



# Global Supporters

Below you will find ambassadors from the worlds of sports, entertainment and music who are helping bring awareness to the important work of Special Olympics.

## Apolo Anton Ohno, Special Olympics Global Ambassador



**Biography:** Apolo Anton Ohno is an American short track speed skating competitor and an eight-time medalist (two gold, two silver, four bronze) in the Winter Olympics. He is the most decorated American Winter Olympic athlete of all time. Raised by his father, Ohno began training full-time in 1996. At the age of 14, he became the youngest U.S. national champion in 1997 and was the reigning champion from 2001-2009, winning the title and total of 12 times. In December 1999, he became the youngest skater to win a World Cup event title. Two years later,

in 2001, Ohno became the first American to win a World Cup overall title, which he won again in 2003 and 2005. He won his first overall World Championship title at the 2008 championships. Ohno's accolades and accomplishments include being the United States Olympic Committee's Male Athlete of the Month in October 2003 and March 2008, the U.S. Speedskating's Athlete of the Year for 2003, and a 2002, 2003, and 2006 finalist for the Sullivan Award, which recognizes the best amateur athlete in the United States. Since gaining recognition through his sport, Ohno has worked as a motivational speaker and a philanthropist and started a nutritional supplement business called 8 Zone. In 2007, he competed on and won the reality TV show *Dancing with the Stars*.

**Engagement:** In 2012, Ohno traveled to support Special Olympics Nippon at its Winter National Games in Fukushima, where he participated in Opening Ceremonies and hosted skate clinics. He continued to China to host several skate clinics, where he drew inspiration for his blog, *Fly Your Hope*.

Ohno attended the 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Pyeongchang, Korea, where he participated in a Unified Sports Experience with Special Olympics athletes and several former Olympic skate champions.



## Brooklyn Decker, Special Olympics Ambassador for Team USA



**Biography:** Brooklyn Decker is an actress on the rise and the budding talent in many major films and popular TV shows. At 18, Brooklyn moved to New York City and quickly rose to stardom within the industry, gracing the pages of magazines including Glamour and Cosmopolitan and participating in advertising campaigns for Gap and American Eagle. Brooklyn's big break came in 2010 when she appeared on the cover of the wildly popular Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue after appearing in the magazine in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. She then went on to appear in romantic

comedy "Just Go With It" opposite Adam Sandler and Jennifer Aniston, star in the sci-fi epic "Battleship", and bring tears of laughter to watchers of "What to Expect When You're Expecting." Brooklyn has also made TV appearances on The New Girl and FX's The League. When not acting, Brooklyn is an avid sports fan, rooting for the University of North Carolina Tar Heels and the Carolina Panthers, her two favorite teams. Inspired by her love of sports and her family connection with an aunt with an intellectual disability, Brooklyn became active in the Special Olympics in her hometown of Charlotte.

**Engagement:** As a Special Olympics Ambassador for Team USA, Brooklyn has hosted the opening ceremonies of the 2012 USA National Games in Nebraska with Special Olympics Athlete and Board Member Eddie Barbanell.

## Her Serene Highness Princess Charlene of Monaco, Special Olympics Global Ambassador



**Biography:** Her Serene Highness The Princess of Monaco Charlene Wittstock is an Olympic and World Champion swimmer from South Africa. As a child, she developed a passion for swimming and, in 1996, won her first South African Championship at the age of 18. Four years later, Her Serene Highness The Princess of Monaco qualified for the 2000 Olympic Games as a member of the South Africa 4x100m medley relay team, which placed fifth. In 2002, she won three gold medals at the swimming World Cup in the 50m freestyle, 100m freestyle, and 4x100m medley relay.

After a successful career, Her Serene Highness The Princess of Monaco retired from swimming in 2007. Growing up in Africa heightened her awareness of the challenges affecting impoverished children, and,



as a result, she is currently involved with numerous humanitarian organizations. She is the Honorary President of Ladies Lunch Monte Carlo, an associate of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, and a Global Ambassador for Special Olympics. Additionally, she has become involved in the charitable works of her husband, His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco, who she met at a swim meet in 2000. An avid surfer and hiker, Wittstock enjoys reading biographies, ethnic South African poetry, and studying contemporary art.

**Engagement:** As a Special Olympics Global Ambassador, Her Serene Highness The Princess of Monaco has participated in a number of events, including the 2011 World Summer Games in Greece, a trip to China where she and fellow Special Olympics Global Ambassador Yao Ming played volleyball on a special school visit in March 2012.

## Damian Lillard, Special Olympics Global Ambassador



**Biography:** Selected by Portland as the #6 overall pick in the 2012 NBA Draft, Damian started in all 82 games during his rookie campaign. He led all rookies in scoring averaging 19.0 points, 3.1 rebounds, 6.5 assists and 38.6 minutes per game. In the Trail Blazers season opener versus the Los Angeles Lakers, Damian joined Oscar Robertson and Allen Iverson as the only players in NBA history with at least 20 points and 10 assists in their NBA debut. Damian was named the NBA's Rookie of the Year in May 2013, becoming just the fourth unanimous Rookie of the Year in NBA history. He

swept the Kia NBA Western Conference Rookie of the Month honors for all six months, becoming one of just eight players to sweep NBA Rookie of the Month honors since the inaugural award in 1981-82, joining Ralph Sampson, David Robinson, Tim Duncan, LeBron James, Carmelo Anthony, Chris Paul and Blake Griffin. Damian joins Oscar Robertson and Allen Iverson as the only rookies in NBA history to record 1,500 points and 500 assists in one season. In April of 2013, Damian broke the all-time NBA rookie record for 3-pointers in one season with 185, surpassing Stephen Curry's 166 set in 2009-10, Damian is the first Trail Blazer to win an NBA All-Star event, capturing Saturday night's Skills Challenge. He also participated in the Rising Stars Challenge during All-Star weekend, finishing with 18 points, 3 rebounds and 5 assists in a game-high 28 minutes. This summer, Damian was named to the 2013 USA Basketball Men's National Team mini-camp roster.

**Engagement:** In 2013, Damian was recognized as a Special Olympics Global Ambassador at the Special Olympics and The Walt Disney Company/ESPN Partnership announcement in Bristol, Connecticut. During the 2013 NBA All-Star Weekend in Houston, TX, where Damian served as an honorary coach at the NBA Cares Special Olympics Unified Sports basketball game, he was impressed with the Special Olympics Basketball players and reminisced about his College days volunteering with Special Olympics. Damian shared his reasons for teaming up with Special Olympics, "I realized how much of an impact I had on them and just how much they have the same abilities that we have. I'm happy to be a part of it and ...to



raise the awareness for people with intellectual disabilities.” Damian also supports Special Olympics annual Spread the Word to End the Word Campaign which is a national campaign to encourage people to pledge to stop using the word retard.

## Dani Alves, Special Olympics Ambassador for Global Football



**Biography:** Born in Juazeiro, Brazil on May 6, 1983, Daniel Alves de Silva, commonly known as Dani Alves, plays as an attacking right defender for FC Barcelona and the Brazilian national team. Before joining Barcelona, Alves spent a successful six year spell with Sevilla FC, winning two UEFA Cups and the Copa del Rey with the Andalusian side. He joined Barcelona for €32.5 million, becoming the most expensive defender to date. Alves won the Treble in his first season with the club and a further Spanish super cup, European super cup, and the FIFA Club World Cup, thus

achieving the Sextuple. He also helped the club to clinch another Spanish super cup, two league titles, and a UEFA Champions League in the years that followed.

**Engagement:** As a Special Olympics Ambassador for Global Football, Dani participates in awareness campaigns and is integral in the efforts to promote more opportunities for athletes with disabilities.

## Dikembe Mutombo, Special Olympics Global Ambassador



**Biography:** Dikembe Mutombo is a National Basketball Association (NBA) legend and an NBA Global Ambassador. A retired Congolese American professional basketball player, Dikembe is best remembered as a star center for the Houston Rockets of the NBA. The 7 ft. 2 in (2.18m) center is one of the greatest shot blockers and defensive players of all time and has won the NBA Defensive Player of the Year Award four times. On January 10, 2007, Dikembe surpassed Kareem Abdul-Jabbar as the second most prolific shot blocker in NBA history. Other NBA honors include NBA All-Rookie Team (1992), 8-time NBA All-Star, 3-time All NBA, and 6-time All-Defensive Team. A

well-known humanitarian, Mutombo started the Dikembe Mutombo Foundation to improve living conditions in his native Democratic Republic of Congo. On August 14, 2006, Mutombo donated \$15 million for the completion of the Biambe Marie Mutombo Hospital in Kinshasa, which is named after his late mother who passed away of a stroke in 1997.

**Engagement:** In 2012, Dikembe was recognized as a Special Olympics Global Ambassador. In 2011, Dikembe participated in the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens. Dikembe not only promotes basketball with NBA Cares clinics in Africa, but also football at the Special Olympics Africa



Unity Football Cup in 2012. Dikembe participated in 2013 Unified Sports Experience in Floor Hockey at the Korea 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games in PyeongChang, Korea.

## Derek Poundstone, Special Olympics Global Torch Run Ambassador



**Biography:** Derek Poundstone is arguably one of the ten strongest people on Earth. Derek picked up powerlifting at a young age. While training to enter his first Strongman competition, Poundstone was accepted as a Police Officer in the Naugatuck, Conn. Police Department. He has proudly served the town of Naugatuck as a Patrolman since 2004. Managing to find the time to balance his career as a Police Officer with his passion for weight training, Poundstone entered his first professional Strongman competition in 2004. Since that time, he has managed to become the most decorated American Strongman in 4 decades, winning 5 major Strongman titles, all while

continuing to serve the citizens of Connecticut as a Police Officer. In addition to his duties as a Police Officer, Poundstone trains for 3 hours a day 5 days a week, and recently opened his own gym, The Poundstone Performance Training Center located in Waterbury, Connecticut. He also hosts Poundstone Power Radio on Sirius Xm satellite radio, travels the world as a spokesman for Solae, LLC the world's largest provider of soy, and in 2011 was named as the first-ever Global Ambassador for the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics. He and his wife Kristin reside in Waterbury, Connecticut.

## Elena Delle Donne, Special Olympics Global Ambassador



**Biography:** Elena Delle Donne is a professional basketball player entering her second year with the WNBA's Chicago Sky as one of the premiere talents in the league. At just 24 years old, Delle Donne has firmly established herself as a leader of the next generation of great American basketball players thanks in large part to a decorated 2013 WNBA season that saw her take home Rookie of the Year honors as well as accumulate four consecutive Rookie of the Month awards. Moreover, the 6-foot-5 Delle Donne, who was selected second overall in the 2013 WNBA Draft, finished as the top vote getter for the WNBA All-Star Game and made a run at the WNBA MVP award, finishing third in overall voting. To top it all off, in what is perhaps the biggest testament to her ability as both a player and leader, Delle Donne guided the Sky to the franchise's first playoff berth in its eight year existence. As a prep athlete in Delaware, she was a three time Gatorade Player of the Year in the state before enrolling at the University of Delaware to remain close to her tight-knit family. While at Delaware, Delle Donne completed an extraordinary collegiate career, finishing as CAA Conference Player of the Year three times

and as a consensus first team All-American her senior year. During her senior season, Delle Donne ranked first in the nation in scoring with an average of 28.1 points per game and she led Delaware to its first



ever NCAA Sweet Sixteen berth. Delle Donne has an older brother Gene who played college football as a tight end, first at Duke and then Middle Tennessee and an older sister Lizzie, who has cerebral palsy and is blind and deaf.

**Engagement:** Elena has a special place in her heart for Special Olympics because of her sister's participation through the MATP (Motor Activity Training) program. Elena has witnessed the positive impact that inclusion can have on children and individuals with intellectual disabilities and she has always dedicated her time to volunteering locally in Delaware both in her personal time and while in school at the University of Delaware. During Elena's announcement in February 2014, she participated in a Unified Basketball clinic in Illinois with 26 Special Olympics Illinois athletes and 80 students from Homewood-Flossmoor High School. Elena looks forward to continuing to engage with Special Olympics to help bring awareness to individuals with intellectual disabilities through basketball. She participated in the 2014 NBA Cares Special Olympics Unified Basketball games in New Orleans during NBA All-Star Weekend and served as Honorary Coach for the Special Olympics basketball team exhibition at the 2014 Big East Women's Basketball Tournament. Elena will also lead the efforts with the WNBA to help raise awareness for the sport of basketball within Special Olympics, particularly among females, with the goal of increasing female basketball participation worldwide. Furthering her commitment to Unified competition and to encourage more Special Olympics girls to play basketball, Elena will include Special Olympics girls in her Delle Donne Skills Academy camps along with other middle and high school girls.

## Hannah Teter, Special Olympics Global Ambassador



**Biography:** Hannah Teter is a Professional Snowboarder and world champion athlete from Belmont, Vermont. She is the first Action-Sports Global Ambassador for Special Olympics. She is an Olympic champion, having won the gold medal in halfpipe at the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Torino, Italy. She also won bronze at the 2005 FIS World Championships at Whistler, British Columbia, and has six World Cup victories in her career. Hannah was born into a snowboarding family, and is the only girl among five brothers. Two of her older brothers have competed for the US Snowboard Team. In January 2010, Teter was named to the US Team for the 2010

Winter Olympics in Vancouver. She won the silver medal in women's halfpipe at the Vancouver Games. In 2010, Hannah was awarded the VH1 Do Something Award for Athlete of the Year and was also one of four American athletes to model for the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue in a section devoted to Winter Olympians. Hannah is known for her humanitarian efforts, specifically for the creation of her charity, Hannah's Gold, which raises funds for a clean water project for a small town in Kenya. Ben and Jerry's limited edition flavor "Maple Blondie" was created in her honor and a portion of the proceeds go to Hannah's Gold.

**Engagement:** In June 2012, Hannah attended the Special Olympics Vermont State Games. In January 2013, Hannah attended the Special Olympics World Winter Games in PyeongChang, Korea, where she participated in a Unified Sports Experience in snowboarding, spoke at the Global Development Summit on Sports in developing countries, and engaged with youth leaders and Unified youth pairs (young people with and without intellectual disabilities) at the Global Youth Activation Summit Youth Rally. In the summer of 2013, Hannah attended the Southern California Summer Games at Cal-State Long Beach



where she participated in Opening Ceremonies, watched competition and participated in Unified Sports Experience in bocce with athletes from Southern California. During Hannah's announcement in January 2014, she participated in a Unified Sports Dual Slalom Snowboarding Race with 11 Special Olympics Colorado athletes, brothers Abe and Amen Teter and special guests Arielle Gold, Jamie Anderson, Scotty James, Mitchie Brusco and Johnny Bananas on Silver Dip Mountain in Aspen. In the coming months Hannah will be leading Special Olympics efforts to broaden Special Olympics athlete participation in action sports as well as link her passion and humanitarian efforts in the developing world with Special Olympics.

## Hidetoshi Nakata, Special Olympics Global Ambassador



**Biography:** Hidetoshi Nakata is a retired Japanese football player and is considered one of the most famous Asian footballers of his generation. Nakata began his professional career in 1995 and won the Asian Football Confederation Player of the Year award in 1997 and 1998 and the Scudetto with A.S. Roma in 2001. He played for Japan in three FIFA World Cup tournaments (1998, 2002 and 2006) and played in the Olympics twice (1996 and 2000). Nakata announced his retirement at age 29 on July 3, 2006 after a ten-year career that included seven seasons in the Italian Serie A and a season in the English Premier League. In March 2004, Pelé named Nakata in his FIFA 100, a list

of the top living footballers at the time.

**Engagement:** Hidetoshi Nakata became a Special Olympics Global Ambassador in October 2014 and has been a supporter of Special Olympics Nippon for many years. Nakata's Take Action Foundation is based upon the theme of "Just one thing, whatever you can do." The foundation organizes activities such as soccer matches, charity galas, and various other events and campaigns that link the actions of each individual to solve global issues.

## In-Kyung (I.K.) Kim, Special Olympics Ambassador for Golf



**Biography:** In-Kyung (I.K.) Kim is a South Korean female professional golfer currently playing on the LPGA tour. In her rookie year of 2007 she had four top-10 finishes. The next year, I.K. recorded seven top-10 finishes and claimed her first win at the Longs Drugs Challenge. In June 2009, she claimed her second career title with a one-shot win over compatriot Se-Ri Pak to take the LPGA State Farm Classic in Illinois, US. In December 2009, Kim won her third professional title, winning the Dubai Ladies Masters on the Ladies European Tour. Kim won her fourth professional title and third LPGA title at the 2010 Lorena Ochoa Invitational, from which she donated her entire

winnings to charity. In 2010, Kim won Rookie of the Year honors on the Ladies European Tour and, in 2012, Special Olympics recognized her as a Special Olympics Ambassador for Golf.



**Engagement:** As the Special Olympics Ambassador for Golf, I.K. has hosted several golf clinics for athletes and generously contributed \$100,000 gift to support expansion of the sport. She recently helped to announce the new partnership between ShopRite and Special Olympics in support of the 2014 Special Olympics US National Games in New Jersey.

## Joe Haden Corner Back, Cleveland Browns



**Biography:** Born Joseph Walter Haden III, Native of Fort Washington, Md., where he attended Friendly High School - a four-year starter at quarterback who set a Maryland public school record with 7,371 career passing yards. As a senior he led his team to the Class 3A state football title with a 14-0 record. Joe started for his school's basketball team that won a state title. He played college football for the University of Florida, was recognized as a unanimous All-American, and was a member of a BCS National Championship team. He was selected by the Browns in the first round of the 2010 NFL Draft as the 7th overall pick. On December 27, 2013, Haden was voted to his first

Pro Bowl Selection. Joe is the eldest of five boys, his brother Josh was a running back for Boston College, his brother Jordan is a safety for University of Toledo and his brother Jonathan is a running back for University of Arizona. His brother Jacob is a Special Olympic athlete. Jacob competes in the 100 meters race and bocce.

**Engagement:** In 2015, Joe was recognized as a Special Olympics Global Ambassador at the NFL Super Bowl XLIX media day in Phoenix, Arizona. During the 2015 Super Bowl XLIX media day, Joe teamed up with Special Olympics Athlete, Vanessa Robles, and participated in media row promoting the first-ever Special Olympics Unified Relay Across America and the Special Olympics World Games Los Angeles 2015. Joe has attended many Special Olympics Maryland events over the years as his brother Jacob participates in athletics and bocce. Joe attended his first USA Games in 2014 in Princeton, New Jersey where he witness many athletes from North America participate in basketball and flag football. Joe will focus on increasing the number of athletes that participate in flag football, promote healthy athletes and continue to recruit and encourage the public to join the Special Olympics Unified movement.

## Lauren Alaina, Special Olympics Ambassador for Project Unify



**Biography:** Lauren Alaina, a Rossville, GA native, and the American Idol Season 10 runner up, released her debut album Wildflower and it landed at No. 2 on the Billboard's Top Country Album chart and an impressive No. 5 on the Billboard Top 200. She became the youngest female artist to debut this high on the Billboard charts since LeAnn Rimes' debut 15 years ago and is the best-selling country female debut since 1996. Her current single "Georgia Peaches" is making its way up the country charts.





## Maria Menounos, Special Olympics Global Ambassador



**Biography:** Author, Producer and Host at E! Entertainment, Unified Relay Across America Co-Captain and Special Olympics Global Ambassador

Maria has interviewed every President since Clinton. Her groundbreaking conversational style of hosting led her, at age 22, to become the youngest to host "Entertainment Tonight." as well as report for "NBC Nightly News" and "the Today Show". She's starred in movies, is a 2 time NY Times best selling author and CEO of the largest online broadcast network, AfterBuzz TV.

## Michael Phelps, Special Olympics Global Ambassador



**Biography:** Michael Phelps is widely regarded as one of the most accomplished athletes of all time. With more gold medals, world championships and world records than any other swimmer in history, Phelps used his \$1MM performance bonus from Speedo to create the Michael Phelps Foundation, a non-profit organization focused on growing the sport of swimming and promoting healthy and active lifestyles, especially for children.



## Nadia Comaneci, Special Olympics Global Ambassador



**Biography:** At the 1976 Olympics, a 14-year-old Romanian captured the hearts and minds of the world with her daring and perfection, earning seven perfect tens, three gold medals, one silver, and one bronze. She returned home to Romania to a heroines welcome. Four years later, at the 1980 Olympics, Comaneci earned two more gold medals and two silver to bring her Olympic total to 9 medals. In 1996, Comaneci was inducted into the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame; and in 1999, she was honored by ABC News and Ladies Home Journal as one of the 100 Most Important Women of the 20th Century. In April 1996, Comaneci married American

Olympic Champion, Bart Conner, and they have one son, Dylan Paul. Together, they own several gymnastics-related business interests including the Bart Conner Gymnastics Academy. Comaneci is also involved in a variety of charities, serving on the Special Olympics International, Muscular Dystrophy Association, and Laureus Sports For Good Foundation Board of Directors. Additionally, she has continued to support dozens of charities in her homeland of Romania, including the Nadia Comaneci Children's Hospital in Bucharest.