

CALL TO ACTION: HOW YOU CAN HELP AS INDIVIDUALS OR CORPORATIONS

Special Olympics is honored to be an important part of making the world a more inclusive and unified place for all and giving more people with intellectual disabilities a chance to live up to their potential.

There are many ways for you to get involved and support Special Olympics, if you have suggestions or questions, please feel free to reach us at:

soea@specialolympics.org

**2024
EAST ASIA
ANNUAL REPORT**

OUR MISSION

Special Olympics provides 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 and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

CONTENT

- ♥ MESSAGE FROM AN ATHLETE LEADER
- ♥ MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP
- ♥ 2021-2024 GLOBAL STRATEGIC PLAN
- ♥ IMPROVE SPORTS QUALITY
- ♥ LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY BUILDING
- ♥ UNIFIED SCHOOLS
- ♥ FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND YOUNG ATHLETES
- ♥ GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
- ♥ UN PARTNERSHIPS
- ♥ IMPROVE ATHLETE HEALTH
- ♥ RAISE AWARENESS
- ♥ GENERATE MORE RESOURCES
- ♥ LETTER FROM CHAIRMAN OF REGIONAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
- ♥ REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CONTACTS

MESSAGE FROM AN ATHLETE LEADER



Dear Friends,

My name is Szeto Chi Long, and I am honored to serve as a Regional Messenger for Special Olympics East Asia and as a member of the Regional Athlete Leadership Council. As an athlete leader from Special Olympics Hong Kong living with autism, I am currently studying at the Hong Kong Design Institute. In addition to my studies, I take pride in volunteering at Healthy Athletes screening events, organizing activities, and hosting game booths to promote health and inclusion within our community.

My academic work in animation production requires strong skills in drawing, presentation, and writing. Although I sometimes feel discouraged by my current abilities in sketching, editing, and scene design, I refuse to give up. I embrace these challenges as opportunities to practice diligently, refine my technique, and achieve both academic success and personal growth.

My journey with Special Olympics began in 2011 when I first participated in bocce and golf. Initially, I struggled with confidence during bocce training and competitions. However, over time, I learned to embrace my weaknesses, dedicated myself to improvement, and ultimately discovered a genuine passion for sport. In 2023, I was thrilled to win a gold and a silver medal at the Special Olympics East Asia Regional Bocce Competition — a moment made possible by the unwavering support of my teammates, friends, and family.

Becoming an athlete leader has been a profound and transformative experience. In 2023, I had the honor of participating in the Global Athlete Congress in Berlin, Germany, where I connected with athlete leaders from around the world, engaged in group activities, and proudly showcased the outcomes of our inclusion events. Following the Congress, I furthered my leadership journey by attending athlete leadership training sessions in Taicang and Beijing, deepening my commitment to the Special Olympics movement.

As an athlete leader, I aspire to collaborate with fellow athletes and mentors to organize events that foster inclusive awareness. Together, we can help more people learn to respect, support, and embrace one another, ultimately building a more inclusive and welcoming society for all.

Finally, I want to leave you with this message: challenges are not obstacles; they are opportunities for growth, resilience, and discovery. They test us, strengthen us, and inspire us to reach new heights. As a challenger, I encourage each of you to embrace the opportunities before you, remain open-minded, and welcome the experiences that will enrich the color and meaning of your life.

Thank you for being a part of this journey toward inclusion and empowerment.

Sincerely,
Ron Szeto

Special Olympics East Asia Regional Messenger
Regional Athlete Leadership Council Member

MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends,

On behalf of Special Olympics East Asia (SOEA) I am pleased to share with you our efforts for the past year. In 2024, we continue to see our Programs working hard to recover from the Covid pandemic as we return to normalcy in terms of sports training and competitions, organizational development and leadership efforts, health screenings and fitness programs, etc. Our mission to engage people with and without intellectual disabilities (ID) into our Movement to promote inclusion and equality remains our unwavering focus.

Our Sports team is determined to introduce and cultivate new sports for our athletes. To do so, we must engage and train coaches to lead our athletes to reach their potential best in these new sports. Our wide array of sports activities include expansion of MATP, 3x3 Basketball as well as Community sports engagement. We are also promoting female sports in compliance with SOI priorities. All in all, we are working hard to increase our athletes and participants' count to beyond pre-pandemic figures by offering our Programs excellent learning opportunities and competitions for our athletes.

Leadership and capacity building amongst our Programs, athlete and youths as well as organizational excellence are always key focal areas for our East Asia Organizational Development department. We resumed holding our annual Regional Leadership Council meetings off-line while holding regular virtual quarterly meetings with Program Leadership in addition to frequent communications to ensure compliance and synergy between our Regional office and Program staff. Engaging athletes and their Unified partners, as part of our Unified Schools efforts, takes priority.

Maximizing awareness and building brand presence is core to the efforts orchestrated by our Marketing, Communications and Development team to promote Special Olympics in and beyond our Region. We cultivate relationships with a wide variety of partners, ambassadors, donors and supporters while promoting our brand via social media, both domestically and internationally. Fundraising in the current climate has become more challenging, however we are blessed to continuously receive the support of existing donors and sponsors who are avidly introducing new potential supporters to us.



Freda M. Fung
Regional President
& Managing Director
Special Olympics East Asia

2021-2024 GLOBAL STRATEGIC PLAN

Our Healthy Athletes screenings continuously provide pro-bono medical service to ensure our athletes receive opportunities to understand and maintain their physical and mental health better. Many local-funded screening events have been successfully organized and executed by our Health team. We now have 8 disciplines serving the health of our athletes, the newest being "Strong Minds" which focuses on the mental well-being of our athletes.

All in all, we've had a busy year and we are most grateful for the generous support that you, our supporters, donors and partners, have granted to us. We would not be able to achieve our goals and targets for our Movement in our Region without your contributions. On behalf of our SOEA team, our athletes and families, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your great support to us throughout the year.

Thank you and we are looking forward to an even more exciting 2025 and working with you to continue making this world one of more acceptance and inclusion.

With thanks and blessings,



OUR **VISION** IS AN INCLUSIVE WORLD FOR ALL, DRIVEN BY THE POWER OF SPORT, THROUGH WHICH PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES LIVE AN ACTIVE, HEALTHY AND FULFILLING LIFE.

GOAL A

INCREASE LOCAL SPORTS PARTICIPATION AND WELL-BEING TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

GOAL B

REMOVE BARRIERS TO INCLUSION AND EXPAND REACH THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY



2019-2024 SO EAST ASIA CENSUS DATA

Data Captured April 7th, 2025



GLOBAL TARGETS REACH

STRATEGIC METRICS - ROAD TO 2030



	2019	2022	2023	2024
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS*	1,781,183	1,725,910	1,749,480	1,830,096
ACTIVE PROGRAMS	6	6	6	6
CERTIFIED COACHES	85,916	66,500	69,047	67,496



UNIFIED (CHAMPION) SCHOOLS	2019	2022	2023	2024
MEANINGFUL ATHLETE AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP ROLES/JOBES*	402	664	838	1,471
UNIFIED LEADERSHIP	26,342	28,358	28,653	30,030



SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS	2019	2022	2023	2024
HEALTHCARE WORKERS TRAINED*	24,091	37,175	42,841	46,233



HEALTHCARE WORKERS TRAINED*	2019	2022	2023	2024
0	664	1,104	1,060	

SO EAST ASIA FOOTPRINT

SPECIAL OLYMPICS DEMOGRAPHICS



	2019	2022	2023	2024
TOTAL PROGRAMS (National, States, Countries, Jurisdictions)	6	6	6	6

	2019	2022	2023	2024
ACTIVE PROGRAMS	6	6	6	6

	2019	2022	2023	2024
LOCAL CLUBS/ PROGRAMS	115	364	587	622
LOCAL CLUBS/ PROGRAMS CONDUCTING UNIFIED SPORTS (excluding Unified Schools)	72	342	388	397

SPORTS & COMPETITION

ATHLETES, PARTNERS, COMPETITIONS, COACHES



ATHLETES, COMPETITIONS, COACHES

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Athletes	1,434,390	1,407,937	1,430,986	1,451,036
MATP	3,450	3,376	3,452	3,512
Young Athletes	15,467	19,480	21,622	22,798
Total who Trained AND Competed, Athletes	794,350	785,786	793,738	800,459
Total Traditional Competitions By Sport, Competition	0	0	7,537	7,729
Total Athletes Trained BUT did NOT Compete	640,040	622,151	637,248	650,577
Total Competitions (traditional and Unified)	7,596	7,690	7,781	8,062



CERTIFIED COACH RATIOS

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Total Coaches (Certified and Uncertified), Coaches	87,027	88,501	92,049	94,777
Number of Certified Coaches, Coaches	85,916	66,500	69,047	67,496
Certified Coach Ratio	1:17	1:21	1:21	1:21



SPORT PARTNERSHIPS*

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Sport Partnerships	56	26	55	47

*Data update June 2.

UNIFIED ATHLETES, PARTNERS, COMPETITIONS, COACHES

UNIFIED SPORTS RECREATION MODEL

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Unified Sports Recreation Model, Athletes	143,649	148,727	150,780	153,283
Unified Sports Recreation Model, Partners	157,885	158,846	159,322	209,774

UNIFIED ATHLETES AND PARTNERS

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Unified Totals Athletes and Partners, Athletes	272,324	282,366	285,799	290,442
Unified Totals Athletes and Partners, Partners	346,793	317,973	318,494	379,060

YOUTH UNIFIED ATHLETES AND PARTNERS

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Youth Unified Athletes and Partners, Athletes	127,836	131,111	133,270	135,842
Youth Unified Athletes and Partners, Partners	89,338	88,576	88,651	88,969

UNIFIED PLAYER DEVELOPMENT MODEL

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Unified Player Development Model, Athletes	70,804	72,871	73,872	75,045
Unified Player Development Model, Partners	112,630	92,550	92,563	99,655

UNIFIED COMPETITIVE MODEL

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Unified Competitive Model, Athletes	61,000	63,162	64,065	66,899
Unified Competitive Model, Partners	77,590	74,432	74,484	79,669

UNIFIED COMPETITIONS

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Number of Unified Competitions	337	269	274	309
Total Unified Competitions By Sport, Other	0	0	274	508

UNIFIED COACHES

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Total Unified Coaches, Coaches	54,680	56,115	57,299	58,429



www.SpecialOlympics.org

PROGRAMMATIC CONSTITUENTS & LEADERS

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Athletes Serving in a Meaningful Leadership Role	19,334	20,395	20,549	21,797
Number of Youth Leaders (aged 8-25)	7,008	7,963	8,104	8,233
Athletes Trained in Leadership or Skill Development	0	3,256	3,707	3,894



FAMILIES

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Total Registered Family Members	161,858	177,876	179,654	210,164
Number of Family Leaders	7,793	8,407	8,719	8,805



VOLUNTEERS

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Total number of Volunteers	69,455	57,730	58,243	68,002
Number of Youth Volunteers (aged 8-25)	42,064	39,470	39,840	49,553

SOCIAL MEDIA

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Total Social Media Followers	24,091	37,175	42,841	46,233
Facebook	17,461	24,583	28,197	31,054
X (Formerly Twitter)	1,310	0	0	0
Instagram	4,264	8,813	10,633	10,586
Other	1,056	3,779	4,011	4,593



PAID & UNPAID STAFF

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Full-Time Paid Program Director/CEO?	5	5	4	4
Total Number of Paid Staff (full and part-time)	58	62	67	69
Number of Paid Staff with Intellectual Disabilities	4	6	6	5
Number of Unpaid Staff with Intellectual Disabilities	2	0	4	8

ORGANIZATIONS EDUCATED UNIFIED LEADERSHIP

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Organizations Educated in Unified Leadership	0	295	405	155

SCHOOLS

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Total Number of Schools Engaged in Special Olympics	3,295	2,023	2,209	2,232
Number of Unified Schools	357	623	799	1,411
Number of Unified Champion Schools	45	41	39	60

HEALTH

FITNESS

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Athletes that participate in any Fitness Activity	0	13,216	17,258	19,964
Athletes that participate in a Structured Fitness Activity of 6 weeks or longer	0	3,644	4,077	4,700
Individuals w/o ID (Unified Partners, Coaches, Family members, etc.) that Participate in any Fitness Activity	0	1,357	1,768	1,683
Individuals w/o ID (Unified Partners, Coaches, Family members, etc.) that Participate in a Structured Fitness Activity of 6 weeks or longer	0	380	375	629



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES & TRAINED WORKERS*

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Healthy Communities	0	4	4	6
Healthcare Workers Trained	0	664	1,104	1,060



APPENDIX

Metric Definition and Updates:

1 **Strategic Target Metric:** The total number of **Participants** includes Athletes, Unified Partners, Young Athletes, and MATP.

2 **Strategic Target Metric: Meaningful Athlete and Youth Leadership roles/job** is a combined metric of Athlete Leadership and Youth Leaders(8-25) for the Strategic Target.

3 **Strategic Target Metric: Healthcare Workers Trained** metric is captured outside of Census by the Health and Research team. This metric is provided and shared to support the Health metrics within the Census, as well as, has a direct impact for the targets within our Strategic Plan.

4 The **Healthy Communities** metric is captured outside of Census by the Health and Research team. This metric is provided and shared to support the Health metrics within the Census, as well as, has a direct impact on Health and Research team reach targets.

5 On May 7th discrepancies were found **Demographics** (age, gender) which also impacted metrics in 2022 and 2023. Metrics for 2024 have been corrected, however, data from 2022 and 2023 will be preserved as previously reported.

6 **Sport Partnerships** data is captured outside of the Census by the Sports team, but shared as a crucial connection to the Sports and Competition teams reach.

Special Olympics International Confidential

IMPROVE SPORT QUALITY

SPORTS COMPETITIONS

2024 Special Olympics Fuzhou Community Competition

May 11-12, 2024



The 2024 Special Olympics Fuzhou Community Competition took place from May 11 to 12, 2024. This event welcomed Special Olympics athletes from various districts and counties in Fuzhou, with approximately 160 participants. The competition featured a range of activities, including the Motor Activity Training Program (MATP), badminton events, and table tennis matches.

2024 Special Olympics Korea International Unified Games

June 14-16, 2024

The 2024 Special Olympics Korea International Unified Games took place in Inje from June 14 to 16. This event promoted inclusion and exchange among athletes with and without intellectual disabilities through the Unified Sports format. A total of 410 athletes from Special Olympics East Asia participated, competing in five Unified events: basketball, volleyball, badminton, floorball, and football.

Notably, Unified Sports teams from SOEA had the opportunity to exchange gifts and socialize after the matches. All athletes who participated in the Unified events received a medal and a gift, generously sponsored by Teddy Bear Korea.



2024 Special Olympics East Asia 3x3 Basketball Competition

July 18-21, 2024

The 2024 Special Olympics East Asia 3x3 Basketball Competition was held in Qingdao, China, from July 18 to 21, 2024. A total of 12 teams from Special Olympics East Asia were invited to participate in this event, comprising 8 men's teams and 4 women's teams. In all, 82 team leaders, coaches, and Special Olympics athletes took part.



Notably, Zheng Haixia attended the Special Olympics women's basketball training camp, where she personally guided athletes through various skills. From chest passes to bounce passes and stationary shooting, she patiently explained and demonstrated each movement.



2024 Special Olympics Harbin Community Competition

September 22, 2024

The 2024 Special Olympics Harbin Community Competition took place in Harbin on September 22, 2024. This event welcomed Special Olympics athletes from various communities in the area, with approximately 100 participants. The competition featured two main categories of activities: football and athletics, encompassing a total of 48 individual events across smaller categories.





2024 Special Olympics Kunming Community Competition

October 10-11, 2024

The 2024 Special Olympics Kunming Community Competition took place from October 10 to 11, 2024. Over 160 athletes from various communities participated in this event. The competition featured a total of 11 individual events, 1 team event, and a demonstration event.

2024 Special Olympics East Asia Unified Schools Football League

October 24-28, 2024

SOEA hosted the 2024 Special Olympics East Asia Unified Schools Football League in Chengdu from October 24 to 28. This groundbreaking event brought together eight all-female teams from across East Asia, offering female athletes and Unified partners enhanced training and competitive opportunities through a play-to-learn approach. The tournament also featured an all-female refereeing team accredited by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), setting a new standard for inclusivity and empowerment in regional sports events. As a result of this competition, we significantly increased the participation of female athletes in the region.



2024 Special Olympics Guangzhou Community Competition

November 30, 2024

The 2024 Special Olympics Guangzhou Community Competition took place in Guangzhou on November 30, 2024. Over 200 Special Olympics athletes, parents, and enthusiastic volunteers came together for this event. The fitness run featured two joyful island-circling running projects: a 5-kilometer and a 10-kilometer course.



COACH WORKSHOP & TRAINING



2024 Special Olympics East Asia Dance Sport Coach Workshop

April 16-19, 2024

The SOEA Dance Sport Coach Workshop was held in Chengdu, from April 16 to 19, 2024. The workshop aimed to raise awareness of Special Olympics, promote dance sport within the organization, and enhance the professional knowledge of Special Olympics coaches. Led by Dr. Pierre Gider, an experienced lecturer from Special Olympics Global Advisor for Dance Sport, the workshop saw participation from over 30 coaches from SOEA Programs.

2024 Special Olympics East Asia Badminton Coach Workshop

May 20-23, 2024

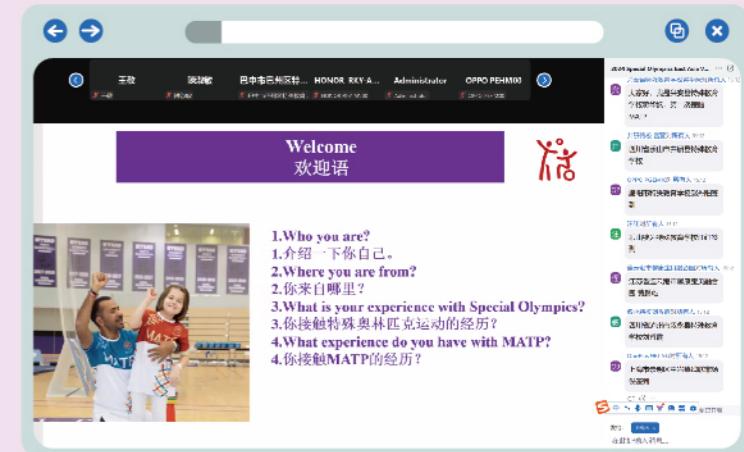
The 2024 Special Olympics East Asia Badminton Coach Workshop took place in Hefei from May 20 to 23, 2024. This training, which combined theoretical and practical approaches, aimed to help 37 coaches from Special Olympics East Asia enhance their badminton teaching methods for athletes and foster their interest in the sport. The workshop featured two senior trainers, Yong Joo and Erica, from the Badminton World Federation. Additionally, former Badminton World Champion Wang Yihan visited the training site to engage in sharing and interaction. 20 Special Olympics athletes from the Hefei Special Education Center also participated in the training.



2024 Special Olympics East Asia Virtual MATP Coach Workshop

August 20-21, 2024

The Special Olympics East Asia Virtual MATP Coach Workshop was successfully held on August 20 to 21, 2024. The two-day course attracted nearly 250 MATP coaches from various Special Olympics East Asia Programs. Led by Dr. Niamh E. Mourton, Senior Manager of the Motor Activity Training Program at Special Olympics International, the workshop featured professional lectures and discussions. Over the course of the event, coaches gained valuable expertise in MATP and learned effective methods for teaching Special Olympics MATP athletes.



SOC Unified School Coach Workshop

September 24-27, 2024



From September 24 to 27, 2024, the Special Olympics China Unified Schools Coaches Workshop was successfully held in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province. This workshop focused on introducing Special Olympics, organizing Special Olympics training, preparing for Special Olympics competitions, and developing Special Olympics winter sports such as floorball. Over 30 coaches from Unified schools across mainland China participated in the training. The expert panel consisted of four lecturers from Shanghai, Sichuan, Harbin, and Xi'an. This training course provided a professional learning

platform, allowing coaches to enhance their skills. Additionally, the coaching activities established a solid foundation for fostering a more inclusive and supportive Special Olympics sports environment.

2024 Yangtze River Delta MATP Regular Training

Year round

The 2024 Yangtze River Delta MATP Regular Training is a physical activity initiative designed for individuals with intellectual disabilities in the Yangtze River Delta community.

By establishing a community-based sports intervention system, we have successfully covered 10 locations across the region, supporting 15 participants over a 30-week period. Our efforts have benefited a total of 4,500 individuals, fostering an environment where those with intellectual disabilities can better integrate into society and enjoy the benefits of social development.



This year's achievements reflect our commitment to creating a more inclusive world through sports. With continued effort and dedication, we aim to expand our reach and deepen our impact in the coming years, ensuring every individual with intellectual disabilities has the opportunity to participate, grow, and thrive.



2024 Shaanxi MATP Regular Training

Year round

The 2024 Shaanxi MATP Regular Training aimed to explore effective pathways for promoting physical capability development among school-age children with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. The initiative included a series of specialized online and offline activities, such as coach training, school visits, parent exchanges, and motor skills assessments. The Motor Activities Training Program (MATP) Challenge Day was designed to guide parents and teachers

in systematically enhancing the physical abilities of students with intellectual disabilities.

Throughout the year, our program successfully reached nearly a thousand beneficiaries, fostering an inclusive environment that encourages physical activity among children with intellectual disabilities. By equipping coaches and families with the necessary tools and knowledge, we are working to create a more supportive and inclusive world for individuals with intellectual disabilities.



2024 Special Olympics East Asia Unified Camp

August 26-31, 2024

The Special Olympics 2024 Camp Shriver took place from August 26 to 31, focusing on swimming. A total of 50 Special Olympics athletes and 50 Unified partners registered for the six-day camp. Participants primarily came from Unified schools and local communities, with some partners from our special sponsor, Disney. Everyone shared in the joy and passion of sports.



LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY BUILDING

SOEA Unified Leadership Assembly

July 20–22, 2024



The 2024 Special Olympics East Asia Unified Leadership Assembly, which included three concurrent events — the Youth Leadership Summit, Athlete Leadership Training, and Virtual Unified Schools Leadership Forum — brought together over 300 participants with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) from all six Special Olympics East Asia Programs, including representation from every province-level division in mainland China. The opening coincided with China National Special Olympics Day, where participants were

invited by the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) to celebrate inclusion through sports alongside local athletes at the China Administration of Sports for Persons with Disabilities.

The events focused on Unified Leadership, inclusive mindsets and behaviors, youth innovation, mental wellness, information accessibility, advocacy effectiveness, and meaningful collaboration between individuals with and without IDD. Speakers and trainers from Special Olympics International, Special Olympics East Asia, UNICEF, the Lions Clubs International Foundation, and local partners shared valuable tools and insights to support inclusive leadership development. Highlights included a panel on female participation and disability inclusion, featuring diverse voices from UNFPA, media, and Special Olympics athletes. These events were made possible through the generous financial and technical support of global and regional partners, including Bank of America, Bloomberg, Coca-Cola, UN agencies, and many others committed to advancing inclusion through youth and athlete leadership.

The full report is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/2024SOEAULA>



Our Time to Shine

Year Round

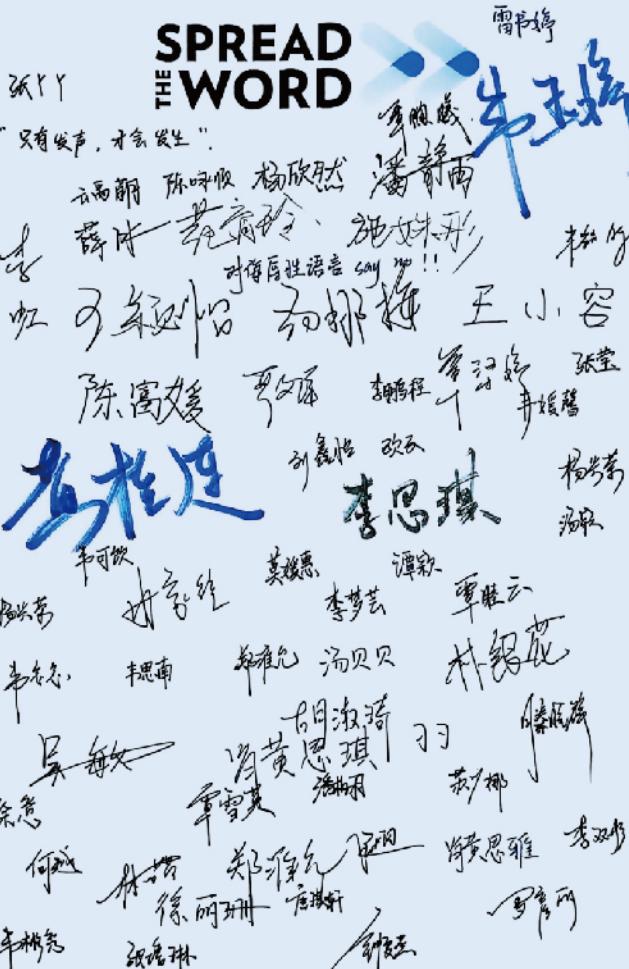
In 2024, Special Olympics East Asia continued its tradition of amplifying athlete voices by featuring seven personal stories on Weibo and WeChat. What began as a way to stay connected has evolved into a powerful platform for athletes to share their journeys, celebrate the people who support them, and showcase their unique perspectives and abilities.

These narratives provide insight into the diverse experiences of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, highlighting how inclusion—when paired with the right support and opportunities—can lead to meaningful personal growth. Whether through Unified Sports or expanded leadership initiatives, these stories convey a shared message: every individual, regardless of background, has the potential to thrive.

SPECIAL OLYMPIC ATHLETES COLUMN
特奥运动员专栏

CHEN WENLI
陈文里故事分享

Vol.32
本期话题
我的故事



Spread the Word

Year Round

In 2024, alongside traditional pledge posts across social media channels, Special Olympics East Asia expanded the Spread the Word campaign by promoting it through a digital platform dedicated to student volunteering opportunities in mainland China. This approach successfully attracted over 600 students, introducing them to Special Olympics, intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), and the core message of the campaign.

Inspired by this initiative, students from previously uninvolved universities organized offline Spread the Word activities, encouraging their peers and raising awareness about inclusion for individuals with IDD.

Program Excellence

June 14-15, 2024

The Special Olympics East Asia Regional Leadership Council Meeting was successfully held in Inje County, Korea, with full attendance from representatives of all six Programs, including athlete representatives.

Lou Lauria, Chief of Games and Competition at Special Olympics International, presented the Sport Impact Standard Guidelines, emphasizing the importance of high-quality event operations and sports presentation. He facilitated discussions on increasing female athlete participation and enhancing communication with sports partners to promote the Special Olympics movement.

Dipak Natali, Regional President of Special Olympics Asia Pacific, outlined a strategic plan to re-engage athletes and key participants lost during the COVID-19 pandemic, sharing best practices from the SOAP region. He also explored collaboration opportunities between East Asia and the Asia Pacific region to strengthen the influence of Special Olympics and increase participation.

As a traditional part of the meeting, each Program shared highlights and best practices from the past year, showcasing their significant achievements. These sessions fostered learning and provided valuable insights for future collaboration.

Coinciding with the meeting was the Unified Games hosted by Special Olympics Korea, where participants witnessed the grand opening ceremony. Everyone engaged with athletes and Unified partners, participated in a Unified badminton activity, and strengthened friendships through sports, celebrating the spirit of the Special Olympics movement.

UNIFIED SCHOOLS Unified Schools Virtual Training

April & December

To engage schools and promote educational transformation on campus, Special Olympics Unified Schools training continues to serve as the foundational step for those embarking on the Unified Schools initiative. The virtual training sessions were held on April 22-23 and December 2-3, reaching 630 participants from both special and regular schools, as well as community-based institutions serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in mainland China. This was made possible through the support of Special Olympics China and the China Association of Intellectual Disability Persons and Their Relatives.

In addition to the Unified Schools Program, dedicated experts and lecturers introduced various programs, including Unified Sports, the Motor Activity Training Program, Young Athletes, and Inclusive Health. These sessions featured success stories and personal experiences shared by Unified Champion Schools, family leaders, and youth leaders, effectively illustrating how Unified Schools impact campus culture and individual growth.

A post-event survey revealed a 99.6% satisfaction rate among participants, highlighting teachers' desire for collaborative efforts among society, schools, families, and individuals to create more inclusive opportunities for engaging people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities, ultimately fostering a more inclusive society.



Special Education School Gathering

October & November



Special schools play a crucial role in advancing local Special Olympics programming across various aspects of the movement. On October 23 and November 13, 2024, Special Olympics East Asia successfully hosted two Special Education School Gatherings in Beijing and Shanghai, bringing together school administrators and representatives from 49 schools and government units. The purpose of these gatherings was to promote exchange and collaboration in revitalizing school engagement, particularly between the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and the Yangtze River Delta region.

Key topics included the opportunities and challenges that Special Olympics presents to schools and how the movement can inspire

collaboration in building an inclusive future. Additionally, the meetings addressed the expansion of regional and local competition opportunities, with Special Olympics serving as a bridge to strengthen cooperation between special and regular schools.

The open and constructive communication fostered during these meetings helped reconnect with schools, paving the way for a more dynamic environment and establishing successful practices for local programming growth facilitated by special schools.



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND YOUNG ATHLETES

Family Engagement

Year Round

The SOEA family online resources continue to serve as a valuable learning platform, welcoming new families to the World of Special Olympics and nurturing their growth as family leaders. By the end of 2024, 100 families and individuals from over 30 community-based family clubs began their learning journey, with 42 successfully completing the 20-hour curriculum and receiving certification.



August 21-23, 2024

Special Olympics East Asia Family Leadership Forum was successfully held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, with over 60 family leaders and Program staff from six Special Olympics East Asia Programs attending this first in-person regional family forum since the pandemic.



Despite its relatively short history, Special Olympics Mongolia has made significant strides in family initiatives. The event brought together 28 passionate family leaders from more than ten regions, including some remote and underdeveloped areas of Mongolia, all eager to learn and explore breakthroughs within their communities. Ten years after its establishment, Special Olympics Mongolia has grown its family program from the ground up to a nationwide initiative, with family members and leaders working intensively at the grassroots level across the country.

The forum emphasized family engagement practices and the structures established at the Program level within SOEA, featuring in-depth discussions that clarified the roles of family leaders and outlined the advocacy landscape for promoting inclusion. Moreover, it provided a memorable opportunity for families from across the Region to unite and strengthen their connections through network building.

Young Athletes Expansion

Year Round

With funding support from the UPS Foundation, Special Olympics Hong Kong and Special Olympics Chinese Taipei have resumed Young Athletes (YA) initiatives at schools and community centers following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Special Olympics Hong Kong completed an 8-week Young Athletes (YA) training program for 124 children with intellectual and developmental disabilities from 9 special schools. Additionally, 34 new YA coaches were trained through a Train-The-Trainer workshop, equipping them to apply their knowledge in teaching. As a year-end celebration, a YA Challenge Day showcased the children's overall progress and inspired local UPS employees to continue their engagement with the Young Athletes program.



Meanwhile, Special Olympics Chinese Taipei hosted a 16-week program at three locations in Taichung. During this period, two Young Athletes Coach Trainings were conducted in Chiayi and Taichung, attracting a total of 65 participants. To evaluate the coaches' learning, two Unified Young Athletes Games were held, bringing together 224 children with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities, significantly raising public awareness about the abilities of children with special needs. The host university expressed interest in organizing a Young Athletes Games on campus next year.

August 23, 2024

Special Olympics Mongolia launched a pilot program for Healthy Young Athletes during the Regional Family Leadership Forum in Ulaanbaatar. Over 20 children participated in enjoyable sports activities, alongside both oral and optical screenings. This initiative benefited children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families by promoting overall health improvements. Furthermore, the inclusion of children without intellectual and developmental disabilities highlighted the program's commitment to inclusivity throughout the event.



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Throughout 2024, SOEA collaborated closely with the SOIHQ Global Development and Government Relations (GDGR) team to enhance relationships with key diplomatic stakeholders. A highlight of this effort was Ms. Freda Fung, SOEA Regional President and Managing Director, being warmly welcomed by Minister-Counselor Ms. Chunmei Chen at the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C in October. This meeting reinforced goodwill and mutual support for the movement.

Additionally, the SOEA Regional Office continued its efforts to assist China and Mongolia in fulfilling their commitments to the Global Leadership Coalition for Inclusion. Building on their 2023 pledges to join the Coalition, further actions were taken to help both countries advance the implementation of their objectives.



SO China

Year round



In 2024, Special Olympics East Asia enhanced its engagement with the new leadership of Special Olympics China through a series of virtual and in-person meetings, fostering a deeper understanding of the Global Leadership Coalition for Inclusion and advancing its objectives. This collaboration resulted in the establishment of over 600 new Unified Schools across mainland China.

Additionally, the China Disabled Persons' Federation expressed interest in bidding to host a future Special Olympics World Games and plans to attend the 2025 World Winter Games in Turin. To support long-term growth, SOEA contributed to the drafting of a Special Olympics China Development White Paper Compilation Framework. This framework aims to assist Special Olympics China in formulating guidelines for localized development, thereby expanding the reach and quality of programming nationwide.



SO Mongolia

Year round

Following Mongolia's 2023 commitment to the Global Coalition, ongoing coordination resulted in the official signing of an agreement between the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and Special Olympics Mongolia. The Mongolian government has also begun allocating funding to fulfill its Coalition commitments, underscoring its dedication to supporting inclusion and advancing the Coalition's goals.



During the SOEA Regional Family Forum held in Ulaanbaatar in August, SOEA leadership met with the new Minister of Culture, Sports, Tourism, and Youth, Nomin Chinbat, and extended an invitation for her to attend the 2025 World Winter Games in Italy.

UN PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership with UNICEF

Year round

In 2024, eight Youth Innovation Projects were successfully implemented across Special Olympics Macau, China, and Korea, focusing on key themes such as Health & Fitness, Advocacy and Community Engagement, Unified Sports, and Women's Empowerment. Collectively, these projects engaged over 17,000 youth with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities, fostering inclusion and youth leadership throughout the region.



Building on the successful experience of selecting, monitoring, and celebrating Youth Innovation Projects in 2023, Special Olympics East Asia (SOEA) once again partnered with UNICEF China for the 2024 cycle. Six projects from Special Olympics China received technical support from UNICEF China. Among these, the "Warmth Inclusion" project in Hangzhou was highlighted as a featured human-interest story by SOEA and UNICEF China, showcasing the importance of inclusive employment and vocational skills development for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Project leaders Wang Chang and Zhou Yuchu were featured in a co-produced video that garnered over 350,000 views across UNICEF China and SOEA's social media platforms.

You can watch the full video here: <https://tinyurl.com/WangChangVideo1>



In addition to supporting Youth Innovation Projects, UNICEF has been a key partner in our regional events, including the Unified Leadership Assembly. At the Assembly, UNICEF China Representative Amakobe Sande delivered a keynote speech during the opening ceremony, emphasizing the importance of inclusive leadership and the collaborative efforts with Special Olympics in promoting disability inclusion. Meanwhile, Child Protection Officer Yin Jia moderated the "Youth in Action" panel, showcasing how young people are driving change and putting disability inclusion into practice.

Partnership with UNDP

Year round



Collaboration on the development of the Movers Programme resources continued in 2024. SOEA optimized two additional modules—Storytelling and Leadership—to make them more accessible and relatable, particularly for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). These revised modules now include real-life stories and best practices from Special Olympics athletes, bringing the content to life. Unified Leadership principles have also been integrated throughout,

promoting inclusive mindsets and behaviors to a wider audience.

Additionally, UNDP further supported the SOEA Unified Leadership Assembly by sending Youth Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator Vivian Lam to Beijing to lead a session on Wellbeing, a module co-developed and enhanced by SOEA in 2023. We also facilitated connections and hosted several official meetings between Special Olympics East Asia, Special Olympics Asia Pacific, and the UNDP Asia Pacific office to collaboratively empower youth with disabilities across the regions where both SOEA and SOAP operate.



CRPD Animated Video

September 3, 2024

In 2024, a new episode of the CRPD animated video series Life with the CRPD, co-produced by SOEA and One Plus One Disability Group, titled The Education I Want, was released. This episode shares the perspectives of individuals with disabilities, highlighting the anxieties and challenges they and their families face when starting school. By incorporating both child and gender viewpoints, it underscores the broader significance of education—not just for people with disabilities, but for everyone. The episode emphasizes the crucial role of education in fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable society, while calling for stronger efforts to protect and fulfill the right to education for people with disabilities.

You can watch the full video and read the article in Chinese here: <https://tinyurl.com/LifeWithCRPD3>



Partnership with the United Nations Youth Office

November 19–20, 2024

SOEA supported the participation of the UN Youth Office at the Global Center Summit in Abu Dhabi. Representing Dr. Felipe Paullier, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, were Chief of Staff Elizeu Chaves Jr. and Disability Inclusion and Gender Specialist Manuela Rubianogroot Arias. Dr. Chaves delivered the closing remarks at the Youth Declaration for Global Inclusion session, while Ms. Rubianogroot Arias participated in the Partnership



Building for Sustainability panel. Both shared valuable insights from the UN Youth Office's work with young people and highlighted their ongoing collaboration with Special Olympics East Asia.

Looking ahead, we are committed to strengthening this partnership by aligning our resources and goals to ensure that all youth, regardless of ability, can lead equitable, peaceful, and fulfilling lives.

IMPROVE ATHLETE HEALTH

Inclusive Health 2024



Ongoing Prevention and Fitness

1,484 family members and caregivers received health education.
3,663 athletes participated in the constrictive fitness program at community level.



Early Detection & Care Coordination

5,830 Healthy Athletes Screenings offered, **82%** of urgent referrals addressed, and **90%** of non-urgent referrals received follow up care.

SO China and SO Mongolia are YA Community pilot Programs in SOEA, **2,171** new Young Athletes recruited.

Training the Health Workforce

90 new Clinical Directors trained, **52** Health workers, **317** clinical volunteers and **467** medical students received training in and out of Healthy Athletes events.



Transforming Health Systems

30 Health Messengers trained,
23 Health Messengers activated in health events.

RAISE AWARENESS

Unified Run at the Haichang Ocean Park in Shanghai

March 30, 2024

On March 30, Special Olympics Ambassador and Boxing Olympic Champion Zou Shiming, together with Li Xiang, Huang Yujie and other Special Olympics athletes, participated in the opening ceremony of the 10th Haichang Ocean Park Social Welfare Month and the launch ceremony of the Ocean Healing Art Festival.

This event, held at the Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park, kicked off the Unified Run activity and the Park's Welfare Month, to call on all society to care for people with intellectual disabilities (ID), including autism, and create a society of more inclusion and acceptance. The Haichang Group promises to provide free admission, in the month of April, to all their Themed Parks throughout China for people with Autism and SO Unified Schools students with ID. The launch ceremony was also attended by SOEA Regional President Freda Fung and Olympic badminton champion Zhao Yunlei. Before the Unified Run, Zou Shiming and the Special Olympic athletes led nearly 200 runners, at the scene, in fun & effective warm-up exercises, which coupled with the dynamic and powerful rhythm, quickly prepared everyone for the Run.



Unified Experience at NBA ON SHOW on Children's Day

June 1, 2024

On June 1, SOEA and NBA Cares jointly held a Special Olympics Unified Basketball event at NBA ON SHOW in Shanghai. This event enabled children with ID to experience the fun of NBA basketball on Children's Day, enriching their lives and promoting public awareness and support for people with ID. 80 families of Special Olympics athletes and Unified partners participated in the two sessions held in the morning and afternoon. The children enthusiastically watched the "Science Experiment" and actively participated in the interaction, wearing specially customized "NBA Cares" T-shirts provided by the organizers. The 1000m² immersive panoramic theater showcased an amazing basketball light and shadow show that left the children deep impression. The subsequent magic interaction further captivated everyone's attention. In the final basketball clinic session, they experienced the physical and mental release and joy brought by basketball through a series of activities.



Bloomberg Race in Beijing

August 23, 2024

After 5 years, the Bloomberg Square Mile Relay had finally come back to China with the first station in Beijing. Every participant in the race made an impact through the community program, The Extra Mile, which addresses unique social challenges in communities where they live and work, through three philanthropy pillars: Education, Public Health and Social Justice & Equality. Once again, Bloomberg chose Special Olympics to be its sole beneficiary and contributed by making a USD\$30,000 donation after the event, which was designated to support the Special Olympics in the pillar of Social Justice & Equality.

On August 23, the Beijing relay was kicked off. SOEA President Freda Fung was invited to be the special guest who announced the start of the relay. 6 SO athletes and their families were also invited to experience the track in advance. They participated in football mini games and had a great time on the scene.

Bloomberg Race in Shanghai

October 18, 2024

Bloomberg Square Mile Relay series was hosted in different cities around the world, aiming to promote the health and team cohesion of financial professionals, focus on local public welfare projects, and advocate for a healthy lifestyle. On October 18, it was held in Shanghai with as many as 80 teams participating. Ten local Special Olympics athletes attended the event, interacted with the participants on-site, and promoted the inclusive philosophy of the Special Olympics.



Play Unified at WTA

October 28, 2024

The main draw of the WTA 250 Hong Kong Open kicked off on October 28. Chinese tennis legend and Special Olympics Global Ambassador Li Na served as the tournament director. During the Special Olympics "Play Unified" segment, Li Na engaged closely with Special Olympics athletes, conveying messages of hope and encouragement while showcasing the inclusivity and power of sports. Meanwhile, the Special Olympics athletes demonstrated a true spirit of sports through their perseverance, courage, determination, and friendship.





"Disney on Ice" tour in China

November 2024

In November, the 2024 global tour of "Disney on the Ice: Find Your Hero" took place in Beijing, Chengdu, and Wuhan, China. As a global partner of the Special Olympics, Disney has always focused on inspiring children with intellectual disabilities. Through this tour, 60 families were organized from three cities to experience the charm of ice and snow up close, inspiring their courage and dreams.

Unity Gala Dinner 2024

December 12, 2024

2024 Unity Gala Dinner was grandly held at the Ritz-Carlton Tianjin on December 12. Themed "Inclusion for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities," the event celebrated the achievements of individuals with ID in recent years. It also extended gratitude to those who had always supported Special Olympics and aimed to foster a more inclusive, equal, and respectful society where dignity, health, and happiness could be shared among people of all abilities.

In attendance were Special Olympics Global Ambassadors Yao Ming and Yang Lan, as well as Zheng Haixia, a member of the Chinese Basketball Hall of Fame. The keynote speakers were Mr. Li Xikui, Chairman of the China

Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development; Dr. Shi Derong, Special Olympics International Board Member; and Ms. Zhang Junting, Senior Advisor of Special Olympics East Asia.

Athletes from Special Olympics East Asia Programs including Special Olympics China, supporters from all walks of life gathered in a joyful and harmonious atmosphere! Additionally, Special Olympics athletes from the Hebei District Special School in Tianjin, were also invited, joining in the celebration of this powerful and warm event.



A Very Special Christmas held in Shanghai

December 19, 2024

"A Very Special Christmas" is sponsored by the AVSC Record Trust, the most successful benefit recording series in musical history, established by Jimmy Iovine and Mrs. Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1987 for Special Olympics. In recent years, SOEA has hosted the annual AVSC Appreciation Party to celebrate the holiday season and honor Special Olympics athletes, their families, coaches, Unified partners, volunteers, and all supporters, including principals of Unified Schools, corporate and individual sponsors, as well as media partners.



This year, the AVSC event took place on December 19. Ms. Freda Fung, SOEA Regional President and Managing Director, and Mr. Navarro Moore, Acting Consul General of the United States Consulate in Shanghai, delivered inspiring speeches. Special Olympics athlete Huan Chenglin captivated the audience with a solo musical performance.

The event also featured a showcase of video clips highlighting the talents of Special Olympics athletes from all Programs in the East Asia region. Attendees also participated in interactive Unified games, creating a warm and relaxed atmosphere to welcome the Christmas holiday season.



GENERATE MORE RESOURCES

Sponsor & Donors

Rockcheck Group

Rockcheck Group has been supporting Special Olympics East Asia in various key projects.

ShiDa Foundation

The Foundation has been supporting SOEA since 2021.

Coca-Cola China

Coca-Cola is the presenting sponsor of SOEA Unity Gala Dinner, in addition to regular year-round support.

Disney

Being the global partner of Special Olympics, Disney also pays a great attention to the regional development of the cause by supporting SO Unified sports activities through donation and voluntary service.

Sun Future Foundation

The Foundation donated to support SOEA's strategic development in marketing and communications.

City Football Group

The Group has been supporting the Watermark project solving Water issues by the power of football in Shanghai since 2021.

CMC China

CMC donated and continued to help Special Olympics to raise public awareness through various activities.

The Extra Mile

As a global charity initiative linked to the Bloomberg Square Mile Relay, it has been supported Special Olympics movement in Beijing and Shanghai since 2024.

A Very Special Christmas (AVSC)

AVSC, the single most successful benefit album in musical history for the past decades, funds SOEA to hold an annual AVSC Party to appreciate supporters.

ESPN

As a global partner, ESPN leverages its resources to help with the development of Special Olympics Unified Sports in the East Asia region.

Lions Club

As a Special Olympics Champion Partner globally, Lions Clubs International has always been supporting the SO Opening Eyes program.

Also, we would like to express our deepest appreciation to following corporates, organizations and individual donors:

CBA

China Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development

Shanghai Charity Foundation

NBA China

Shanghai Disney Resort

U.S. Consulate General Shanghai

Endeavor China

Ling Ding Auction

ELG

Orion

Wellington College International Shanghai

In alphabetical order

Betty Cao

Shi Derong

Chen Weide

Su Yiming

Hou Kun

Sun Qiuwenhui

Li Anqi

Wu Jingyu

Liao Mei

Yan Lan

Li Na

Yang Lan

Li Ning

Yang Yang

Li Ping

Yao Ming

Li Ruigang

Yeung Man Ying

Li Xiaopeng

Zhang Jiantao

Mary Gu

Zhang Junting

Mont Gu

Zheng Haixia

Paul MAK

Zhou Guanyu

Ran Yingying

Zhou Xun

Robert Shi

Zou Shimin

Sharon Kwan

LETTER FROM CHAIRMAN OF REGIONAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Dear athletes, families, partners, supporters and colleagues,

As we wrap up 2024 in the Special Olympics East Asia region, I'm truly grateful. This year has been a remarkable display of the dedication of our athletes, coaches, volunteers, partners and staff. Their efforts have made a real difference in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

The Special Olympics isn't just about sports. It's about inclusion, empowerment, and changing the world. In 2024, we saw this spirit in every corner of our region, from local training to cross-Program events. We're committed to providing year-round sports training and competitions for our athletes.

Local programming, as emphasized in Special Olympics strategic plan, is extremely important. Local events are where our athletes start their journey. These events help them learn new skills, gain confidence, and make friends. They also bring communities together, breaking down barriers and promoting acceptance. In 2024, local competitions and events across our region proved the value of such programming.

Looking ahead to 2025, we're excited about the Special Olympics World Winter Games in Turin, Italy. This global event will be a great chance for our athletes to show what they've learned through local training. It's a platform for them to inspire the world and prove that with support, they can achieve anything. We're sure our SOEA athletes will do us proud in Turin.

I want to thank everyone involved in our success in the SOEA region. Your hard work has made a huge impact. Together, we're building a more inclusive world. Let's look forward to 2025 with hope and energy, knowing that the future of Special Olympics in East Asia is full of promise.

Sincerely,
Soh Changwoo



Soh Changwoo

Chairman of Special Olympics
East Asia Regional
Leadership Council

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CONTACTS

SPECIAL OLYMPICS EAST ASIA

Ms. Freda M. Fung
Regional President & Managing Director
ffung@specialolympics.org

Ms. Daisy Cao
Vice President
Organizational Development
dcao@specialolympics.org

Mr. Allan Cheng
Senior Director
Sports
acheng@specialolympics.org

Ms. Rebecca Liu
Senior Director
Finance & Administration
rliu@specialolympics.org

Ms. Cherry Ye
Senior Director
Marketing & Development
cye@specialolympics.org

Mr. Jason Zhan
Director
Healthy Athletes
jzhan@specialolympics.org

SPECIAL OLYMPICS CHINA

Mr. Zhou Changkui
Chairman
joblina@126.com

Mr. Ma Litao
National Director
malitao@cdpf.org.cn

SPECIAL OLYMPICS CHINESE TAIPEI

Mr. Lee Shi-Jin
Chairperson
shijin042537@gmail.com

Mr. Lin Jui-Yen
National Director
rain5611@yahoo.com.tw

SPECIAL OLYMPICS HONG KONG

Dr. Evelyn Lam
Chairperson
adm@hkso.org.hk

Dr. Allison Wong
National Director
allisonwong@hkso.org.hk

SPECIAL OLYMPICS KOREA

Mr. Cheong Yang Seog
President
cheongys@sokorea.or.kr

Mr. Kim Dae Kyung
National Director
big@sokorea.or.kr

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MACAU

Dr. Sze Tat Ming
Chairperson
tmsze@umac.mo

Mr. Hetzer Siu
National Director
msomacau@macau.ctm.net

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MONGOLIA

Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren
Chairperson
oyun@zorigfoundation.org

Ms. Altantsetseg Baldandorj
National Director
altansomgl@gmail.com