



**Special  
Olympics**

# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
LATIN AMERICA



# Content index

<b>3</b>	MISSION
<b>4</b>	MESSAGE FROM OUR GLOBAL MESSENGER
<b>6</b>	MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP
<b>8</b>	REACH REPORT
<b>10</b>	SPORTS
<b>14</b>	YOUNG ATHLETES
<b>16</b>	HEALTH
<b>20</b>	EDUCATION & YOUTH
<b>24</b>	GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY
<b>28</b>	LEADERSHIP
<b>32</b>	50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IN CHICAGO
<b>34</b>	GAMES & COMPETITIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-II CENTRAL AMERICAN &amp; CARIBBEAN SPECIAL OLYMPICS SOCCER TOURNAMENT -GUATEMALA 2018</li><li>-WORLD TENNIS INVITATIONAL SANTO DOMINGO 2018</li></ul>
<b>38</b>	OPENING MINDS AND HEARTS
<b>40</b>	REGIONAL PARTNERS



## 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.



## MESSAGE FROM OUR GLOBAL MESSENGER

### “I want to be the voice of the voiceless”

My name is Emanuelle Dutra Fernandes de Souza. I am extremely happy I can represent Special Olympics and the Latin American region in my role as Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger.

But before I continue, allow me to tell you a bit more about me. It’s a story about dedication and hard work to reach our goals.

When I was a child, I had seizures. I was left in a coma for a week. My mom realized I reacted and moved differently after recovering from that coma. Doctors suggested it would be better if we moved somewhere else, and we did. In a new city, my life started anew.

My health and my life improved noticeably. My mom got involved with the Parents and Friends of Exceptional People Association (APAE, the Portuguese acronym), and this led to my relationship with sports.

I discovered my passion for soccer and beach volleyball, and trained almost daily. Because of this, Special Olympics heard of me in 2013. I had my first competitions with Special Olympics that year, in my first local games. Then, in 2014, I competed in the National Games and in 2015, I was able to represent my country, Brazil, in the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles, where my team won Bronze Medals in soccer.

I kept on competing and in December of 2017, I participated in beach volleyball and we classified

for the Abu Dhabi World Games. In July of 2018, I got a Silver medal in the first Unified Soccer Cup in Chicago.

In 2018 I represented the region in the Special Olympics Global Youth Leadership Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan, with my Unified Partner Leticia Maciel. We presented a project to introduce Unified Sports in Leticia’s school. And in September of that same year, I was invited to be a Sargent Shriver Global Messenger. This was a dream come true for me, because when I saw the Global Messengers sharing the stage with Michelle Obama in Los Angeles...I wanted that to happen to me too!

However, it was not an easy choice to make. My teammates and I had worked very hard to classify for the Abu Dhabi World Games. If I accepted the role of Global Messenger, I would not be able to compete with the rest of my team there.

Thanks to the advice and support of my teammates, I am sure I took the right decision. **Being a leader means listening to people, and doing what benefits everyone. It means leading by example, inspiring others to do the same.**

I like to practice sports, make new friends, travel, listen and talk to others. I wanted to be a Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger because I wanted to give a voice to those athletes that don’t have the opportunity to be heard. I want to be the person that listens to them: I want to be their voice. That’s how **WE** can change society. It can be better for us and everyone.

The road ahead is not an easy one but nothing worthwhile is. As an athlete and leader, I have seen that only through teamwork and hard work can we hope to achieve all our dreams and goals. With the support of everyone, I do believe a better tomorrow is possible.

Thank you.

#### **Emanuelle Dutra Fernandes de Souza**

Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger  
Special Olympics Brazil Athlete Leader

“Being a leader means listening to people and doing what benefits everyone. It means leading by example, inspiring others to do the same”.



## MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

### Tenacity. Perseverance. Dedication.

Special Olympics athletes embody the meaning of these words. That is how, for more than 50 years, they have inspired us. To follow them. To be like them. To fight for what really matters.

We have come a long way since the foundation of our movement in 1968. But the need for a more inclusive world has never been more urgent. We are at a turning point in the history of mankind: amongst so much division and discord, we are in dire need of setting the groundwork for the kind of future we want to leave for our children. A future of true inclusion, where young people and adults with intellectual disabilities can feel proud of all they can accomplish, both in and out of the playing field. A future where friendship between people with and without intellectual disabilities is not seen under the lens of charity or pity, but of companionship, love and respect among people. We are setting the groundwork for a more just, prosperous and inclusive world for all of its inhabitants.

We can do this. Through sports and athletic competitions for children and adults with intellectual disabilities; through improvements in the quality of life of this population, by way of inclusive initiatives that foster their integration to the world that surrounds them, starting from childhood; to policies and legislation that respects their rights and protects them from abuse; to changes in the treatment and access to high-quality medical care, a human right that continues to be a challenge for

this segment of the population. In its most basic sense, our mission is to remind society of their fellow men and women's worth, no matter the differences in ability – and to remind the population with intellectual disabilities that they are truly worth it. That they exist, and deserve not only to be heard, but also to be respected and lead fulfilling, happy lives, like any other person.

This year was really important to our Movement. We celebrated our 50th Anniversary, a historic milestone for an organization that, from its origins in Soldier's Field in Chicago, can now be found throughout the length and breadth of the globe, with more than 6 million athletes with & without intellectual disabilities in over 174 countries. And we celebrated those accomplishments in style!

In 2018, we held the Special Olympics Unified Cup, an international soccer tournament; our Global Day of Inclusion, held in Chicago's Soldier's Field, that included a star-studded concert and wholesome, fun activities for the whole family; and the lighting of the Eternal Flame of Hope, a 30-foot monument symbolizing the hope that Special Olympics offers athletes and their families, that same hope that our athletes then spread around the whole world; and finally, the Light Up For Inclusion campaign, where 225 iconic buildings and monuments from all over the globe lit up red on July 20th, to commemorate our anniversary.

Our Movement turned 50, but our Inclusion Revolution is just beginning!

Being able to celebrate this incredible anniversary of Eunice Kennedy Shriver's vision and legacy, and see how many hearts and corners of this Earth we have reached, fills us with pride. But, by the same token, it pushes us to commit wholeheartedly to our cause, never stopping, blazing the path forward not just for our athletes, but with them.

**The future begins today. Join us and be a part of our Inclusion Revolution.**

#### **Claudia Echeverry**

Regional President and Managing Director  
Special Olympics Latin America

**“Our Movement turned 50, but our Inclusion Revolution is just beginning!”.**

# REACH REPORT 2018

SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
LATIN AMERICA



## ATHLETES

357,981

UNIFIED PARTNERS

20,898

TOTAL

378,879



### TOTAL

2018

UNIFIED PARTNERS 20K ATHLETES 378K

2011

1K 299K

2006

2K 243K

2002

745 101K

## HEALTH PROGRAM

HEALTHY ATHLETES CLINICS

175

ATHLETES SCREENINGS

20,521

HEALTH VOLUNTEERS

5,143

COUNTRIES OFFERING HEALTHY ATHLETES

12

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

RECOGNIZED PROGRAMS 2 PROGRAMS IN PROGRESS 5



## UNIFIED SPORTS

TOTAL TEAMMATES

48,824

UNIFIED ATHLETES

27,926

UNIFIED PARTNERS

20,898

2017-2018 CHANGE

+5.7%

+682



## TOTAL YOUTH TEAMMATES

AGE 8-25

25,780

UNIFIED ATHLETES

13,943

UNIFIED PARTNERS

11,837

2017-2018 CHANGE

+22.72%

+4,772

## YOUNG ATHLETES

20,091

## COMPETITIONS

5,842

UNIFIED

2,664



16 COMPETITIONS / DAY  
1 COMPETITION / HOUR

## REGIONAL FOOTPRINT

NATIONAL PROGRAMS

20

COUNTRIES

20



## ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

ATHLETE LEADERS

2,435

2017-2018 CHANGE

-4.62%

-118



## PROGRAM LEADERS

PROGRAMS WITH PAID LEADERS

14

PAID STAFF WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

12

UNPAID STAFF WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

153

## VOLUNTEERS

69,073

YOUTH

22,767

COACHES

28,023



## YOUTH LEADERSHIP

YOUTH LEADERS (AGE 8-25)

1,546

2017-2018 CHANGE

-29.31%

-641



## FAMILY LEADERSHIP

FAMILY LEADERS

1,999

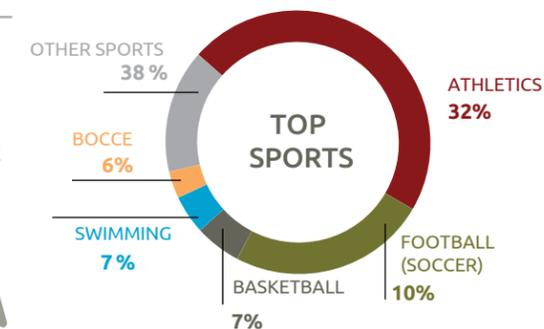
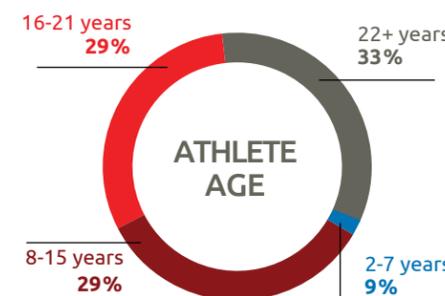
2017-2018 CHANGE

-6.33%

-135

REGISTERED FAMILY MEMBERS

84,348





# SPORTS

**357,981**  
ATHLETES

**20,898**  
UNIFIED  
PARTNERS

TOTAL OF  
**378,879**  
ATHLETES IN THE  
REGION

**28,023**  
TOTAL COACHES

Sports are the focus of empowerment efforts at Special Olympics. Every year, we organize over 5,000 competitions in Latin America, in 39 sports disciplines. These sports events serve various functions for the benefit of our athletes: by honing their physical skills, athletes strengthen their self-esteem and independence. By forming bonds with others, they experience the joy of friendship and community. And by taking on leadership roles, they get a rewarding sense of purpose and responsibility.

In 2018, over 5,647 competitions were held in the region. Out of all those, athletics and soccer were the most popular sports of the year.

## Unified Sports

Special Olympics Unified Sports, which brings together people with and without intellectual disabilities (ID), emphasizes another of our goals: changing attitudes towards people with ID and fostering an inclusive mindset in new generations. In Latin America, Special Olympics Unified Sports have recruited a **total of 20,898 Unified Partners and 27,926 Athletes in 2018, for a grand total of 48,824 in the region!**



### ESPN – A PARTNER THAT PLAYS UNIFIED

ESPN has been a Global Partner of Special Olympics Unified Sports since 2013, and ever since, has supported efforts from Special Olympics Mexico with a variety of events, such as the **Unified Bocce Bal Exhibition** in March of this year. Thanks to the support of ESPN in Mexico, Unified Sports grew with the addition of **150 new Athletes** and **120 new Unified Partners**.

### PROJECT MISSION: INCLUSION

The **Mission: Inclusion Project**, a partnership between **Lions Club International** and **Special Olympics Brazil**, has been crucial in the implementation and expansion of Unified Sports in the country, supporting the hosting of events such as the local Athletics Games, Unified Bocce, Unified Futsal (indoor soccer) and many other unified competitions, where **2,127 athletes** were able to compete in 2018.

### ARGENTINA AND CHILE PLAY UNIFIED

Special Olympics Argentina and Special Olympics Chile joined forces in a rewarding inclusive cultural & sports exchange in Chile. From La Pampa, Argentina, a delegation of 37 athletes from "El Rincón de Todos", a sports school for people with intellectual disabilities, joined athletes from the **San Luis de Quillota soccer club**, in Chile, to participate and enjoy unified sport activities, barbecues, gift exchanges and cultural events and dances from both countries.



**27,926**

UNIFIED  
ATHLETES

**20,898**

UNIFIED  
PARTNERS

**2,664**

UNIFIED  
COMPETITIONS



**48,824**

TOTAL ATHLETES  
THAT PARTICIPATE  
IN UNIFIED SPORTS

# Sports Partnerships



Sports partnerships between Special Olympics Latin America and regional sports federations strengthen inclusion efforts and increase high level competition opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities.

These partnerships help our athletes and our movement by offering training and certifications for coaches, sports facilities for practicing and competitions; accredited refereeing and other joint activities that empower our athletes by acknowledging them as authentic sportspeople, driven by the same passions and subject to the same rules as their peers.



In **2018, 20 programs** had partnerships with at least one Sports Federation, for a **total of 22 partnerships with local sports federations.**



## ACTIVITIES WITH CONMEBOL

As part of our partnership with the South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL), 72 grants were awarded to Special Olympics trainers and athletes to enable their participation in 36 courses hosted in 10 countries in the region. The courses included: Indoor soccer, Beach Soccer, Sports Laws, Marketing and goalkeeper training, to name a few. Special Olympics athletes also had the opportunity of escorting playing teams into the field during the semifinals and finals of the Libertadores Cup.



## PARTNERSHIP RENEWAL WITH COTECC

During 2018, Special Olympics Latin America and the Central American and Caribbean Tennis Confederation renewed their cooperation agreement for four more years. The agreement allows the development of a joint program, *Tenis Para Todos* (Tennis for Everyone), that supports the social and sports development of people with intellectual disabilities in the region through this sports discipline. The partnership also benefits Special Olympics coaches, referees and trainers with workshops, classes and regional conferences.



# Young Athletes



## YOUNG ATHLETES REGIONAL WORKSHOP

In January, Special Olympics Latin America held the **II Young Athletes Regional Workshop**, that gathered together all those leading this initiative from all the programs in the region, so they could share best practices & experiences and update their knowledge on the subject, allowing for a better implementation and greater growth of Young Athletes in Latin America.



## YOUNG ATHLETES AND UNIFIED SPORTS TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

As a part of the *Unified Schools: Inclusive Education and Sports as Tools for Development in Panama* project – with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank – a training workshop was held to benefit the principals, physical education and special education teachers from 35 public schools in Panama that are a part of the project’s first year plan. The training focused in disabilities and the implementation of Unified Sports and Young Athletes, key components of Special Olympics Unified Schools.

## ARGENTINA SUPPORTS YOUNG ATHLETES

On September 6, Special Olympics Argentina dressed up for their VII Annual Solidarity Gala Dinner, where 600 guests, including journalists, celebrities and businessmen, shared together with athletes and volunteers an elegant, fun night in support of Young Athletes.



Funds raised not only allowed further development for trainers, thus reaching more education institutions, teachers and athletes with this Program; it also paved the way for the future inauguration of the first “Young Athlete School” in Buenos Aires, where children will be able to participate in development and stimulation activities designed for young athletes with intellectual disability, managed by specialized professionals.



# YOUNG ATHLETES

NEW YOUNG ATHLETES  
**4,725**  
TOTAL OF  
**20,091**  
YOUNG ATHLETES IN THE REGION

Special Olympics Young Athletes is a sport and play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities, ages 2 to 7 years old. Young Athletes introduces children to basic sport skills, like running, kicking and throwing. The Program also offers families, teachers, caregivers and people from the community the chance to share the joy of sports with all children.



## Inclusive Health



Every person has the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. People with disabilities have the rights to a wide variety of healthcare services, from immunization and the treatment of illnesses and conditions, beginning at childhood, to sexual and reproductive health services during adolescence and onward.

Access to such basis services is equally important. Inclusive health seeks to guarantee that children, teenagers and adults with disabilities can enjoy the rights and access to these services, just like anybody else.

## Healthy Athletes



Healthy Athletes is a Special Olympics Health program, made possible by the Golisano Foundation, that provides health screenings and services to athletes in 67 countries. The Healthy Athletes health screenings are divided into eight different areas: **Fit Feet** (podiatry), **FUNFitness** (physical therapy), **Health Promotion** (better health and wellbeing), **Healthy Hearing** (audiology), **MedFest** (Sports physical exam), Special Olympics-Lions Club International **Opening Eyes** (vision), **Special Smiles** (dentistry), **Strong Minds** (emotional wellbeing).

In 2018, more than **15,118** health screenings were organized in Latin America, benefitting over **6,000** athletes and people with intellectual disabilities in the region. Events included Healthy Athlete fairs in **12** countries including Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela, highlighting the more than **5,000** health screenings organized by Special Olympics Costa Rica during 2018.



# HEALTH

**175**

HEALTHY ATHLETES CLINICS

**23,233**

SCREENING FOR ATHLETES

**7,699**

HEALTHY ATHLETES VOLUNTEERS

**13**

COUNTRIES THAT OFFER HEALTHY ATHLETES

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

PROGRAMS AWARDED RECOGNITION **2**

PROGRAMS WITH PENDING RECOGNITION **5**

Despite severe need and higher health risks, people with intellectual disabilities are often denied health services and die on average 16 years sooner than the general population.

Special Olympics Health, made possible by the Golisano Foundation, is creating a world where people with intellectual disabilities have every opportunity to be healthy. Inclusive health means people with intellectual disabilities can fully access and enjoy the same healthcare programs and services available for people without intellectual disabilities. Our goal is to improve access to quality healthcare services for 11 million people with intellectual disabilities.



## LATIN AMERICA WINS PRESTIGIOUS GOLISANO GLOBAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP AWARD

Special Olympics Guatemala and Special Olympics Venezuela were honored with the prestigious Golisano Global Health Leadership Award, a recognition to the progress made throughout the world in improving the access to essential medical attention & care for people with intellectual disabilities. It is the top honor bestowed by Special Olympics to its health partners.

In Guatemala, the Unit of Applied Sciences to Sports of the Autonomous Sports Confederation of Guatemala and the Guatemalan Olympic Committee, with Dr. Virginia Rosales, a specialist in physical rehabilitation, and Visión Integral, a specialized ophthalmology clinic, were honored with this award for their enormous contribution to health, prevention and treatment for Special Olympics Athletes.

In Venezuela, professor Alis Ramos de Herosmo, from Special Olympics Venezuela, was honored with this recognition for her 41 years of uninterrupted service in Zulia, considered a pioneer state in the medical care and attention for people with intellectual disabilities.

### 'BETTER SIGHT, BETTER LIFE'

Essilor Argentina's "Better Sight, Better Life" campaign provided free ophthalmological screenings and glasses for more than 40 children of the Special Olympics Young Athletes program, which focuses on the development of sports skills for children with or without intellectual disabilities between 2 and 7 years of age. Since 2002, Essilor and Special Olympics have promoted the visual health of Special Olympics Athletes.



## NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH PAHO

Starting in April 2018, Special Olympics Latin America began to develop relations with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in the Dominican Republic. As part of the joint activities developed between Special Olympics and PAHO, we can highlight a sensitivity training workshop for public health workers held in the Dominican Republic, and a Train the Trainers in Healthcare Promotion event, with the participation of health volunteers from Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic..



## Healthy Communities

Healthy Communities is a Special Olympics program ensuring year-round access to health care and prevention programming. Through partnerships that include NGOs, the private sector, universities and government institutions, Healthy Communities paved the way for more inclusive health in 2018, with specific, important actions in Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Paraguay and Venezuela.

During 2018, Special Olympics awarded a Healthy Communities recognition to Mexico and Paraguay.

## Family Health Forums

Special Olympics Family Health Forums are designed to engage families of those with intellectual disabilities (ID) in Special Olympics and offer an environment where parents and caregivers can gain direct access to health information, resources, and support. In 2018, thanks to the Lions Club International, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela all organized these forums.



## FITNESS CHALLENGE

Thanks to the support from Special Olympics International, Special Olympics Mexico has been able to implement the Fitness Challenge program since 2017, which seeks to "Be healthy, feel healthy, stay active, have fun and change your lifestyle!" On a national level, families and coaches have signed up in this program, which encourages the whole family to participate in daily exercise activities and improve the overall health of all family members.



## LATIN AMERICA, REPRESENTED IN THE GLOBAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

Over 300 youth leaders and adults from 30 countries around the world gathered in Baku, Azerbaijan, for the Special Olympics Global Youth Leadership Forum. This forum set the stage for a new era of social impact projects, led by youth from all the corners of the world.

Latin America was represented in this international event by Emanuelle Fernandes de Souza and Leticia Maciel, youth leaders from Special Olympics Brazil. Their project focused in the introduction of Unified Sports in Leticia's school, and through this, fostering the message of a Unified Generation. *"My friends have always shown me respect, but I know this experience is not the same for all the people with disabilities. That is why we have to make an effort to transform society and youth," said Emanuelle. Leticia echoed her, adding that "Before, people with disabilities were invisible to society. Fortunately, we are witnessing a change in this scenario. Today, our generation is more active and we are agents of this change."*

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS YOUTH INNOVATION GRANTS

The Special Olympics Youth Innovation Grants award up to \$2000 to inclusion projects led by youth from around the world, and Latin America was not an exception.

Ten inclusion projects in Latin America received the support of these grants: in Argentina, Lucas and Silvero organized a Special Olympics Youth Forum; in Colombia, Andrés, Paola and Daniel designed training courses on leadership and vocational skills for people with intellectual disabilities, while Marla, Gaviria, Karen and Hernando prepared races, physical activities and Unified Days of cultural activities to promote inclusion in their schools.

In El Salvador, Mónica and Arnaldo promoted inclusion and health simultaneously, with inclusive Zumba classes. Paola, María, Andrea, Cristian, Marcela and Wendy, Salvadorian Youth Leaders, had a desire for greater inclusion, and did this by inviting family members and the Salvadorian community at large to Unified Sports events. Finally, in Mexico, Jorge and Francisco sought to expand the reach of the Unified Generation by recruiting more youth to our inclusion movement.



## EDUCATION & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Special Olympics envisions a world in which all people are valued for their unique contributions to their community and are respected, included and welcomed in society regardless of their different abilities. Young people with and without intellectual disabilities (ID) are critical to creating this world. They are more open to inclusion – they understand and embrace it.



**7,310**

SCHOOLS INVOLVED WITH SPECIAL OLYMPICS

**1,691**

UNIFIED SCHOOLS

**811**

UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

# Unified Schools



Special Olympics Unified Schools® builds on Special Olympics' values, principles, practices, experiences and impacts to shape a generation that welcomes everyone. It empowers youth and educators to be leaders of change. By playing and learning we will create a more inclusive world.

Unified Schools are educational institutions that offer or host Special Olympics Unified Sports at least twice a year. Through these inclusive sports activities, Special Olympics fosters the development of social skills among youth, promoting a culture of inclusion, friendship and mutual support.

On a global scale, the goal for 2020 is the creation of **10,000 Unified Schools** to promote social inclusion through inclusive sports, the development of inclusive youth leadership and the inclusion efforts created and led by youth; training over **20,000 new Unified Sports coaches**, to guarantee a positive, high-quality sports experience; and finally, actively involving **750,000 Athletes and Unified Partners** in this celebration of diversity.



## PARTNERSHIP WITH THE IADB FIRST YEAR RESULTS

The Unified Schools: Inclusive Education and Sports as Tools for Development in Panama project, a joint effort organized with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Japanese Fund for Poverty Reduction, seeks to foster inclusion in and out of the playing field, focusing on schools and the youth of society.

During its first year, the project reached over 13,000 Panamanian children and youth with and without intellectual disabilities, from 33 public schools, who had the opportunity to practice inclusion through sports activities; at the same time, more than 500 teachers and members of the education community in Panama were trained on Special Olympics Unified Sports & Young Athletes.

The culmination of this project in 2020 has an estimated reach of 18,000 children and youth from 60 schools.

## BE FEARLESS, BE KIND HASBRO PARTNERSHIP

### BRAZIL, CHILE, COLOMBIA & MEXICO

In 2018, the partnership with Hasbro supported the development and implementation of Unified Schools in four countries in the region as part of the Be Fearless, Be Kind initiative, that seeks to inspire and empower youth to have compassion, empathy and the courage to include and defend others.

Hasbro's support to Unified Schools allowed for the hosting of inclusion events that reinforced growth in participating schools, Athletes and Unified Partners.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

### BRAZIL & CHILE

In 2018, our partnership with the Stavros Niarchos Foundation allowed us to delve deeper in the expansion and development of our Unified Schools program in Latin America, starting with Brazil and Chile. This partnership ensures the appropriate implementation and functioning of this program, that promotes inclusion from an early age, in the school environment.



# GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*Building an INCLUSIVE WORLD*

In many parts around the globe, people with intellectual disabilities still face rejection, abandonment and even confinement.

Special Olympics works ceaselessly to stand up and fight against negligence, injustice and intolerance. Our efforts with governments and communities ensure that people with intellectual disabilities are not only accepted, but allowed to become valuable, productive members of their communities, which leads to a more inclusive, respectful society for all of its members.



## TIMOTHY SHRIVER VISITS THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Timothy Shriver, Chairman of the International Board of Directors of Special Olympics, led a visit to the Dominican Republic where he met with President Danilo Medina and hosted a press conference together with the First Lady Cándida Montilla de Medina, where they confirmed their commitment to the Inclusion Revolution through the celebration of the World Tennis Invitational and the Global Athlete Congress taking place in the Dominican Republic.





## THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC COMMITMENT

The First Lady of the Dominican Republic, Cándida Montilla de Medina, fully committed to Special Olympics movement & our mission after her participation in the III Latin American Regional Games, Panama 2017. The Office of the First Lady became the hosting institution

for the Special Olympics World Tennis Invitational and the Global Athlete Congress. The First Lady also called out for societies and governments around the world to adopt or improve the public policies safeguarding the rights of people with disabilities.



## GLOBAL AGREEMENT WITH THE OAS

During the 2018 Global Athlete Congress and World Tennis Invitational in Santo Domingo, the Organization of American States and Special Olympics International signed an agreement to promote sports, physical activity, inclusive health and education, sustainable human development and the human rights of people with intellectual

disabilities. The agreement was signed by Tim Shriver, Chairman of the Board of Special Olympics International and Betilde Muñoz, in the name of Luis Leonardo Almagro Lemes, Secretary General of the Organization of American States. Athletes representing the Americas, Europe and Eurasia were present as witnesses to the signing.



## COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING FOR ATHLETES IN POETA CENTERS IN MEXICO

*"I want to thank Special Olympics Mexico for giving us the opportunity to keep learning new, constructive things, that also help us avoid being stuck and landing a possible job in the future".*

-Juan Amir Juárez Ojeda, Special Olympics Mexico Athlete.

The POETA (Economic Opportunities Through Technologies in the Americas Program, in Spanish) created by the Trust for the Americas Foundation, have helped many Athletes from Special Olympics Mexico and other countries in developing linguistic abilities, computer and software classes, and other vocational skills thanks to the partnership with Trust for the Americas and their POETA Centers, an ongoing alliance since 2016.

# DISABILITIES & RIGHTS:

## SPORTS, DISABILITIES AND ACCESSIBILITY AS RIGHTS

Juan Pablo Salazar, activist for the rights of people with disabilities, founder of the Arcángeles Business Group, VP of the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities at the OAS, former Chairman of the of the Colombian Paralympic Committee, and renowned communicator, was one of the special guests at the Special Olympics Latin America Annual Leadership Conference, where he spoke about "Sports, disabilities and accessibility as rights", discussing the current, international state of affairs regarding sports, and the implications, opportunities and challenges for people with disabilities in the pursuit of these rights.



# Athlete Leadership



If we want the world to be inclusive, Special Olympics athletes must contribute in ways beyond the sports field. Athletes must lead the way, educating the world about their potential and driving Special Olympics forward through their insights and contributions. Our goal is to create a world where people follow the leadership and voice of Special Olympics athletes toward an inclusive way of life where everyone's gifts are valued. The Athlete Leadership program creates opportunities for people with Id to develop and demonstrate their abilities and voices in various leadership roles.

Athlete Leadership empowers athletes to develop leadership skills and utilize their voices and abilities to undertake meaningful leadership roles, influence change in the Special Olympics movement and create inclusive communities around the world.

## LEADERSHIP



**2,435**

ATHLETE LEADERS

**1,546**

YOUNG LEADERS

*"Leadership is serving others. It's not you first, and then everyone else. When you are leading others, you are teaching them the way. You are the voice of the voiceless. Those that can't speak, you will speak for them...We are fighting for social inclusion. We are fighting for the rights of people with disabilities. Together, we will build an inclusive world".*

-Nyasha Derera, Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger

### INCLUSION BEGINS WITH ATHLETE LEADERSHIP



Through sports and competitions, Special Olympics helps people with intellectual disabilities find joy, acceptance and success. They earn the confidence that comes along with victory and accomplishment. They feel empowered. Athletes lead the way as voices within the movement, taking on important roles in their communities and educating the world about the potential of people with intellectual disabilities. These athletes drive the Special Olympics movement forward, with their contributions and knowledge, and embody great examples of what it means to be a leader.



In 2018, athlete leaders in the region kept strengthening their abilities and expanding their reach and participation in issues of interest for people with intellectual disabilities, like the **National Athlete Leader Congress**, held during the National Games (Puebla, Mexico), where over 30 athlete leaders and mentors discussed topics such as safety and cybercrime. In 2018, Special Olympics Latin America had **2,435 athletes taking leadership roles, from all 20 countries in the region.**



## SPECIAL OLYMPICS GLOBAL ATHLETE CONGRESS

The Global Athlete Congress serves as a platform where Special Olympics Athletes lead the way into a more inclusive world. **The event, held in Santo Domingo, gathered over 60 athlete leaders from 56 nations so they could share ideas and develop their leadership skills,** providing them with opportunities to show the world the reach and power of inclusive leadership in Special Olympics, their communities and workplaces.

Julio Barrera, president of the Regional Council of Latin American Athlete Leaders and Athlete Leader

from Special Olympics Panama, gave the opening speech, expressing what inclusion means to him:

*"Inclusion is being able to be a part of the world we live in, with our friends, families and coworkers, as equals. Special Olympics believes in us. It has given us strength, courage and confidence through sports, and beyond that, to be able to live without fear. And as part of the evolution of our movement, today we are training more Athlete Leaders. Thanks for believing in our strengths".*



## Capacity Building



During 2018, regional leadership of the movement also had the opportunity to grow and improve their knowledge in areas such as partnerships, marketing and strategies for the optimization of their programs.



## PUBLIC ADVOCACY AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

During the framework of the Annual Leadership Conference, Special Olympics Latin America held the first Fundraising and Advocacy with the international Cooperation & Government Workshop, in charge of Alejandro Bonilla, an expert in fundraising and positioning.

The workshop presented the main key actors of international cooperation in Latin America and how national governments generate multilateral agreements with international organizations, as well as the strategy behind aligning our institutional approach to facilitate the generation of partnerships and raise funds.



## 2018 ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Special Olympics Latin America organized the Annual Leadership Conference in Panama City with the participation of presidents, executive directors and leaders of the 20 Special Olympics Programs in the region, as well as three Athlete Leaders that are a part of our regional council. Aside from reviewing the achievements of 2018, the leaders had the chance to review the plans for the World Tennis Invitational and the 2019 World Games, as well as participate in workshops about operational strategies and partnership management.



# 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IN CHICAGO

With more than 6 million athletes in over 170 countries around the world, Special Olympics has come a long way since the first International Games in Chicago's Soldier's Field in 1960. As the birthplace of our Movement, Chicago was the ideal stage to celebrate our 50th Anniversary. During the week-long celebration, various high-profile events raised awareness about inclusion on a global level and captured the hearts and minds of millions of followers that witnessed this important moment of acceptance and embracing of all people, regardless of differences.



## UNIFIED SOCCER CUP

The Special Olympics Unified Cup presented by Toyota featured 24 female and male Unified teams comprised of players with and without intellectual disabilities. Representing every region of the world, they played in this inaugural global football (soccer) invitational tournament and showed the world that when we play unified, we live unified.

The big winners of the Cup were Slovakia, on the women's soccer side, with their victory over Brazil; and in men's soccer, Ecuador rose as the champion after defeating Uruguay.



## UNIFIED CONCERT

Chance the Rapper, Usher, Francis & The Lights, Daya, Smokey Robinson, Jason Mraz, and O.A.R. performed at the 50th Anniversary Celebration Concert! Dedicated to empowerment and inclusion, the concert inspired an **#InclusionRevolution**.

## LIGHTING UP THE ETERNAL FLAME OF HOPE

A new permanent, 30-foot monument for Special Olympics at Soldier Field, the site of the first games 50 years ago, was lit at a dedication ceremony. The monument featured a landscaped plaza and donor recognition wall, as well as a spectacular sculpture and eternal flame, symbolizing the eternal hope that Special Olympics provides to athletes and their families, and in turn, the eternal hope that Special Olympics athletes provide to the world. World-renowned artist, Richard Hunt, designed the sculpture.



## THE GLOBE LIT UP RED

From the Empire State Building in New York to the Sydney Opera House; from the Niagara Falls to the Panama Canal; from the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi to the Angel of Independence in Mexico City — All around the globe, countries showed their commitment to tolerance, respect and inclusion.

On 20 July 2018, over 225 landmarks across the world 'lit up red' in honor of the Special Olympics 50th celebration.

The lighting up red of these landmarks and iconic buildings became an international display of solidarity with Special Olympics, and announced the start of the **Inclusion Revolution**, our mission to end discrimination against people with intellectual disabilities and create inclusive communities around the world.

## GLOBAL DAY OF INCLUSION

To mark the amazing milestone of the 50th Anniversary and to kick off the next 50 years, Special Olympics harnessed the reach and power of our five million athletes in 170 countries, along with their families, friends & supporters, to send a clear and compelling message to the world: "Join us for a Global Day of Inclusion." The birthplace of Special Olympics, Chicago's Soldier Field, hosted a massive celebration, this Inclusion Revolution served as the spark for people around the world to commit to making their cities more inclusive. This family friendly festival offered sports activities, interactive games, exhibits, killer food offerings, and live entertainment.



# 2018 Special Olympics Central American & Caribbean II Soccer Tournament, Guatemala



## THE MOST INCLUSIVE SOCCER TOURNAMENT IN THE REGION ARRIVED TO GUATEMALA CITY!

From June 2 to 10, 200 soccer players with and without intellectual disabilities, hailing from 11 countries, competed and demonstrated their sports skills while promoting a message of inclusion, equality and respect, through the most popular sport in the world, football (soccer)!

Athletes, coaches and Unified Partners from Guatemala, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico, Peru and Belize met head-on in this second installment of the tournament, under the Special Olympics Unified Sports program, and following the Copa Oro format from the Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF).

This inclusive sports joust was made possible thanks to the support of the Guatemalan Olympic Committee, the Autonomous Sports Confederation of Guatemala, the Municipality of Guatemala and the Ministry of Sports and Culture of Guatemala.

The event, comprised of 21 soccer matches, concluded with the final match between Guatemala and Panama, where Guatemala rose victorious and claimed the Cup.

## YOUNG ATHLETES DEMONSTRATION

An exhibition of the Special Olympics Young Athletes program was hosted in the Doroteo Guamuch Flores National Stadium, where children aged 2 to 7 years of age, with and without intellectual disabilities, played in various sports-like activities (batting, kicking, running, throwing).

## SPORTS CLINICS

2 sports clinics were hosted in the Athlete's Village: one aimed at goalies, led by the National Goalkeeper Coach, Walter Molina. The other one, a floorball workshop, was taught by Special Olympics Latin America, and was attended by various athletes and coaches from the participating delegations.

## FAMILY FORUM & SIBLINGS WORKSHOP

Families are the most important resource and the foundation for the success and development of athletes. This is why Special Olympics organized the Family Forum "Raising in Diversity: Positive Sibling Relationships", which featured emotional testimonials from the Gálvez brothers, born only 7 minutes apart, one of them with intellectual disabilities, the other without. The Forum was led by Claudia Peña, Family Leader for Special Olympics Latin America.

The first Siblings Workshop, "Growing Up in Diversity: Travel Mates," was also held at the same time. Led by Dessire Ugarte, psychologist from Special Olympics Guatemala, the workshop began with a powerful account from siblings of athletes from Special Olympics Puerto Rico & Guatemala.



## FUERZA GUATEMALA

During the 7 days of competition, all the athletes, coaches and members of Special Olympics showed strong solidarity - both inside and outside the playing field - with the victims of the Volcán de Fuego eruption that happened during the event. Representing the athlete community of Special Olympics Latin America and their respective countries, athletes from the 10 competing delegations attended and offered their support at a donation drive for families affected by the volcanic eruption.

# GAMES & COMPETITIONS

Special Olympics was founded on the belief that people with intellectual disabilities benefit from participation in individual and team sports.

Consistent training helps develop sport skills. The competitions, races, matches, tournaments and games organized by Special Olympics help measure progress and encourage personal growth.



## Special Olympics World Tennis Invitational

After the commitment made by the First Lady of the Dominican Republic in 2017, Santo Domingo became the official host of the 2018 World Tennis Invitational. From November 9 to 17, the international event gathered together 400 Special Olympics athletes from 30 countries around the world, all possible thanks to the support of the Office of the First Lady and the Ministry of Sports and Recreation (MIDEREC).

The World Tennis Invitational had the support of the International Tennis Federation (ITF), Professional Tennis Registry (PTR) and the Women's Tennis Association, and was organized under the Special Olympics' Unified Sports competition model.



### LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN

The Flame of Hope was carried throughout the Dominican Republic, in the hands of Special Olympics athletes and law enforcement agents from the country. Prior to the official start of the World Tennis Invitational, the Law Enforcement Torch Run brought a message of inclusion to all the communities it visited, and with its arrival to the Parque del Este Stadium, marked the beginning of the Opening Ceremony for the World Tennis Invitational.



### COMPETITIONS

Competitions took place in the Parque del Este tennis courts, modern sports facilities located in Santo Domingo. Over 200 athletes from 30 countries, with and without intellectual disabilities, competed in singles, doubles, unified doubles and unified team matches. Athletes were accompanied by more than a 100 coaches and delegates, and cheered on by over 400 family members and 700 volunteers.

**"Today we take an important step forward by telling the country that we people with disabilities have rights and real opportunities that allow us to develop our abilities and reach for our dreams".**

**-José Miguel Abreu, Special Olympics Dominican Republic Athlete**



### HEALTHY ATHLETES FAIR

The Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program, sponsored by the Golisano Foundation, offered free health screenings to 400 people with intellectual disabilities, in four disciplines: podiatry, vision, physical therapy and nutrition and healthy habits.

**"The health screenings performed in Healthy Athletes sometimes offer the first opportunity for a person like me, to interact with a healthcare professional in a friendly, inviting environment".** -Álvaro Valdez, Special Olympics Dominican Republic Athlete



### YOUNG ATHLETES

During the event, children aged 2 to 7 from the Dominican Republic participated in a demonstration of the Special Olympics' Young Athletes Program, filling everyone's hearts with joy. These events seek to develop the skills and athletic abilities of children with and without intellectual disabilities.



### HOST TOWN PROGRAM

The Host Town Program was held in the historic Plaza de España, in the Colonial Zone. The program offered entertainment and cultural, educational activities in a joyful, inclusive environment for all athletes participating in the World Tennis Invitational.

### FAMILY FORUM

The Family Forum had over 250 family member attendees and offered a discussion on the role of the family in the independence and autonomy of the person with intellectual disabilities. The Forum featured a conference, "The Road Towards an Independent Life: Adaptive Skills", taught by Dr. Teresa Aguilascho, and a panel discussion with invited specialists in intellectual disabilities and development.

## UNIFIED EXPERIENCES

Special Olympics Unified Sports Experiences bring together athletes from Special Olympics with Olympic and/or professional athletes, dignitaries, celebrities, partners and special guests to participate in a wholesome, friendly competitive environment.

The purpose of the event is to highlight the abilities of Special Olympics athletes and the power of inclusive competitions. Unified Experiences included a fun, festive warmup session where renowned singer-songwriter and Special Olympics Global Ambassador Erika Ender led the athletes into stretching and rhythmic calisthenics.

Afterwards, members of Special Olympics, including Mary Davis, CEO of Special Olympics International; Yolanda Eleta, president of Special Olympics Panama; Javier Vásquez, Vice-president of Health Programs for Special Olympics International; and Sergio Tobal, vice-president of the Dominican Tennis Federation, teamed up with Special Olympics Athletes Brittany Tagliareni (U.S.A.); Juan López (México); Christoph Meienberg (Switzerland) and Yaritza Parrado (Puerto Rico). The partners competed in double matches, with Eleta and López taking the first place, followed by Tobal and Parrado in second place and Vásquez and Tagliareni in third.



## OPENING HEARTS AND MINDS

Special Olympics' vision is to open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disability and create inclusive communities in the region and around the world.

In 2018, the celebration of our 50th anniversary, the regional and international events, and the introduction of a new Global Ambassador all contributed to the unprecedented raising of awareness and spreading of our message.

### ERIKA ENDER, NEW SPECIAL OLYMPICS GLOBAL AMBASSADOR

Renowned Singer-songwriter and actress Erika Ender, co-author of the international hit "Despacito" with Luis Fonsi, was appointed Special Olympics Global Ambassador. The artist, who's already collaborated with Special Olympics during the Torch Run and Opening Ceremony of the III Special Olympics Latin American Games in 2017, took part in the most important events of 2018, including the World Tennis Invitational in Santo Domingo.



### THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC'S HEART OF INCLUSION

Under the slogan of "Heart of Inclusion", the official campaign of the World Tennis Invitational Santo Domingo 2018 featured a gigantic physical representation of the event's logo, a heart, which was displayed in busy areas in Santo Domingo. The general public was invited to take pictures with the "Heart of Inclusion" and share them on social media outlets, using the event's hashtags. Once this was done, people were invited to fill the heart with a tennis ball, representing the small, but powerful contribution to the cause.

The campaign was wildly successful in the Dominican Republic, becoming a trending topic in social media and consolidating the commitment the Dominican Republic, its government and its citizens had made toward inclusion.

*"I want to be part of a world in which love, inclusion, equality and empathy are our guiding force. If we all nurtured the child inside us, the one that does not judge, does not discriminate, that sees life full of light and loves unconditionally, we would undoubtedly live in a better world. It is that world the one we see through the eyes of those with special intellectual abilities, that teach us to live with our hearts wide open. I consider them as great teachers of how we should see and live life, and I am infinitely honored to become a Special Olympics Global Ambassador".*

-Erika Ender



## REGIONAL ALLIES



### VMLY&R MEXICO

2018 was another exciting year for the partnership between VMLY&R Mexico and Special Olympics Latin America. In our shared mission of creating a more inclusive world, we developed and adapted a new awareness campaign called the Revolution Is Inclusion. Art and ads were created, inviting the whole world to join our revolution and show their commitment with inclusion. VMLY&R is an important global partner of Special Olympics, and the VMLY&R Mexico branch supports regional initiatives since 2014.



### ESPN

ESPN is the Global Presenting Sponsor of Unified Sports and Official Broadcaster for the Special Olympics USA and World Games. ESPN is proud of its relationship with Special Olympics, which spans nearly 33 years. The alliance between ESPN and Special Olympics uses the power of sports to promote social inclusion and acceptance through two pillars of the relationship: ESPN's Global Presenting Sponsorship of Special Olympics Unified Sports® and a multi-year global programming agreement.



### STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

Special Olympics signed a new global partnership with the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. The 3-year partnership with this international philanthropic organization included a \$10 million donation in support of expanding youth activation on an international level – *Play Unified: Learn Unified*. This partnership will also expand the Unified Schools and Unified Sports programs worldwide.



### IADB

In 2017, Special Olympics Latin America announced the beginning of a joint project with the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), with the goal of helping countries in the region and the Caribbean to show and strengthen their commitment to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals promoting inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. The "Unified Schools" Project uses inclusive sports activities that show the real benefits of inclusion and awareness. The IADB's mission is to improve lives. Founded in 1959, the IADB is one of the main sources of long-term funding for the economic, social and institutional development of Latin America and the Caribbean.



### LDM

Latam Digital Marketing is a leading digital marketing agency, focused on Latin American markets. For 218, Special Olympics Latin America and LDM renewed their collaboration agreement which includes assessment in digital and marketing strategies, as well as support in social media content.



## LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

In July of 2018, Timothy Shriver, Chairman of the Special Olympics International board, officially announced the renewal of “Mission:Inclusion”, a historic 5-year partnership for \$8.8 million on behalf of Lions Club International and the International Lions Club Foundation, two of the greatest and most active partners of Special Olympics. With their support, it has been possible to develop, support and implement initiatives such as Opening Eyes, Unified Sports programs, Family Health Forums, the Special Olympics Leadership Academy, and other activation efforts and youth empowerment initiatives.



## SCOUTS

The Scout Movement, in its role as a formative organization complementing family and school education, strives for the development and teaching of youth. Its mission is to contribute to the education of youth through a values system based on the Scout Promise and Scout Law, to help build a better world where people can feel accomplished as individuals, playing a constructive role in society. Their partnership with Special Olympics Latin America helps people with and without intellectual disabilities in countries where both organizations are present, promoting inclusion and the acceptance of diversity.



## POETA

The POETA Program, part of the POETA Social Franchise, a social development model that seeks to consolidate and strengthen a network of Information Technology Centers run by NGOs and entities from the public, private and academic sectors, through services that include resources and support for the promotion of social inclusion and the creation of economic and education opportunities for vulnerable groups, empowering them to access, use and train on Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Through the Athlete Leadership Program, Special Olympics strengthens and empowers athletes to become leaders within the Movement and society.



## COPA AIRLINES

Copa Airlines is an Official Sponsor of Special Olympics Latin America, supporting with airfare for athletes and coaches, who travel frequently to participate in sports competitions and put their skills to practice regularly throughout the year. This partnership represents the joint effort between Special Olympics and Copa Airlines to empower and support the growth of people with intellectual disabilities and their inclusion in society through sports.

“  
Let me win.  
But if I cannot win,  
**let me be brave**  
in the attempt.”

-SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE OATH



# *Special Olympics*



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