

Community Based Welcome Packet

Welcome to Northampton County Special Olympics! We have many fun and exciting activities in our community based program. Those activities include: skiing, floor hockey, fitness, basketball, tennis, softball, bowling, swimming and equestrian. In order to participate in these programs, you must have an Application for Participation on file. Parents also must provide their own transportation to and from the training site.

In order to register for our community based program, you must visit our website at nespecialolympicspa.org and click on community based. You will then need to register your athlete for each sport that your athlete would like to train for.

Through the community based program, athletes may be selected for local, sectional and state events. Those events may include: Indoor Winter Games, Winter Games, Summer Games and Spring Sectionals.

Northampton County Special Olympics is always encouraging all of our athletes to participate in the Fit 5 program. Athletes want to perform their best at every competition. They can do this by being fit. Fit 5 is a plan for physical activity, nutrition, and hydration. It can improve athletes health and fitness to make them the best athlete that they can be. This program is being used in our community based programs.

All athletes that participate must have an Application for Participation. This application is also a medical form. Every athlete is required to have a medical exam prior to training and competition participation.

- Arrange for your family doctor or frequently seen physician to review your athlete's
 medical history and complete the Physical Examination section. Many physicians and
 Public Health Agencies will perform the necessary examination for free or at a reduced
 cost when asked to do so for Special Olympics. A signature from authorized medical
 personnel is required on the form. Authorized medical personnel to include CRNPs,
 FNPs, and PAs (in addition to MDs and DOs already authorized).
- Upon completion of the application and medical form, return it to the local program representative or your child's teacher who will arrange for your athlete to begin training in the sport of his/her choice.

If you have any questions about our school based program, please contact Amanda Sechrist at asechrist@cliu20.org.

Benefits of Special Olympics

Sports at the Core

Special Olympics sports are transformative experiences that bring out pride, courage and joy in athletes — while inviting families and entire communities to join in the celebration. The Special Olympics sports experience has always been rooted in a radical notion: That every person has the capacity to be an Olympian, and that human greatness is defined more by the spirit than the body.

Sports are at the heart of Special Olympics because they are universal. Sports are understood and celebrated by all people, regardless of race, nationality, gender, economic level, religion and— thanks in large part to Special Olympics—intellectual ability. Athletes with and without intellectual disabilities compete according to the same rules and have the same motivations, the same goals, and reap the same benefits.[i]

Special Olympics is the world's leading voice in elevating awareness of the needs and abilities of people with intellectual disabilities. Sports are at the heart, but our ultimate goal is to use stories of athletes' achievements, skills and challenges to educate, engage and ultimately change attitudes toward people with intellectual disabilities.

Measurable Life Enhancement

The Special Olympics experience fills a critical need in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and the demonstration of competence to themselves, their families and the community. The improvements athletes make in social skills and friendships are often dramatic. Special Olympics athletes learn developmental and life skills as the benefits of participation translate beyond sports, helping them to live more independent and rewarding lives. [iii]

By providing a platform for achievement and a large social network of teammates, coaches, family members and community groups, Special Olympics makes a measurable difference in the lives of athletes. In fact, at least 80% of families in the United States say they have seen improvements in their athletes' self esteem, self confidence, social skills, friendships and health thanks to their participation in Special Olympics.[jiii]

Special Olympics involvement also has positive effects on how family members relate to one another and to their athlete. A majority of parents in the U.S. (70%) report that Special Olympics has a positive effect on time spent as a family, either increasing the amount of time spent together or increasing the types of shared activities. This outlook is shared by siblings as well—82% of who feel that Special Olympics has a positive impact on their family.[iv]

Anecdotal evidence suggests that volunteering with Special Olympics has a positive effect on all groups that work with the organization. Volunteers report a wide variety of benefits including personal satisfaction, increased tolerance, and re-examination of personal values.

Research indicates that Special Olympics can have a positive effect on members of the general public who have no relationship with the organization other than knowing about it, hearing others talk about it, and seeing its events on television or reading about them in the news. While it is harder to measure its effect on the general public, it is clear that the public in many places around the world is influenced by Special Olympics. Nonetheless, much progress still needs to be made for people with intellectual disabilities to be treated as equals in communities around the world. [V]

There are 381,071[vi] individuals with intellectual disabilities living in the State of Pennsylvania; 5.2% are enrolled in the Special Olympics Pennsylvania program. It is very important for us to continue our mission and to provide opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities whereby they are accepted, respected, and given the chance to become useful and productive citizens.[vii]

[ii]Norins Bardon, J., Harada, C. M., Parker, R.C., and Brecklinghaus, S. (2008). Evaluation of the Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Unified Football Pilot-Project: Findings from Austria, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. Special Report for Special Olympics International. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston/Special Olympics Global Collaborating Center

[ii] Impact of Special Olympics Families, Special Olympics Toolkit

[III]Siperstein, G.N., Harada, C.M., Parker, R.C., Hardman, M. L., McGuire, J. (2005) A Comprehensive Study of Special Olympics Programs in the United States. A Special Report for Special Olympics International. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston/Special Olympics Global Collaborating Center

[[v] ibid

[v] Special Olympics, Inc. (2009) Serving Athletes, Families, and the Community, the Universal Impact of Special Olympics: Challenging the Barriers for People with Intellectual Disability.

[vi] World Health Organization

[vii] Special Olympics North America

APPLICATION FOR ATHLETE PARTICIPATION IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS - NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

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Authorized and Accredited by Special Olympics	Inc. for the Benefit of Persons with Intellectual Disability
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RELEASE TO BE COMP	LETED BY ADULT ATHLETE
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	and belief, I am physically and mentally able to participate in Special Olympics
	d the health information contained in my application and has cetified, based on
	vidence which would preclude me from participating in Special Olympics. I under
	rts or events which by their nature result in hyper-extension, radical flexion or
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Instability. I am aware that I must have this radiological examin butterfly stroke, diving starts in swimming, high jump, alpine skil	ation before I can participate in equestrian sports, gymnastics, diving, pentathlon, ing, and soccer.
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	the purpose of advertising or communicating the purposes and activities of
Special Olympics and/or applying for funds to support those pur	
	ould need emergency medical treatment, and I am not able to give my consent or
	njuries, I authorize Special Olympics to take whatever measures are necessary to
protect my health and well-being, including, if necessary, hospit	calization. Inderstand the provisions of th release that I am signing. I understand that by signing thi
paper, I am saying that I agree to the provisions of this release.	
Signature of Adult Athlete	Date / /
I hereby certify that I have reviewed this release with the athl	ete whose signature appears above. I am satisfied based on that review that the
athlete understands this release and has agreed to its terms. Name (Print):	
Relationship to Athlete	
RELEASE TO BE COMPLETED BY PAR	RENT OR GUARDIAN OF A MINOR ATHLETE
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in Special Olympics activities.	
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explained these provisions to the athlete. Through my signalur	re on this release form, I am agreeing to the above provisions on my own behalf and on
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I hereby give my permission for the athlete named above to	participate in Special Olympics games, recreation programs,
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