

# WELCOME TO SPECIAL OLYMPICS FACT SHEET

**Special Olympics**  
Delaware



## **WHAT IS SPECIAL OLYMPICS?**

Special Olympics Delaware (SODE) utilizes sports as a platform to create life-changing experiences for those involved or touched by our program. These achievements include: building athlete capacity to reach their full potential; impacting the delivery of health care to our athletes; and, changing perceptions of the capabilities of persons with intellectual disabilities.

## **SPORTS**

Aquatics	Flag Football	Soccer
Basketball	Golf	Softball
Bocce	Long Distance Running	Tennis
Bowling	Nordic Skiing	Track & Field
Cycling Figure	Powerlifting	
Skating	Snowshoeing	

## **PROGRAMS**

SODE is made up of more than 4,200 athletes participating in nearly 170 schools and/or one of five Area Programs: Wilmington, Newark, M.O.T., Kent County and Sussex County. Area Programs are overseen by an Area Director and Leadership Team, while school programs are typically overseen by faculty members. The ages of the athletes involved and sports offered vary depending on the program.

## **TRAINING AND COMPETITIONS**

Athletes practice for at least eight weeks under the guidance of trained coaches in preparation for their final competition. Whenever feasible, league play, scrimmages, time trials and clinics are offered to enhance the training process.

Competitions of all sizes are held across the state throughout the year, highlighted by SODE's signature events: Summer Games, Fall Festival, State Basketball Tournament, Bocce and Soccer competitions, and Bowling Tournaments. Athletes and teams are divisioned based on ability (and age and gender whenever possible) for all competitions. Along with state-level competitions, SODE athletes also compete at National and World Games, and often participate in regional or other states' events.

The Young Athletes program is offered for children ages 2-7 and the Motor Activity Training Program for athletes of all ages with profound disabilities.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

More than 4,000 volunteers enable SODE to offer its year-round sports training and competition program. Volunteer opportunities include coaching, event management, participating in fundraising, volunteering on the day of an event, and even being part of a team as a Unified Partner.

## **MORE THAN SPORTS**

SODE has several special programs and events for athletes and volunteers of all ages and abilities. Some are opportunities to further enhance an athlete's sports experience, while others are meant to provide athletes and volunteers with opportunities to enrich or improve their lives through non-sports activities. Examples include Athlete Leadership programs, Unified Champion Schools, Families Day at the Beach, and Summer Camp at Camp Barnes.

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Special Olympics does not charge its athletes a fee to participate and also provides uniforms and equipment at no cost. Therefore, it is a constant challenge to stretch resources in order to provide everyone with a chance to benefit from Special Olympics. Financial support comes from funds raised from individuals, organizations, corporations, foundations and special events. The Lewes Polar Bear Plunge and Over the Edge are examples of fundraising events unique to SODE.