

Program Overview

**Special
Olympics**
Wisconsin



Special
Olympics
**Healthy
Athletes®**



Revealing the champion in *all* of us.

Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) provides year-round sports training and competition to children and adults with intellectual disabilities (ID). Our athletes train hard and play harder. They strive to beat their personal best and defy the odds again and again. From the local ball fields to the world stage, our athletes showcase the talents and triumphs of people with ID.

While sports are at the center of our work, we also offer programming in health, education and leadership; empowering our athletes to be healthy, productive and respected members of their communities.

The true power of Special Olympics is the impact felt well beyond the athletes and their families. With our large community of volunteers, supporters and business partners, we are working together to create a more inclusive society for all.



The Need

- Individuals with ID still face stigma, discrimination, social isolation and injustice every day of their lives.
- This situation becomes even more challenging when accompanied by poverty, depression, anxiety, obesity, diabetes and heart disease, all of which are circumstances that nearly all people with ID experience.
- Access to common services, such as health care, dentistry and disease prevention programs is limited or unavailable.



- Despite progress in many educational systems, students with ID still experience negative attitudes from their peers, social isolation and rejection, and even victimization in the form of bullying.
- Through Special Olympics, athletes discover they have a voice to become advocates for themselves and feel empowered to participate in decision-making at all levels.
- SOWI currently serves 10,000 athletes, or only 1 in 14 individuals with ID in Wisconsin. Help us reach more.

The Impact

While our larger society grows more fractured and segmented, involvement in Special Olympics can be a way to weave the civic fabric back together. Our work is a way of engaging and uniting all ages, abilities, race, ethnicity and class. Special Olympics is a positive force for social change.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS WI BY THE NUMBERS

10,058 athletes served at no cost to them or their families

702 year-round sports competitions from local to state, and opportunities at national and global levels

163 local programs and 48 Unified Champion Schools promoting inclusion and leadership

393 athlete leaders

1,057 Unified Partners and 20 Unified Competition opportunities

9,043 devoted volunteers, 2,613 dedicated coaches and 484 law enforcement partners

1,382 free health screenings annually

2016 Special Olympics Wisconsin Census



Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be **brave** in the attempt. – *Athlete Oath*

Comprehensive Programming

Athlete Leadership

Trains athletes to serve in meaningful leadership roles, such as a Global Messenger, Athlete As Coach, Governance and/or Health Ambassador, other than or in addition to that of “competitor.”

Sports Training & Competition

Year-round training and competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities who are 8 years or older in 18 Olympic-style sports: Alpine skiing, Athletics (track & field), Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Cross-country skiing, Flag football, Golf, Gymnastics, Powerlifting, Sailing, Snowboarding, Snowshoe racing, Soccer, Softball, Swimming, Tennis and Volleyball.

Unified Sports®

An inclusive program which combines individuals with ID (athletes) and individuals without ID (partners) on sports teams for training and competition. Athletes and partners compete alongside one another, each in a meaningful and integral role on the Unified Sports team.

Unified Champion Schools (UCS)

A youth-centered, school-focused program that brings students with and without ID together through unified sports, youth leadership and school-wide engagement.

Special Olympics Wisconsin's Unified Champion Schools have made a significant impact:

- **96% of all school liaisons** believe UCS has been valuable for the school as a whole.
- **93% of young people** with ID reported significant change in self-esteem/self-confidence.
- **91% of youth** without ID reported significant change in their social skills.



SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org





Young Athletes

Introduces children, ages 2-7, both with and without ID, and their families to sports and the world of Special Olympics. Through developmentally appropriate play activities, the Young Athletes improve their physical, intellectual and social skills.

Healthy Athletes®

Improves the health and fitness of athletes through free medical screenings in seven disciplines: general fitness, podiatry, hearing, vision, dental hygiene, healthy lifestyle choices and sports physicals. Athletes receive screenings and education in a fun, welcoming environment that removes anxiety and the fear individuals with ID often experience with medical visits.

Healthy Athletes' impact is significant, in some cases life-saving, by discovering unknown health issues or providing health care that otherwise would not have been available:

- 49% obesity in adults; 29% obesity in youth
- 15% have an eye disease; 26% need new/different eyeglass prescription
- 21% have low bone density; 26% fail hearing tests
- 16% have untreated tooth decay; with 6% requiring urgent dental care

Special Olympics Wisconsin has emerged as a leading public health organization for people with ID.

- Each year, 1,300 free health screenings are performed.
- Since 2001, SOWI has provided more than 5,700 prescription eyeglasses free of charge.
- Since 2006, more than 4,000 healthcare professionals and students have volunteered at SOWI events.
- Since 2006, SOWI has referred more than 300 athletes for urgent dental needs.

INDIVIDUALS WITH ID WE SERVE

1 in 14 ATHLETES

Together, let's get more athletes on the playing field.





“Words cannot even tell you how much Special Olympics has done for me. The program has given me a way to feel good about myself.” – David, Special Olympics Wisconsin athlete

*Let's not wait for halftime to make a change.
Get started with Special Olympics today,
visit **SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org**.*



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