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Story Starter Template

**1. CREATE YOUR STORY HEADLINE  
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**CHECKLIST**

Did you:

* Describe what’s important or unique about this story (answering the question: "So what?")
* Include a verb?
* Capture the overall message of your story?
* Grab the audience’s attention?
* Is it timely?
* Verify all information is correct regarding athlete name, age, sport, etc.?

**2. TELL YOUR STORY   
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***(use as much space as you need)***

**CHECKLIST**

Did you:

* Write a story that is about someone?
* Tell us what your story is focusing on: volunteer, athlete, Healthy Athletes screening, fitness, competition, etc.
* Describe the BEFORE and AFTER? As in, what changed?
  + What was the athlete’s – or teammate’s or volunteer’s – life like before joining Special Olympics?
  + How did things change after? (A change in a health outcome, confidence, improved skills, new friendships, feelings of acceptance and success?)
* Identify if it’s a strong sports and fitness story i.e. is there a rivalry or history of competition for this athlete that is relevant to telling this story? Did this athlete completely change their fitness and health regime to accomplish their health and fitness goals?
* Put the story within the context of how people with ID are treated/viewed in your country?
* Include any details unique to this story (or to this Program or country)?
* Ask the best questions, such as:

Ask an athlete or unified teammate:

* When did you get involved in Special Olympics and why? Which are your favorite sports and why?
* How is your life different since you’ve been involved with Special Olympics?
* What does Special Olympics mean to you? How has it changed you?
* What are you most proud of?

Ask a volunteer, coach or family member:

* + What inspired you to get involved with Special Olympics?
  + What changes have you seen in the athletes? What changes have you seen in yourself or in other volunteers/supporters?
  + Please tell us about your proudest or most memorable moment(s).
  + How do you describe Special Olympics to other people? Why do you say they should support Special Olympics?

To establish context, you should know or ask:

* How are people with intellectual disabilities treated in your country? How has this changed over time?
* How does this pose challenges for athletes, family members or volunteers?
* How has Special Olympics improved attitudes and helped build unity or community?

Lastly, are there any details that might be unusual or fascinating to others?

This can be anything unique to your Program or your story. For example: Did your athlete receive glasses for the first time at a Healthy Athletes screening? Did your athlete travel far distances to see a doctor and receive an accurate diagnosis and referral for follow-up treatment? Did your athlete receive follow-up care/treatment? Do local athletes play with a masking-tape ball? Do they prefer to run barefoot? Must an athlete travel far distances to attend training? Does he or she live in an orphanage? Or in a yurt in some remote location, etc.?

**3. INCLUDE A PHOTO**

Just one or two photos can turn a good story into a great story. For health and wellness stories, please try to get before and after photos to show the athlete’s progress. Please try to get action shots – especially those that show facial expressions and emotions. We need photos that are high resolution (generally about 1 MB).