

Special Olympics General Orientation

Special Olympics
North Dakota



Course Goals



- Describe Special Olympics Mission, Vision, and Philosophy
- Describe history of Special Olympics and importance of the program in North Dakota
- Identify Special Olympics opportunities for athletes and volunteers
- Motivate you to become a dedicated, impassioned volunteer

Special Olympics: Our Mission



To provide 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.

Athlete Oath



Let me win;
But if I Cannot Win,
Let me be brave in the attempt

Special Olympics: Our Story



- Created by Eunice Kennedy Shriver
- Idea started as a Sports camp at the Kennedy Home
- 1968 - The first International Summer Games were held for more than 1,000 athletes at Soldier Field in Chicago.



Eunice Kennedy Shriver



<http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/video/Eunice-Kennedy-Shriver-Biography-Championing-the-Cause.mp4>

Special Olympics North Dakota



- Founded by Dr. Roger Kerns in 1972
- The first ND State Summer Games were held in Fargo for close to 100 athletes.
- That year, 15 athletes and 4 coaches from ND represented SOND at the International Games in Los Angeles.



Special Olympics Reach



Worldwide-

- ▶ 4.2 million athletes in more than 170 countries
- ▶ 70,278 competitions
- ▶ 1.3 million coaches and volunteers
- ▶ 32 Olympic-type sports
- ▶ Dynamic sport and corporate sponsorships

In North Dakota-

- ▶ 1,500 athletes
- ▶ More than 4,700 coaches and volunteers
- ▶ 15 sports offered
- ▶ More than 70 competitions each year

Special Olympics Philosophy



All individuals with intellectual disabilities deserve:

- Appropriate instruction & encouragement
- Consistent training toward maximizing their capabilities
- Frequent competition and among those of equal abilities

If these are provided, result = **personal growth**

Special Olympics Philosophy



- Focus on what the athletes can do
- Athletes benefit from participation in both individual and team sports
- Consistent training is indispensable
- Competition with those of equal abilities is the most appropriate method for Special Olympics athletes enjoying success

Definition of Eligibility



Age

- ▶ 8 years of age and older to train and compete

Registration

- ▶ To participate in Special Olympics

Identification

- ▶ By their localities/agencies as having an intellectual disability

OR

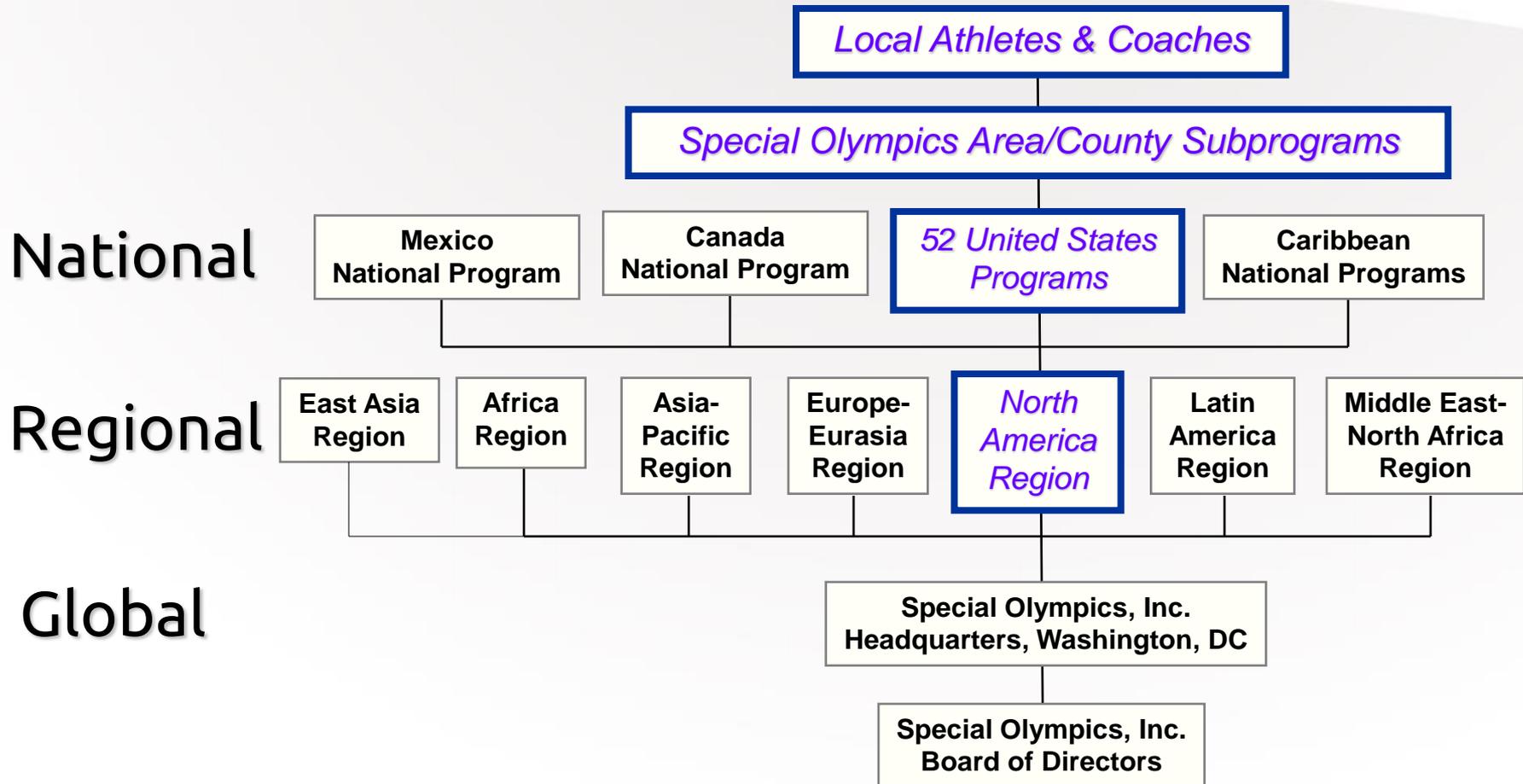
- ▶ By their localities/agencies as having closely-related developmental disability



Unique Sports Organization

1. Sports opportunities for all ability levels
2. Divisioning for equitable competition
3. Awards for all participants
4. Random draw for advancement to higher levels of competition
5. No fees charged to athletes or family members for participation

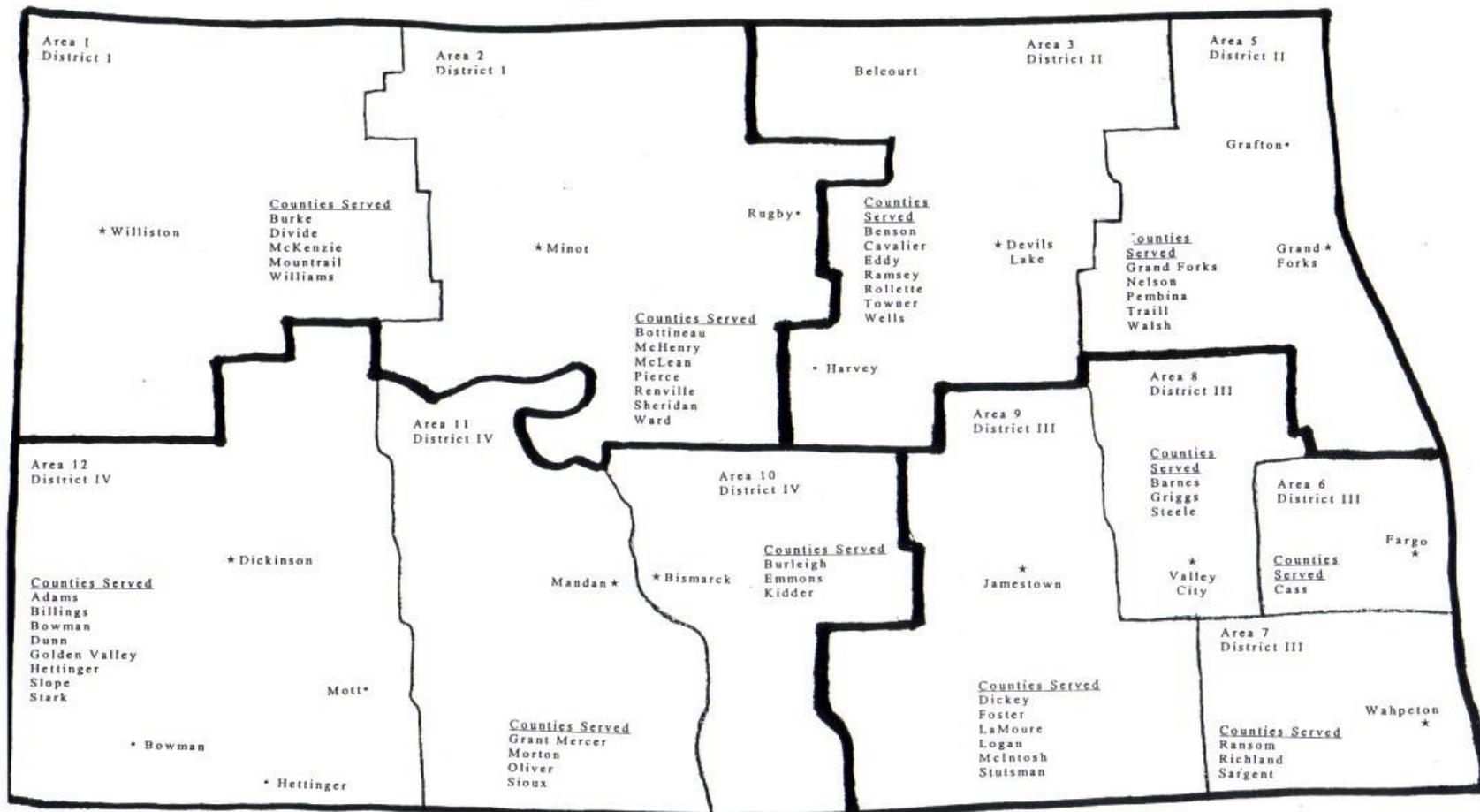
The Global Structure





Special Olympics North Dakota

Area District Map



Year-round Sports Training



- Training and Competitions are held year-round across the entire state of North Dakota.
- Athletes train for a minimum of 8-10 weeks prior to competing at a State Competition
- Practices are conducted by well-trained coaches in accordance with standard sport rules, formulated and adopted by Special Olympics.

Competition for *All* Ability Levels



- **Individual Sports**
 - ▶ Modified events
 - ▶ Conducted by sport federation rules

- **Team Sports**
 - ▶ Individual skills competition
 - ▶ Modified team competition
 - ▶ Conducted by sport federation rules

- **Unified Sports®**

State Sporting Events



Winter Games

- ▶ Alpine Skiing
- ▶ Cross Country Skiing
- ▶ Figure Skating
- ▶ Snow Shoeing
- ▶ Speed Skating

State Basketball Tournament

Summer Games

- ▶ Aquatics
- ▶ Bocce
- ▶ Gymnastics
- ▶ Powerlifting
- ▶ Track & Field
- ▶ Volleyball

State Soccer & Bocce Tournament

State Bowling Tournament





Competition Experience



- Provide realistic experience to improve confidence
- Encourage performance under pressure of real competition.
- Break down small aspects of competition to provide feedback
- Enforce Official competition rules



Proven Benefits of Special Olympics



Physical: Physical fitness along with increased coordination, cardiovascular fitness, and endurance.

Mental: Knowledge of rules and strategy along with increased self esteem, self- confidence, and pride.

Social: Teamwork, interaction with peers and people without intellectual disabilities opportunity to travel and learn about other places and interests, family pride, and increased community awareness and acceptance.

Unified Sports®



Definition:

Unified Sports® is a program that combines *approximately equal numbers* of Special Olympics athletes with individuals without intellectual disabilities (partners) on sports teams for athletic training and competition

Age and ability matching of athletes and partners is specifically defined on a *sport-by-sport* basis

Unified Sports®



Further Meeting the Mission

- Expanding challenging sports opportunities
- Increasing inclusion with the community
- Breaking barriers
- Providing another choice to athletes

Unified Sports®



Offered in North Dakota:

- Bocce
- Football (Soccer)
- Volleyball
- Pilot- Youth Flag Football



Competition at *All* Levels



Goals of Competition



- Safe environment
- Each athlete highlighted
- Enjoyable, high-quality experience
- Olympic atmosphere
- Increased public awareness
- Positive experience for all
- Measurement of skill & development



Divisioning

Provide all competitors a chance to excel

No more than *3-8 athletes/teams* per division

Grouped by *age and gender*

Further separated by *ABILITY*:

- For individual sports,
 - 10-15% guideline & preliminaries
- For team sports,
 - Skills Assessments and
 - Classification rounds of competition

Why Enforce Rules



- Reinforcing correct sports behavior
- Protect rights
- Uphold integrity
- Enable highest skill in athletes
- Easier to involve the NGBs
- Facilitate access into community sports
- Promote SAFETY

Benefits of Special Olympics



Individuals competing in Special Olympics develop:

- ▶ Improved physical fitness and motor skills.
- ▶ Gain greater self-confidence
- ▶ Build lasting friendships
- ▶ Enhanced life skills and their ability to live normal productive lives.

More than ever, Special Olympics athletes hold jobs, own homes, go to school and successfully confront life challenges on a daily basis.

SO Healthy Athletes



- Program 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.
- Provides valuable experience to healthcare professionals; with increased knowledge and compassion for people with intellectual disabilities.
- Special Olympics is the leading healthcare provider to people with intellectual disability in the world.

Special
Olympics
**Healthy
Athletes®**



Other Initiatives



Spread the Word to End the Word

- ▶ Grassroots effort to encourage people around the world, including the entertainment industry, to stop using the “R-word”

Young Athlete Program (YAP)

- ▶ An inclusive sports play program for children (ages 2-7) with intellectual disabilities and their non-disabled peers designed to introduce them to the world of sports.



Project UNIFY



Project UNIFY is a program for creating school climates of inclusion, acceptance, respect, and human dignity for all students with and without intellectual disabilities.

- Builds on the core Special Olympics values, principles, practices, and experiences.
- Incorporates sports and social activities to build acceptance for all.

Middle and High School Partners' Clubs / SO College

- School-aged, student-led programs in middle school, high school and college.
- Nationwide network of highly engaged and motivated students working to bring inclusion and acceptance to their school.
- Components include: Unified Sports, Youth Leadership and Whole-School Activities.

Different Roles for a Volunteer



Coaching

Unified Partner

Training

Partners Club

Officiating

Event Volunteer

Games Management Team

Chaperone



Medical Considerations

Down Syndrome

- ▶ Atlanto-axial instability
 - ▶ up to 15% of individuals with Down syndrome have a mal-alignment of the cervical vertebrae C-1 and C-2 in the neck known as Atlanto-axial instability, exposing such individuals to possible injury if they participate in activities that hyper-extend or radically flex the neck or upper spine.
- ▶ Prohibited sports

Medications

- ▶ Physical side effects
- ▶ Knowing what medications athletes are taking

Seizures

- ▶ Incidence
- ▶ Athlete safety

Physical Disabilities

- ▶ Non-ambulatory
- ▶ Muscle strength

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

- ▶ Consistently functions better on concrete performance tasks

Social Considerations



Social Skills

- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Interaction with others

Recreation at Home

- ▶ Lack of activity
- ▶ Lack of encouragement

Economic Status

- ▶ Financial means
- ▶ Independent transportation



Appropriate Levels of Assistance



- Assess what an athlete is ready to do; and build on those strengths.
- Each athlete may need a varied level of assistance
 - Verbal
 - Visual
 - Physical Prompt
 - Physical Assistance
- **Use drills that involve many athletes at all times.**
 - Keeps athletes participating and engaged throughout practice.

Register as a Volunteer



Visit Special Olympics ND webpage:

▸ <http://www.specialolympicsnorthdakota.org/content/page/title/Volunteers>

1) Class A Volunteer Registration Form

2) General Orientation Quiz

▸ <http://goo.gl/forms/E2o2O1TJ9v>

3) Concussion in Sports

▸ <http://nfhslearn.com/courses/61037/concussion-in-sports>

4) Protective Behaviors Training

▸ http://resources.specialolympics.org/protective_behaviors_training.aspx

Contact Us



2616 South 26th Street
Grand Forks, ND 58201
(701)-746-0331
sond@midconetwork.com
Fax: (701)-772-1265

Thank you.

Special Olympics
North Dakota

