



## COVID-19

Today we are doing everything we can to be proactive in protecting our athletes, volunteers, coaches, and the entire Special Olympics community from COVID-19. To help facilitate social distancing and prioritize the health and safety of our community, upcoming events may be postponed in your area. Please check directly with your local program website for up-to-date information.

These are challenging times and we want you to remain informed, healthy, and hopeful. Here are some ways to stay engaged with us:

- Stay Safe: Washing your hands properly is one way to stay safe. Watch [this video](#) featuring Special Olympics Zimbabwe athlete and Health Messenger Nyasha Derere.
- Stay Active: Special Olympics has developed fitness tools to keep our athletes healthy and you can join in the fun at home! Check out [Fit 5](#) and our newly launched, [School of Strength](#).
- Stay Connected: Follow Special Olympics North Dakota on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or [Twitter](#) to stay up to date on the latest and for opportunities to interact with our athletes and community. We'll be adding online chats, workouts, and community activities. Check our social channels and [website](#) for more details.
- Be Inspired: Check out our [50 Game Changers](#) video series showcasing the stories of game changers in the Special Olympics movement and game-changing moments toward inclusion.
- Stand Together: Put your energy towards a cause that never stops: inclusion! [Add your name to our inclusion pledge](#) and commit to spreading inclusion every day.

While there are limitations to how we can physically be in contact, there are no limitations to how we can socially and emotionally connect to one another. Compassion can travel just as fast as a virus. So can a smile.

Stay Safe. Be Brave.

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### 2020 Memorials

Special Olympics North Dakota deeply appreciates receiving donations in memory of friends and loved ones. Memorial gifts have been received in remembrance of:

Kristin Riley

Britta Curl

Candace Batts



## **Powered by Sport**

This year's program theme – Powered by Sport brings us back to our roots and the vision of our founder, Eunice Kennedy Shriver. Sport for the individual with an intellectual disability is more powerful than any government, program or social justice effort in breaking down stereotypes, racial barriers and reducing social isolation. From the first moment of the Special Olympics experience, the athlete is changed from a person of diminished value to a champion. And in these moments, everyone else is changed and the human race as a whole prevails.

Perceptions and attitudes matter. Challenging mindsets and smashing stereotypes come from the power of sport. Sport has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to every nationality and all ages in a language they understand. Those who witness the accomplishments of athletes, cannot help but be reminded that every day we all face adversity but we can learn from the Special Olympics athlete that we can rise above even the toughest challenges.



### **Fun Facts of 2019 -North Dakota**

5,230 volunteers

84 competitions

1,600 participants

340 coaches



### **Polar & Solar Plunges**

Three plunges, and 138 plungers wrapped up the winter Polar Plunge season; Grand Forks at Choice Health & Fitness; Minot at Sleep Inn& Suites; and Dickinson at Prairie Hills Mall! Awards given included Most Dollar Raised by an Individual, Most Money Raised by a Team, Best Costume, Whitest Legs, Youngest Plunger, Oldest Plunger, and of course, the Golden Plunger, which is awarded to the Law Enforcement Team that raised the most money at each Plunge.

Two plunges, Fargo and Bismarck, have been postponed to a date later this year due to COVID 19. Plungers are still able to continue raising money and recruiting new plungers for our first-ever Solar Plunges! Stay tuned for more information! To register click here- [Fargo](#) [Bismarck](#).

The Polar Plunge is organized by North Dakota law enforcement volunteers, as part of the year-round Law Enforcement Torch Run program (LETR), which dedicates time to raising awareness and funds for Special Olympics. A special thank you goes out to the leadership and volunteers of our organizing committees, event sponsors, donors, and most importantly all the brave souls that celebrated the winter months of 2020 by "Freezin for a Reason!"

### **FUN FACTS**

34 middle schoolers, mostly from Schroder Middle School, plunged in Grand Forks

Three plungers in Dickinson raised over \$1,000 each! Ryan Kilwein became a daddy early in the morning and then plunged!

The Minot Police Department and the Ward County Sheriff's Office had a rivalry over who will win the "Golden Plunger". The Ward County Sheriff's Office took home the trophy again this year!

Polar Plunges sponsored in part by:

Igloo Sponsors: AE2S, Bob's Oil Field, Interstate Towing & Recovery, and Plains Commerce Bank.



## **Spread the Word: Inclusion**

Globally, individuals with intellectual disabilities continue to be excluded. On March 4th this year; schools, businesses and communities alike took part in the mission of Inclusion by holding Spread the Word Inclusion campaigns, with the same goal: Inclusion for all. Locally, that mission was the same across North Dakota. Schools, businesses and communities did their part in holding campaigns state-wide, exposing the message and our mission to thousands!

North Dakota schools are already ahead of the curve on inclusion, but year after year, these campaigns are gaining even more traction. Specifically, the SO College Clubs statewide (Minot State University, North Dakota State University, University of North Dakota, and Valley City State University) are getting full support from their schools, and alone accounted for over 7,000 students being exposed to their campaigns with hundreds of these students signing the pledge. Inclusion is a year-round process, but these campaigns help shed light on the importance of inclusion.



## **SO College Basketball Exhibition**

In a demonstration of sport, respect and inclusion, on December 18th, 2019 UND invited Special Olympics North Dakota Grand Forks area program out to have an exhibition game at halftime. With this, they gave all athletes, coaches, cheer team and SOND staff involved free admittance to the game, with great seats. SOND athletes were invited to high five the home team as they took the court for their game. For the first half, the SOND athletes sat and eagerly awaited their opportunity to play.

At the start of halftime, the lights were dropped down low and an ad was played on the big screen for SOND. Once seated on the home and away benches, the athlete oath was recited and a spotlight shined upon our athletes as they were introduced one by one, they received roaring applause as they took the court. They then played hard for a 5 minute exhibition game in front of 800 excited fans. Following the game, all athletes received a warm standing ovation from the crowd.– [See the photos here!](#)



## **State Basketball Tournament**

It was a gorgeous spring weekend in Minot, but the action inside on the court was even hotter at the 2020 State Basketball Tournament which took place on February 28-29. Arriving into the Magic City for the tournament were 49 teams from 13 cities from throughout North Dakota (Belcourt, Bismarck, Cass County, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Grafton, Grand Forks, Harvey, Jamestown, Mandan, Minot, Valley City, and Wahpeton. More than 430 athletes and 110 coaches took part in this celebration of athletic ability and skill. This outstanding competition would not have been possible without the 300 plus day-of volunteers and the multiple businesses in the community who lent their support. A special thanks goes out to Minot State University and Athletics, Bishop Ryan, Minot Public School, Marketplace Foods, Minot Air Force Base, and the Minot Moose Lodge.



## **More Than 300 Donors said "Count Me" During Giving Hearts Day!**

Giving Heart's Day theme was "Count Me," and more than 300 did exactly that when they contributed to the 24-hour online day of giving. Gifts of more than \$10 were matched up to \$4,500 thanks to charitable matching gifts. We are appreciative of the generous contributions of all the donors and area businesses including support of the Dakota Medical Foundation/Impact Foundation and the Alex Stern Family Foundation.

## **The Best Tasting Fundraiser in North Dakota**

A Special Night Out happened all across the state just in time to beat the Valentine's Day crowd this year. The businesses who donated a percentage of their proceeds to Special Olympics North Dakota included: Blue Moose Bar and Grill in East Grand Forks, Brickhouse Grille in Dickinson, Elevation in Minot, and Sky's Cloud 9 in Grand Forks. Not only is their valuable support important, but provides public awareness on the Special Olympics movement.

**A SPECIAL NIGHT OUT**  
WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 12



**Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation**

**Authorized and Accredited by Special Olympics Inc.**

**for the Benefit of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities**

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