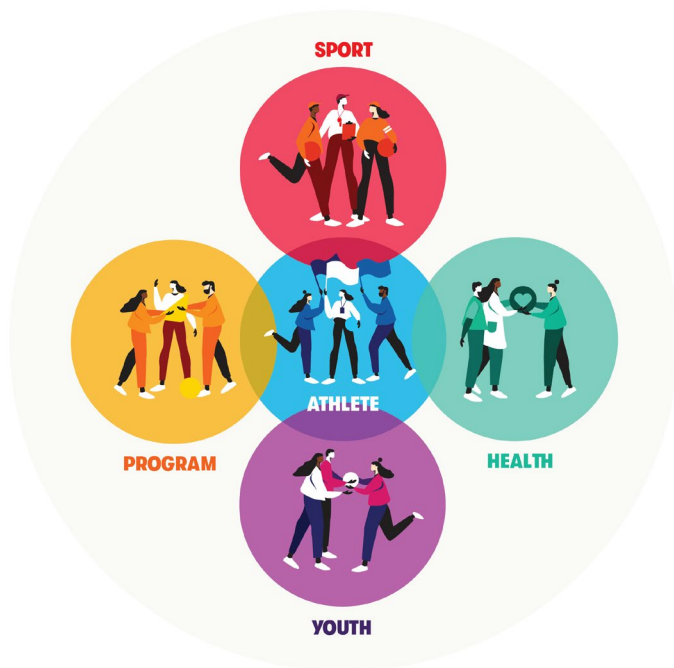


The [Special Olympics Young Athletes Program](#), an early childhood sports play program for children age 2 to seven years old, includes games, songs, and other fun physical activities to get future Special Olympics athletes moving and ready for sport training!

Athlete Leadership Program



Special Olympics Athletes are not only leaders on the field for their fellow athletes, but they are encouraged to be leaders in their community and for the Special Olympics Movement.



[Athlete Leadership Programs](#) (called **ALPs**) allow athletes to explore opportunities for greater participation in our movement beyond sports training and competition.

Athletes receive training in public speaking to become a **Global Messenger**, attend training schools to become a coach, or register and train as a sports official through the National Governing body of that sport.

Volunteer

Special Olympics
West Virginia



Special Olympics Volunteers



Class A

- ❖ Anyone who has direct contact with athletes, or is in a position of authority, supervision or trust of athletes, or handles cash or assets of Special Olympics.
 - Positions include local program directors, coaches, assistant coaches, sport assistants, chaperones, committee members
 - To attend any SOWV local, regional, state, USA or World Games, a volunteer is considered Class A

Class B

- ❖ Assists with competition or fundraising events once, or a few times a year.
 - Positions include Day of event volunteers, Games Management Team (GMT), athlete escorts, competition assistants, award assistants, etc.
 - Volunteers do not have one-on-one contact with our athletes, nor handle money on behalf of our organization

Class A Volunteers Requirements



[Volunteer Screening Form](#)

(background check on volunteers age 18+)

[General Orientation Study Guide](#) (this guide)

[General Orientation Quiz](#)

[Protective Behaviors](#)

[Concussion Training](#)

[Code of Conducts](#)

Screening forms,
Protective Behaviors
and Concussion
tests are valid for 3
years

Volunteers Needed



What can you do to get involved?

- Coaching & Training
- Local Program Director
- School/Agency Coordinator
- Local Program Management Team
- Event Volunteer
- Medical Support
- Officiating
- Board Member
- Public Relations
- Fundraising
- Chaperone
- Office Support
- Recruiting Athletes, Families & Volunteers
- Games Management Team
- Special Olympics Unified Sports Partner
- Partners Club Member



Myths

Truths

- Only for kids

- For all ages

- Only for low ability levels

- Opportunities for all ability levels

- Only Down Syndrome athletes

- All athletes with intellectual disabilities

- Same as Paralympics

- Special Olympics is very different

- Just competition

- Year-round training

- Just track and field

- Opportunities in 18 sports

- Everyone wins

- Only one gold medal per division

- Winning isn't important

- Special Olympics athletes are determined to win

We Look Forward to Your Involvement!



We hope you learned something and are ready to get involved in Special Olympics West Virginia!

Take the General Orientation [Quiz](https://bit.ly/3r4bJi7) (<https://bit.ly/3r4bJi7>) on Special Olympics now.

To find out more information on becoming a coach, go to our website <https://sowv.org/become-a-coach/>

To register as a day-of volunteer for an SOWV event, please visit www.sowv.org for upcoming volunteer opportunities.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Wendy@sowv.org or your **local county director**.

Thank you!

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