An Invitation

You are invited to support the world’s largest sports and humanitarian event of 2017.

Austria has been awarded the bid to host the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games.

There is no better world stage to create the awareness that leads to the acceptance and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.

An iconic and transforming event for Graz and Schladming, the nation and the whole world. Please join us in this extraordinary effort.
Eunice Kennedy Shriver believed that through the power of sport, Special Olympics could transform the lives of the athletes and the world, one community at a time, through the acceptance and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. By empowering people with intellectual disabilities, we are creating communities where everyone is included and respected.

The Issue

In the world today, there are nearly 200 million people with intellectual disabilities. They are often the most neglected, vulnerable and marginalized people in every society and culture.
Starting with the first International Games in 1968, Special Olympics World Games are flagship events held every two years, alternating between Summer Games and Winter Games.

Recent World Games Venues:
- 2017 Graz / Schladming, Austria
- 2015 Los Angeles, Calif., USA
- 2013 Pyeongchang, South Korea
- 2011 Athens, Greece
- 2009 Boise, Idaho, USA
- 2007 Shanghai, China
- 2005 Nagano, Japan
- 2003 Dublin, Ireland

The Result

4.7 million athletes in 170 countries
1.1 million coaches and volunteers
108,000 events annually worldwide
“Special Olympics is a testament to the indestructibility of the human spirit— you, the athletes, are the ambassadors of the greatest of humankind. You inspire us to know that all obstacles to human achievement and progress are surmountable.”

Nelson Mandela
Former President, Republic of South Africa, speaking at the 2003 World Games in Dublin, Ireland
The Impact

The Power of Special Olympics

Special Olympics is a global movement that unleashes the transformative power and joy of sports, every day around the world.

For nearly 50 years, Special Olympics has worked to empower people with intellectual disabilities to become accepted and valued members of their communities. It all starts... with sports!

"The work of Special Olympics is very important for people with disabilities, but in reality, it has an important role in the comprehensive development of humanity around the world."

Hu Jintao
President of China, speaking at the 2007 World Games in Shanghai
World Winter Games in Austria

In 2012, during the Special Olympics Board of Directors meeting in Panama, Special Olympics athlete Loretta Claiborne declared that the 2017 World Winter Games would be hosted by the cities of Graz and Schladming as well as in Ramsau am Dachstein and Rohrmoos. This incredible success was able to be achieved due to:

- the perfect preparation of the application material
- the united support of Austria
- the meaningful sustainability programs
- the amazing humanitarian work since 1993

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Data and Facts

- 2700 athletes from over 107 countries
- 1100 coaches
- 3000 volunteers
- 5000 family members and friends
- 1200 honored guests
- 800 symposium attendees
- 1000 representatives of media
Venues

Graz:
- indoor competition
- Closing Ceremony

Convention Centre Graz:
- speedskating
- floorhockey
- floorball
- stick shooting

Ice-rink Graz:
- figure skating

Closing Ceremony:
- March 24, 2017 / UPC arena

Ramsau am Dachstein

Schladming
Venues

Alpine and Nordic competitions and Opening Ceremony

Opening Ceremony:
March 18, 2017 | Schladming/Planai-Stadium

Alpine competitions:
Schladming-Rohrmoos
- alpine skiing
- snowboarding

Nordic competitions:
Ramsau am Dachstein
- cross country skiing
- snow shoeing
Be a Game-Changer for Inclusion!

We invite everyone to share the heartbeat for the world by playing and living unified every day. These World Games will inspire people of all backgrounds to come together in a global celebration of human achievement.

Here’s your chance

Take the opportunity to become a game-changer for inclusion in 2017. Together, we can open hearts and minds toward people with intellectual disabilities (ID). Together, we can celebrate the skills and talents of athletes of ALL abilities.

Goals of Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017

- advocating human rights
- increase athlete participation by introducing new sports
- establishing partnership programs (Europe for Africa)

Special Olympics Austria 2017
Heartbeat for the world