

“What is Special Olympics?”

What is the NEW Special Olympics?

A MESSAGE OF HOPE...

A VISION OF EQUALITY...

A CHALLENGE TO SOCIETY...

A WORLD OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES, AND HEALTHIER, MORE FULFILLING LIVES...

SPECIAL OLYMPICS is Breaking NEW GROUND, SETTING MORE AMBITIOUS GOALS, AND REACHING OUT TO THE WORLD WITH GREATER SUCCESS THAN AT ANY TIME IN OUR HISTORY.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver bite – **“In Ancient Rome the gladiators went in the arena with these words on their lips “let me win, but if I can not win, let me be brave in the attempt.”**

Special Olympics was founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver. She saw a need and she IMMEDIATELY BEGAN TO MAKE a difference. Decades later, the world is watching the more than 1 million athletes of Special Olympics victorious in their courage, victorious in their achievements and victorious in their spirit.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver bite: **“30 Years ago the world said you could not make a worthwhile contribution to the community of humanity. Today you bring together even warring nations on the playing fields of sport. To the athletes gathered here I say to you look how was you’ve come.”**

In Special Olympics there is a new commitment to creating positive attitudes toward our athletes worldwide, and a new commitment to athlete empowerment, athlete dignity, athlete ability and athlete leadership.

Every day of the year, Special Olympics training and competitions take place in more than 150 countries around the world. At all of those events the Special Olympics “Flame of Hope” signals a commitment to international competition — rallying the youth of the world to our movement and continuing to break down barriers for people with mental retardation.

In the 7 regions of Special Olympics including Africa, Asia Pacific, East Asia, Europe Eurasia, Middle East North Africa, Latin America, and North America - we strive to grow... to make Special Olympics available to the more than 170 million people in the world with mental retardation.

Sports are the foundation of the movement. Special Olympics offers 26 Olympic-type summer and winter sports, everything from Aquatics to Alpine skiing, for children and adults ages 8 to 80. We also offer Unified Sports™, which pairs Special Olympics athletes and non-disabled athletes on the same team. This allows family members and friends to get into the game!

The Special Olympics movement *begins* with the family. Families can become involved as coaches, volunteers, fundraisers and in many other ways.

A Family Support Network has also been launched, providing families an opportunity to share and receive information and support from each other.

Special Olympics is a volunteer-based organization. Everyone has a place in Special Olympics. In the words of our founder... “if you are young you can cheer, if you are an athlete you can coach, if you are a parent you can beam with pride and if you are talented in any way at all you can share.”

Once you become a part of Special Olympics, Special Olympics becomes a part of you. That Spirit is bringing the Flame of Hope TO EVERY CORNER OF THE GLOBE AND THE *VOLUNTEER* SPIRIT OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS IS FINDING A NEW HOME IN THE HEARTS OF THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUALS FROM MEXICO CITY TO Brussels, FROM Shanghai TO South Africa.

From THE PLAYING FIELDS OF EUROPE, to the snowcapped mountains of Alaska, USA, athletes meet to compete AND CELEBRATE THE SPIRIT OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS. In cities all over the world – from swimming pools to basketball courts events are held to help BRING THE HOPE OF ACCEPTANCE and THE PRIDE of ACCOMPLISHMENT TO Millions of POTENTIAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES.

In THE HALLS OF GOVERNMENT, LEADERS AROUND THE WORLD have PLEDGED THEIR SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE IN DOUBLING THE NUMBER OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES BY 2005.

Nelson Mandela bite: Today we are celebrating the talents and abilities of athletes with intellectual disabilities. We are here to witness the abilities of children to see beyond the differences among themselves and to build and appreciate diversity. Our partnership with Special Olympics signals the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship.

OUR MESSAGE OF HEALTH CARE OPPORTUNITY IS ALSO BEING HEARD. The Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Initiative is growing rapidly and to date has reached more than seventy-five Programs worldwide. HEALTHY ATHLETES is setting AN EXAMPLE for the rest of the world by PROVIDING VISION, HEARING AND DENTAL CARE CREATIVELY AND COST-EFFECTIVELY to people with mental retardation.

We have reached out to the youth of the world. YOUTH Summits are being conducted around the world where issues that YOUNG PEOPLE WITH MENTAL disabilities deal with every day and the solutions of how those obstacles can be overcome by youth leadership are being discussed.

A powerful new educational curriculum called SPECIAL OLYMPICS “GET INTO IT” teaches young people about mental disabilities while empowering them to “be the difference,” by learning values of inclusion, tolerance and respect.

Bite: Katie from Nick News: “Hi I’m Katie and this is my partner Sarah. Snowshoeing is difficult when you do it; sometimes people look funny on snowshoes. But it’s ok to look different, I know cause I look different too.”

Athletes are the leaders of the Special Olympics movement. Special Olympics Athletes are in demand for speaking engagements; athletes serve on the Special Olympics Board of Directors across the movement and even sit on the US Presidential Committee on Mental Retardation. They also serve as coaches, officials and policy makers. The Special Olympics Athlete leadership Programs train and teach athletes how to work in these roles and how to become leaders in anything they set out to do. Every two years a new class of SARGENT SHRIVER GLOBAL MESSENGERS brings the movement’s message to the world.

Bite: My name is Alvero Miranda, I am from Lima Peru

Through the Global Messenger program, 12 athletes, representing every region of the world, are trained in media relations and public speaking and travel internationally as messengers of the movement.

Through initiatives such as Healthy Athletes, the Family Support Network, SO Get Into It, Athlete Leadership Programs and Unified Sports, we are breaking down barriers to unlock potential, to discover ability, to welcome difference and to celebrate the giftedness of all people.

None of this would be possible without the generous support of Sponsors and donors, corporations such as The Coca Cola Company, which has been a global sponsor of Special Olympics since 1968, and Cingular Wireless, which has raised more than 30 Million dollars over the past few years for Special Olympics North America.

In addition, individual donors contribute more than 50 percent of the financial support that make Special Olympics possible.

SPORTS STARS and celebrities LIKE NADIA COMANECI, Bart Conner, Scott Hamilton, Tiger Woods, Edwin Moses, Jon Bon Jovi and Arnold Schwarzenegger ARE DOING THEIR PART to PROMOTE THE MESSAGE OF SPORT, ABILITY AND INCLUSION FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES.

Bites from Bart Conner (Olympian and board member) and Troy Ford King (Special Olympics athlete and former Global Messenger): “Ok hey, back again back again, let’s go ski some more, want to? Yeah let’s go ski some more, see you.”

Some serve on the Special Olympics Board of Directors, some hold sports clinics and demonstrations, and some travel the world as Special Olympics ambassadors, spreading this message of hope.

Arnold bite: “I have done a lot of movies in my life, 25 or more and I have fought many battles and people know those battles, but the battle that I am most proud of fighting is the battle for the Special Olympians world wide.”

Special Olympics athletes train hard year-round and many have the opportunity to compete in World Games, which are held every 2 years alternating between Winter and Summer Games. Special Olympics holds World Games events in places like Alaska, USA; Dublin, IRELAND; NAGANO, Japan; and Shanghai, China.

FROM THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA, to Robben Island in South Africa to THE GRAND BALLROOM OF THE WHITE HOUSE, THE MESSAGE OF NEED – followed BY COMMITMENT and support IS REACHING THE LEADERS OF THE WORLD.

President Bush bite: “We gather here to celebrate achievement of the Special Olympics itself and those who compete. The story of our country is an ever-widening circle in which everyone has a place and everyone has something to give. You’ve brought that spirit to the lives of over a million children and adults around the world and I think you for that.”

- Our *mission* remains the same. It is *timeless*.
- Our *philosophy* is *empowerment*.
- Our *vision* is *sports to change the world*.
- Our *symbol* is the *skilled athlete in victory*.
- Our *slogan* is the athlete’s demand: “*Label Me Able!*”*

Tim Shriver bite: “To be free is not merely to cast off ones chains but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.” And this is our pledge: To unlock the respect and joy that enhances the freedom of every child and adult with a medal disability. To do so through the joy of Sport, compete with the whoop of happiness so we might learn to live with an openness of love and to do all of this, Anywhere where that our movement is welcome, anywhere people and interested and people of good will are ready. Whether it’s the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, Europe, Asia ... We are ready in Special Olympics, to go anywhere.