



***This document reflects the official numbers as reported in the 2012 Special Olympics Reach Report. Please use this information until the 2013 Reach Report is published mid-year in 2014***

## **Main Message**

Special Olympics is a global movement that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sport, every day around the world. Through sports, health, education and community programming, Special Olympics is tackling inactivity, intolerance, isolation and injustice that people throughout the world face, especially people with intellectual disabilities. With **220 Accredited Programs** in **170 countries**, Special Olympics is providing opportunities for more than **4.2 million athletes**, one million volunteers and millions more family members, supporters and fans.

## **Messaging Overview**

- Special Olympics sports is a catalyst that reveals the champion in all of us - athletes, volunteers, coaches, fans, supporters, etc.
- Special Olympics removes barriers and stigmas that people with intellectual disabilities face. Through sports and athlete leadership programs, we showcase the many gifts and talents of people with intellectual disabilities. Everyone involved with Special Olympics is inspired in a way that helps them strive to achieve their personal bests.
- Special Olympics envisions a world where people with intellectual disabilities lead healthy, vibrant lives grounded in ongoing sports and physical activities, sound nutrition and a deeply held commitment to improve, compete, achieve and demonstrate their personal bests to themselves and their communities.
- Special Olympics envisions a world where people with intellectual disabilities – and their families -- know the best ways to optimize their health and well-being. We want to make sure that accessible information, resources, systems and policies exist at the individual, community, national and global levels that support them in realizing healthy and productive lives.
- Special Olympics envisions a world in which people with intellectual disabilities are leaders in engendering and sustaining acceptance and respect within schools and communities. We do this through Special Olympics' inclusive sports, fitness and youth activation programs.
- Special Olympics develops and empowers leaders, catalyzing actions that directly benefit people with intellectual disabilities and their communities. By harnessing the power of people to change hearts, minds and behaviors, we create more cohesive and accepting civil societies around the world.
- There are many benefits for all who participate in Special Olympics: dignity, pride, joy, justice, fitness, empowerment, friendship, acceptance and community.



- The Special Olympics values are: Sportsmanship with Joy, Athlete Leadership, Unity, Bravery and Perseverance.
- Special Olympics is united in our commitment to inclusion, respect and dignity. We build communities of acceptance: loving families, inspired employees, coaches, volunteers and fans. Special Olympics is one Movement, across every community and every country, working to foster an accepting and inclusive society for all.
- Every day, Special Olympics athletes demonstrate courage, adhering to the Special Olympics athlete's oath, "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

## **PROGRAM GROWTH**

- Special Olympics, headquartered in Washington, D.C., currently serves 4.2 million athletes in 220 Accredited Special Olympics Programs across 170 countries worldwide. We have seven Regional offices around the world, located in China, Egypt, Ireland, Panama, Singapore, South Africa and the United States.
- During 2012, Special Olympics continued to grow steadily and expand global reach to more than 4.2 million athletes, representing 38 percent of our 2015 Strategic Plan goal. In addition, more than 1.3 million volunteers -- including more than 338,000 coaches -- supported Special Olympics athletes globally during 2012. The number of youth volunteers (ages 12-25) is now at more than 252,000, 28 percent of total volunteers, 8 percent higher than our Strategic Plan goal.
- Key demographics to note: approximately 64 percent of Special Olympics athletes are of school age (8-21) and over 33 percent are adults (22+); Special Olympics serves more than 90,000 individuals in the 2-7 age group; female athletes account for 38.5 percent of our total Special Olympics athlete population worldwide.
- Guided by the organization's Mission Statement, Special Olympics is determined to offer sports training and competition opportunities to all individuals with intellectual disabilities. Over the years, while we have significantly expanded our geographic scope of work and reached millions of new athletes, Special Olympics so far is only serving 2 percent of the world's population of people with intellectual disabilities. Adults and children with intellectual disabilities are every society's most neglected population. Nearly 200 million people have an intellectual disability (ID), making it the largest disability population in the world.

## **SPORTS EXCELLENCE**

Special Olympics focuses on delivering high-quality year-round competition opportunities in a variety of sports in an inclusive culture that stresses athletic excellence, rewards determination, emphasizes health and celebrates personal achievement.

- Special Olympics offers 32 Olympic-type summer and winter sports (28 Official sports and 4 Recognized sports) and held more than 70,000 competitions in 2012. That's the equivalent of about 193 competitions a day, or 8 games an hour, and is a 31 percent increase over 2011. Special Olympics Nigeria, Malawi, India, Arizona and New York all began reporting local competitions in 2012, which accounts for most of the significant increase in competitions.



- Special Olympics' most popular sports include athletics (track and field), football (soccer), basketball, bocce and bowling.
- Special Olympics Unified Sports<sup>®</sup> – which brings together people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same playing field as teammates, creating social inclusion through sports -- continues to grow worldwide. Since 2010, 52 Accredited Programs have started offering Unified Sports, which means we are already at almost 60 percent of our 2015 target. In addition, more than 69,000 young people (ages 12-25) are now participating in Unified Sports. In 2012, we saw more than 618,000 Unified athletes and partners with an almost 14 percent growth rate from the year before. Special Olympics has a goal of 1 million Unified Sports athletes and partners by 2015.
- Every two years, thousands of Special Olympics athletes worldwide come together to showcase their athletic skills and celebrate the spirit of Special Olympics in alternating World Summer and World Winter Games. The first Special Olympics World Games took place in 1968 and since then have evolved into a world-class sporting event similar in size and scope to the Olympic Games, attracting a wide range of sponsors, supporters and media. Special Olympics World Games bring public attention to the talents and capabilities of people with intellectual disabilities and are a capstone to more than 70,000 competitions that happen at all levels of Special Olympics each year. The next World Summer Games will be held in Los Angeles, California, USA from 24 July through 2 August 2015 and the next World Winter Games will be held in Graz, Schladming, and Styria, Austria 18 March through 24 March in 2017.

## **BUILDING COMMUNITIES**

Special Olympics builds strong, cohesive, and inclusive communities by marshaling resources, implementing diverse programming and acting as a convening power of stakeholders to drive positive attitudinal and behavioral change toward people with intellectual disabilities, strengthening the fabric of society.

### *FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP*

- Special Olympics provides a positive venue for families to become part of a caring community, and to be champions for the movement. In 2012, 71 percent of our Accredited Programs reported that they have at least two family members volunteering in a leadership role. Family members recruit new athletes, coach teams, raise funds, officiate at games, organize and chaperone events, and train other volunteers. They serve as a support network for other relatives of people with intellectual disabilities and increasingly are advocating for the needs of our athletes.

### *HEALTH & PUBLIC POLICY*

- Special Olympics promotes the overall well-being of people with intellectual disabilities through programs that ensure ongoing access to quality, community-based healthcare services, highlighted by free health screenings at Special Olympics competitions, games and other venues.
- Special Olympics Healthy Athletes<sup>®</sup> is a program that provides free health screenings in a fun, welcoming environment that removes the anxiety and trepidation people with intellectual disabilities often experience when faced with a visit to a doctor or dentist. Our impact on the health and well-being of Special Olympics athletes around the world is great, in some cases saving lives by discovering unknown health issues or providing health care that otherwise would not be available. In 2012, 30% of Healthy Athletes events were self-funded by Programs, which already exceeds our 2015 Strategic Plan target.



- Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® not only serves athletes but also trains health care professionals who then go back to their practices with increased knowledge of and compassion for people with intellectual disabilities. The Healthy Athletes program has offered free health exams to more than 1.2 million athletes in more than 100 countries. In 2012, more than 106,000 athlete exams happened at over 700 events run by more than 10,000 clinical volunteers.
- Despite a mistaken belief that people with intellectual disabilities receive the same or better health care than others, they typically receive sub-standard care or virtually no health care at all. Health screenings have found that Special Olympics athletes are at increased risk of secondary health issues:
  - 37.3 percent have obvious, untreated tooth decay
  - 37.0 percent needed new eyewear prescription
  - 22.7 percent have low bone density
  - 26.6 percent failed hearing tests
  - 49.2 percent have at least one kind of skin or nail condition
  - 43.0 percent are overweight or obese
- As part of the Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting in 2012, Tom Golisano pledged \$12 million to expand Special Olympics' health-related services to people with intellectual disabilities -- one of the largest and most medically underserved disability groups in the world. This amazing gift allowed for the launch of a new Healthy Communities initiative in eight countries (Mexico, Peru, Romania, Kazakhstan, Malawi, South Africa, Malaysia, and Thailand) and six states in the U.S. (Arizona, Florida, Kansas, New Jersey, Wisconsin and New York).
- Special Olympics is the leader in cutting-edge research and evaluation to better understand the many challenges faced by people with intellectual disabilities and the significant impact of Special Olympics on their lives. This research is a driving force for realizing improved policies, laws and rights for people with intellectual disabilities around the world.

#### *YOUTH ACTIVATION*

- Special Olympics has proven impact in creating positive attitudes & inclusive behavior that counter the pervasive discrimination, bullying and isolation contributing to unwelcoming and intolerant schools and communities for all.
- Special Olympics equips young people and adult influencers, including educators, with effective tools and training to create sports, classroom and community actions that produce friendships and acceptance. The number of Youth Volunteers is now at more than 252,000, 28 percent of the total volunteers.
- Special Olympics Project UNIFY® is a collaboration strategy with schools and communities to engage young people with and without intellectual disabilities in promoting attitudes and behaviors of acceptance and inclusion. Special Olympics seeks to have Project UNIFY in 5,000 U.S. schools, and 5,000 non-U.S. schools by 2015. Thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Education and major donors Special Olympics will continue to grow youth engagement and school activities throughout the U.S. and in five pilot countries (Austria, India, Italy, Romania, and Serbia) around the world.



- Many young people are not experiencing the enormous spectrum of benefits that sport and active play bring. As a direct result, childhood obesity, preventable diabetes and a whole host of emotional and physical health disorders have never been more prevalent. Curriculum for change: Get Into It<sup>®</sup> (K-12), an online curriculum, educates youth about intellectual disabilities while creating positive attitudes of inclusion, value and respect. Get Into It also encourages students without disabilities to participate in Special Olympics, bringing together young people who otherwise might not have the opportunity to meet and to learn from one another.
- The “Spread the Word to End the Word<sup>®</sup>” Campaign is a grassroots effort to educate people around the world, including the entertainment industry, about hurtful language and advocate for them to stop using the “R-word” (“retard” and comparable words in different cultures). The campaign targets students through school events and social networking, inviting them to sign an online pledge, and spread the word on their campuses. To date, more than 400,000 people have taken the online pledge while millions have signed petitions, banners and taken oaths around the world to stop hurtful language and banish prejudices.

### **CONNECTING FANS & FUNDS**

Special Olympics maintains the ambitious goal of doubling operating revenue worldwide over the next five years. In addition, we aim to take advantage of every opportunity to translate communications into strategic storytelling, passive spectating into fan engagement, and community support into real collaborative and breakthrough fundraising.

2012 was a record fundraising year for the Movement. Total revenue for the Special Olympics Movement was \$466,400,000 with cash being \$353,500,000 and in-kind donations valued at \$112,900,000.

#### *CORPORATE SUPPORTERS*

Corporate partners are essential in helping Special Olympics fulfill its mission. Through the generosity of cash, in-kind donations, volunteers and awareness, we are able to share the power of sport with the world. Our corporate team works with companies of all sizes with a solid history and strong brand image, including The Coca-Cola Company, Procter & Gamble, Mattel, Hilton, Finish Line and Safeway.

#### *INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS*

Millions of people across the globe support Special Olympics through donations, volunteerism and advocacy. Whether a monthly pledge donor, a volunteer at a local competition, a teacher promoting tolerance and acceptance in the classroom, or a campus volunteer recruiting fellow students to end the derogatory use of the “R-word,” our individual supporters are vital members of the global movement. They have taken a stand for dignity, acceptance and the human race that ultimately creates a better world for us all.

#### *GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS*

Special Olympics works with state and local governments around the world to raise awareness and drive programming across the spectrum of sports, health, education and community engagement. In the U.S., our partnership with the Department of Education provides support for Project UNIFY in more than 40 States, while the U.S. Center for Disease Control is at the core of our Healthy Athletes Programming. Under the leadership of the Chinese Disabled Persons Federation, our Program in China has surpassed the 1 million athlete mark, making it our largest program worldwide. In the



Caribbean, Special Olympics Jamaica share a robust partnership with the National Government that makes possible programming in sport, health and education. The Special Olympics Europe / Eurasia region has launched an ambitious government awareness program (GAP) designed to engage national government and raise awareness around Special Olympics programming and the value it brings to countries and communities throughout the region. These are just a few of the numerous ways in which government outreach and partnership drive real results for our Programs, athletes and their families at the regional, national, Program and community levels.

#### *COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS*

Special Olympics has deep relationships in the communities where it provides programming. The Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) for Special Olympics is the Movement's largest grass-roots fundraising volunteer corps, having raised more than US\$45 million in 2012, encompassing a variety of events including Torch Runs, Polar Plunge events, Tip-A-Cop® events and the World's Largest Truck Convoy fundraisers. More than 96,000 international law enforcement officers carried the Flame of Hope and volunteered locally last year.

#### *PARTNERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS*

Special Olympics has partnerships with key NGO's throughout the world that leverage the strength, reach and resources of organizations in support of people with intellectual disabilities. Through dynamic and growing partnerships with organizations such as UNICEF, Lions Clubs International, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Catholic Relief Services and more. Special Olympics is partnering to raise awareness around the needs of people with intellectual disabilities, provide direct support for our Programs, and spark the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in partners plan, strategies and programming.

#### *A VERY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS®*

Through bold innovation and enormous generosity, the recording industry has made beautiful music benefiting Special Olympics since 1987. From its first release to the latest recording, the *A Very Special Christmas* record series has raised more than \$109 million as we just celebrated 25 years. Funds raised through the album sales and downloads are granted to catalyze growth of Special Olympics internationally in places like Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Morocco, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, China, Brazil, Mexico, and Russia, as well as in hard-to-reach urban centers of the United States and the world.

### **SPECIAL OLYMPICS VALUES:**

#### *SPORTSMANSHIP WITH JOY*

We believe in the transformative power of sports. We embrace the purity of sports at all levels as we witness incredible personal athletic triumphs that shatter stereotypes.

#### *ATHLETE LEADERSHIP*



We empower athletes to be contributing and respected members of Special Olympics and society. We support athlete-leaders on and off the playing field.

*UNITY*

We are united in our commitment to inclusion, respect and dignity. We build communities of acceptance: loving families, inspired employees, coaches, volunteers and fans. We are one Movement, across every community and every country.

*BRAVERY*

We live our athlete oath: "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

*PERSEVERANCE*

We are capable, tenacious and resilient. We don't give up on ourselves or each other.

**UPDATED BOILER PLATE:**

*Below is a standard paragraph or boilerplate about Special Olympics to be used when describing the movement. Typically, this paragraph is used in press releases.*

**About Special Olympics**

Special Olympics is an international organization that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports every day around the world. Through work in sports, health education and community building, Special Olympics is addressing inactivity, injustice, intolerance and social isolation by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities which leads to a more welcoming and inclusive society. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown from a few hundred athletes to more than 4.2 million athletes in 170 countries. With the support of more than one million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics is able to deliver 32 Olympic-type sports and more than 70,000 competitions throughout the year. Visit Special Olympics at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org). Engage with us on: [Twitter @specialolympics](https://twitter.com/specialolympics); [fb.com/specialolympics](https://fb.com/specialolympics); [youtube.com/specialolympicshq](https://youtube.com/specialolympicshq), and [specialolympicsblog.wordpress.com](http://specialolympicsblog.wordpress.com).

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