



Special Olympics

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Special Olympics

2011-2015

Strategic Plan

SIMPLE LANGUAGE VERSION

FEBRUARY 2011

Table of Contents

Leadership Summary 3

The Starting Point 4

Our Priorities 6

Our Strategic Pillars

Advance Quality Sports and Competitions 8

Build Communities 9

Connect Fans and Funds 10

Develop Movement Leadership..... 11

Establish Sustainable Capabilities.....12

LEADERSHIP SUMMARY

We are excited to share with you the Final Version of our 2011-2015 Special Olympics Strategic Plan – the ideas here will help us improve Special Olympics over the next five years.

We are proud of the fact that many people helped create this document including volunteers, families, and athletes. This Plan proves that when we all work together, we can agree on ways to improve Special Olympics.

This Plan may change as we start working and learn more. If you have comments or ideas about things in the plan you should contact Special Olympics leaders in your area to share them.

We thank you for your support and eagerness to take on this important work. Let's all work together to put this plan in action and make Special Olympics even better than it is today!

Very Sincerely,



Timothy P. Shriver
Chairman & CEO
Special Olympics International

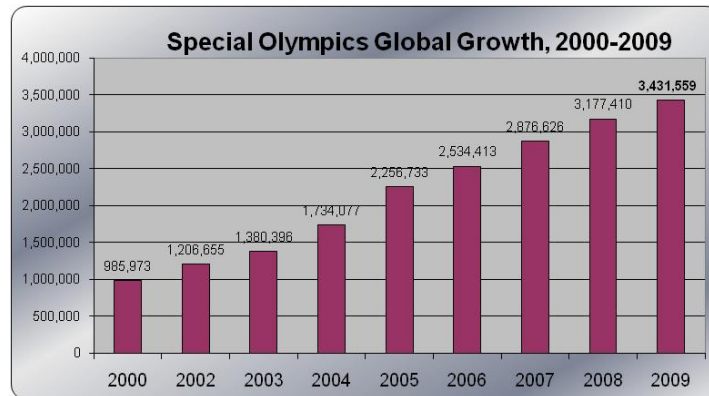


J. Brady Lum
President & COO
Special Olympics International

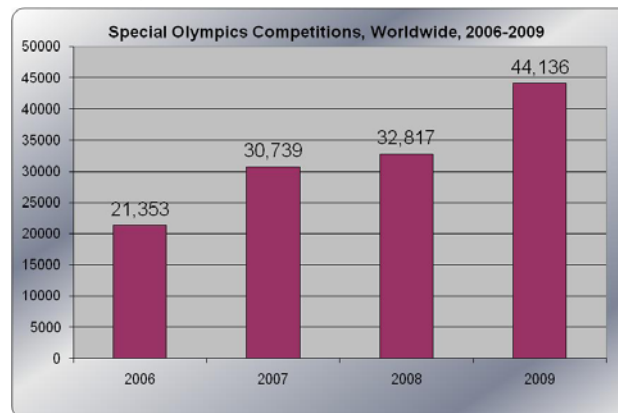
The Starting Point

Make no mistake: the Special Olympics Movement is growing

Special Olympics has grown steadily every year. We now reach over 3.4 million athletes. Since 2000, Special Olympics has added nearly 2.4 million new athletes.



- We are still working to increase the number of competitions for athlete.

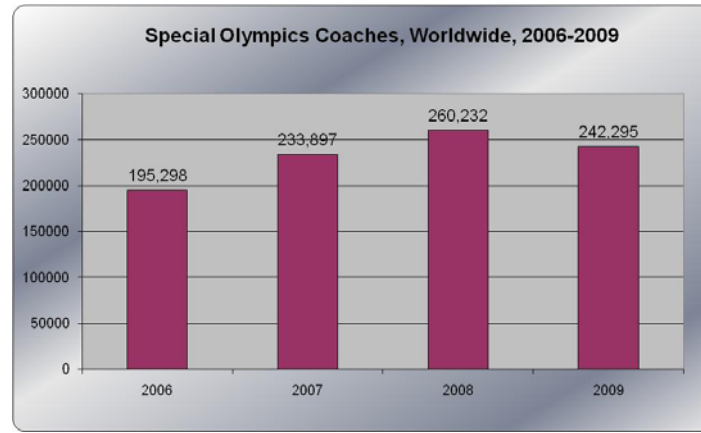


Unified Sports is fastest growing program in Special Olympics.

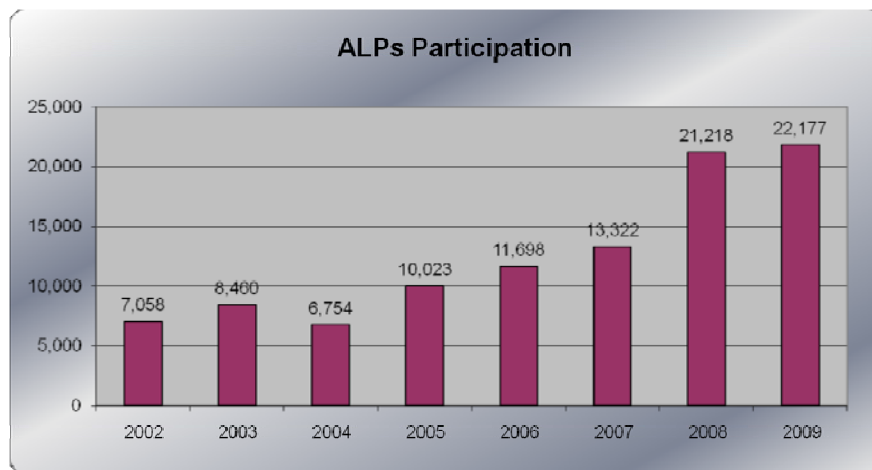
The Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program is now active in more than 100 countries. Each year more than 165,000 athletes receive free health screenings, including eye glasses, hearing aids, education, supplies and referrals to doctors.

But, our Movement has room to improve

We still don't have enough coaches volunteering to work with our athletes. – During 2009, we had fewer coaches than in 2008.



Less than 1 out of every 100 Special Olympics athletes are now serving in leadership positions (ALPs).



Fund Raising:

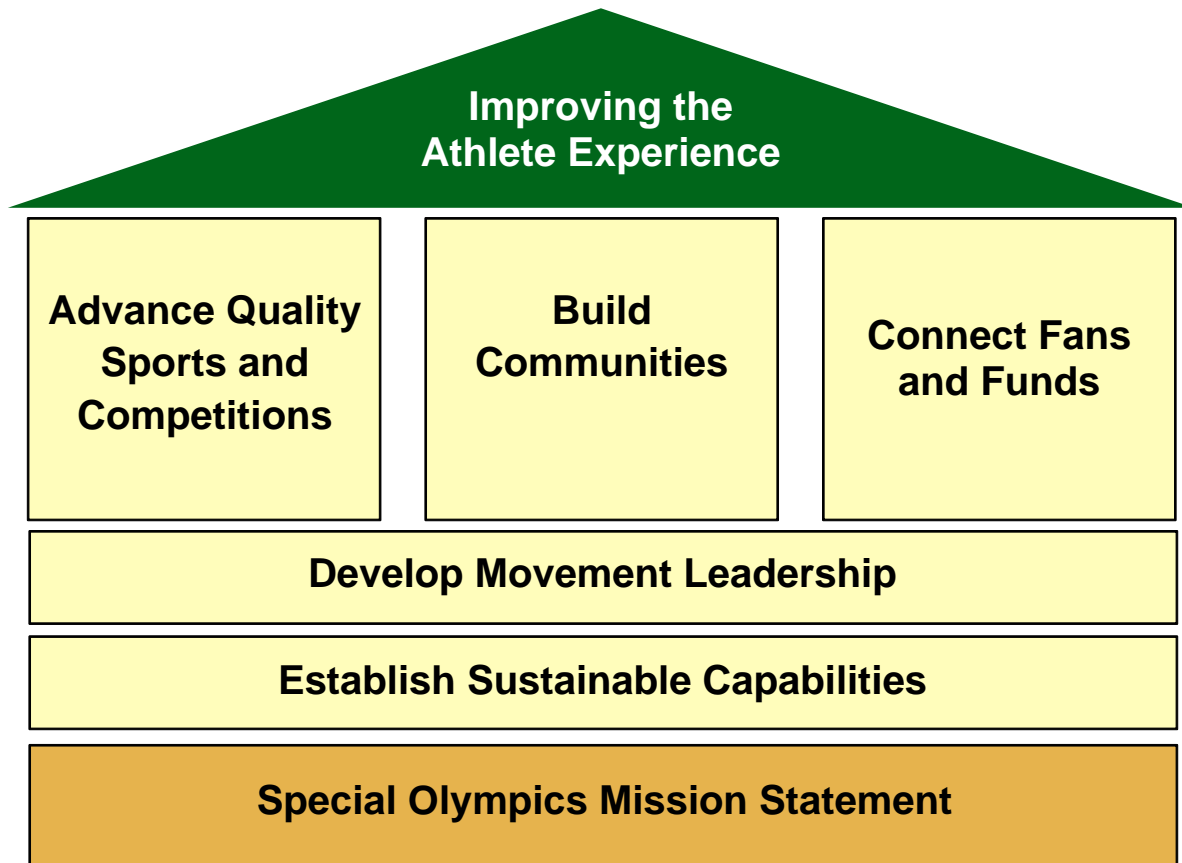
U.S.-based Programs raised most of the money used to run Special Olympics around the world. Overall fund raising has not grown enough to cover expenses of all the new athletes we have registered. We are doing more work with less money. And it's going to take even more money to keep programs running in the future.

Other questions we need to answer:

- What activities we are going to focus on in the future? Is the mission of Special Olympics staying the same?.
- Only half of the leaders of Special Olympics believe that athletes have enough leadership opportunities.

OUR PRIORITIES

Our Strategic Plan framework has been consistent since the very beginning of our planning process – a testament to its strength and simplicity.



The two most important things to keep in mind as we work are:

- **Improving the Athlete Experience:** Improving the program for Special Olympics athletes is the most important reason for our work.
- **Special Olympics Mission Statement:** We also stand with our mission statement but know that we need to be clear about what it means for each community that has a Special Olympics Program.

Special Olympics Mission Statement:

Provide 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 a sharing of gifts, skills & friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

There are three main areas where we will try to improve:

- **Advance Quality Sports and Competitions:** Special Olympics should be known as a global leader in sports. We should provide training for volunteer coaches, and competition managers. Every athlete should have the opportunity to be his or her best by using tools provided by Special Olympics.
- **Build Communities:** Special Olympics works best where we supportive communities around our athletes. Healthy Athletes, Families Program, ALPs, and getting schools and youth involved helps Special Olympics be a part of the whole community, and to make the community better – for all of us – not just for Special Olympics athletes.
- **Connect Fans and Funds:** Special Olympics must become better at fund-raising and making sure that people have heard of us. We need to make it easy for any person or company to support Special Olympics. We also need to make sure that more people know what Special Olympics is.

There are two areas of work that will help us be better at all our work:

- **Develop Movement Leadership:** We must work together to achieve the goals in this plan. Each Program should set its own goals for improving their Special Olympics Program. Programs should find and keep good leaders who can help the program reach those goals.
- **Establish Sustainable Capabilities:** It is critical that Special Olympics focus on not just what it does, but how it gets it done. We have to make sure that our rules and policies still work as we grow.

ADVANCE QUALITY SPORTS & COMPETITIONS

In 2015 ...

Special Olympics will be a global leader in sports. We will provide training for volunteer coaches, and competition managers. Every athlete will have the opportunity to be his or her best by using tools provided by Special Olympics, including training ideas, fitness, and nutrition guides. Special Olympics athletes and coaches will strive to be their best in competition and training, and to make physical fitness a way of life.

Growth Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be 1 coach for every 10 athletes.
Quality Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Special Olympics athletes will have at least two training sessions per week, and have the opportunity to compete in at least two competitions every three months • Special Olympics will create a Personal Sports and Skill Development program for athletes to use in addition to their regular Special Olympics practices. This program will help athletes get better at making health and fitness decisions. • Every Special Olympics Program will offer some form Unified Sports (training and competing on a team that both people with disabilities and people without disabilities)

<i>Current Situation</i>	<i>In 2015...</i>	<i>What we need to do to get there...</i>
In many places there are not enough coaches to give athletes individual attention	There will be more coaches who understand Special Olympics and how to work with our athletes. 1 coach for every 10 athletes is the goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to find more people willing to coach • We need to provide training for those people to help them understand our program
Most athletes go to one Special Olympics training session per week.	Every athlete will have at least 2 practices per week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to find places that will allow us to practice more often • We need coaches willing to plan at least 2 practices per week. • We need to give athletes and families the materials they need to run their own practice at home if the coach can only lead one session per week.
Most athletes go to one competition each sport season	Every athlete will be invited to compete in at least 2 competitions in each sport season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport seasons may need to be longer to allow for more competitions • Local programs need to plan more than one competition where ALL athletes are invited.
Most athletes only exercise once a week when they go to Special Olympics practice.	Most athletes will decide to make fitness and being healthy something they work on all the time; not just when they are at Special Olympics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to find a way to get athletes to care more about their own fitness. • We need to create tools that athletes can use to help them stay healthy all the time.
We know that most athletes who play on Unified Sports teams enjoy it, but not everyone offers it.	More Programs will provide more athletes with opportunities to train and compete on a team with people without intellectual disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to find players who do not have ID who want to play. • We need to find people to organize Unified Sports in each area.

BUILD COMMUNITIES

In 2015...

We will involve everyone in the community in the Special Olympics experience. This will help everyone see the talents of Special Olympics athletes and give young people a chance to grow up seeing our athletes as equals. Families will benefit and work to involve other parts of the community.

<i>Current Situation</i>	<i>In 2015...</i>	<i>What we need to do to get there...</i>
Some Programs offer ALPs training but few work to make sure athletes can volunteer at higher levels.	150,000 athletes will be volunteering for their local Special Olympics Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to find a way to count how many athletes are already volunteering, and what they are doing • We need to offer training for athletes that want to do bigger jobs • We need to offer training for program leader to help them find ways to use more athletes as volunteers.
Some families want to be more involved in the Program, and others want to take a break; but most programs do not involve families as much as they could.	Every local program will have at least 2 family members that are leaders in helping get more people from the community involved in Special Olympics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find families interested in being leaders and spokespeople. • Set rules for families in leadership jobs • Make sure all local programs encourage families to become leaders.
Most young people do not get involved with Special Olympics or talk to our athletes.	1 out of every 5 volunteers in every local program will be a Young person (aged 12-25) without disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find groups of young people who will volunteer • Make sure we have jobs for young volunteers to do • Keep young volunteers coming back and invite them to help with leadership.
We know that Healthy Athletes Screenings are helping, but not enough athletes get to go through the screening.	Over half of the athletes in each local program will go through a Healthy Athlete Screening each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More local programs need to offer HA at their events. • More doctors need to volunteer and go through the training in every Program.
Many SO Programs are not a big part of the community because community leaders don't know about it.	Every SO Program will have at least one community leader helping with the Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find community leaders will to join our leadership teams. • Show how Special Olympics helps communities.

CONNECT FANS AND FUNDS

In 2015...

Special Olympics Programs will raise twice as much money as they did in 2010.

<i>Current Situation</i>	<i>In 2015...</i>	<i>What we need to do to get there...</i>
Many Programs have only one way to raise money. If that one source of fund raising stops working, they have no way to support their programs.	Over half of all Programs will have more than one way to raise money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help Programs plan their fund raising to have more than one source of money. • Look for sources of fund raising that can work for several Programs at the same time.
Many Programs depend on a lot of small donations for most of their fund-raising.	Over half of all programs will have a plan for asking for and getting large donations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help Programs know how to find people who can make big donations and then how to ask them for a big donation.
Most of the money raised by the Law Enforcement Torch Run comes from the US. We think it could raise a lot more money outside the US.	The Law Enforcement Torch Run will bring in \$3.5 million more than it did in 2010, and most of that will come from outside the US.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help Program outside the US know how to start a Torch Run and make more money from it.
Special Olympics sometimes looks different in different places. We know we will have better programs and raise more money if Special Olympics is the same in every country.	3 out of every 4 Programs have the same answer to the questions: <i>Who are we?, What do we do? and Why does it matter?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide what the answers are to these questions. • Tell all countries what the answers are and get them to agree to talk about these answers in everything they do.
Special Olympics has just started to use Facebook and Twitter to help people stay connected with our programs.	750,000 people will join an on-line Special Olympics community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a Special Olympics site where people who are part of our Program can join and then talk to each other. • Promote this new site so that a lot of people want to go there every day to talk about Special Olympics.

DEVELOP MOVEMENT LEADERSHIP

In 2015...

Special Olympics Programs will work together to improve the lives of athletes. Each Program will set its own goals, but all those goals help improve Special Olympics around the world. We will select and develop leaders and better ways to make all Programs better.

<i>Current Situation</i>	<i>In 2015...</i>	<i>What we need to do to get there...</i>
The Board Chairs, National Directors, and CEOs of your Program do not always have a formal Special Olympics training in order to learn how to best do their jobs	3 out of every 4 Board Chairs, National Directors, and Program CEOs have completed formal Special Olympics leadership training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what our leaders need to know in order to be good leaders • Train leaders
We do not always understand how much impact Programs are having. We need to collect more information about Programs, so that Programs can make better decisions on what they should be doing	All Programs collect statistics that help us to understand how a Program is doing and how a Program can do better.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine what information we need to collect in order to measure success and how it will be collected • Collect information
We do not always do a good job of thanking amazing people for the good work that they do. As we don't thank people, other people do not always learn about the good things that good people do	A world-wide program will ensure that Programs and people are recognized for great successes. We will share information about this across the globe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Program to reward amazing people and Programs
Programs do not always understand the rules that govern Special Olympics	We will make sure that Programs understand and follow the rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update our rules • Make sure that we share the rules with global Programs
Programs do a lot of activities, but they do not always stop to think about what they want to do in the next one, two, three, four, or five years	1 in 4 Programs will have multi-year plans and all Programs will have one year plans that say what the Program is going to do in that year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create multi-year plans in Programs that want to do this • Create one year plans in every Program

ESTABLISH SUSTAINABLE CAPABILITIES

In 2015...

Special Olympics has all the tools we need to make fact-based decisions, and improve our Programs. It is important that Special Olympics think about not just **what** we do, but **how** we get it done. We will communicate with each other to make sure that we know what each Program is doing and to work together where we can.

<i>Current Situation</i>	<i>In 2015...</i>	<i>What we need to do to get there...</i>
Programs tend to work alone to solve problems. We need to talk to each other more and with more people from outside Special Olympics.	We will have partnerships with Universities around the world who will help us answer hard questions about how to do things better.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find universities that want to partner with us. • Decide which projects we want to work on first • Look for other Programs in each region that may be ready to work on the same problem.
There are a lot of good ideas but many people don't know that others are willing to help.	We will have one place that everyone can go to for help on how to solve problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a central library and website to store all the ideas we have tried.