

ANNUAL REPORT

SPECIAL OLYMPICS DELAWARE



**Special
Olympics**
Delaware

2024

A YEAR OF GROWTH, FOCUS, AND CHANGE

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The mission of Special Olympics is 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.



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



A MESSAGE

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND SODE PRESIDENT & CEO

The mission and impact of Special Olympics Delaware continue to grow stronger every year, and we are proud to share that 2024 has been our most impactful year to date. Thanks to our athletes, volunteers, and generous supporters, we experienced record-breaking participation in events including the Polar Bear Plunge, Over the Edge, Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR), Spread the Word campaign, Unified Champion Schools Bocce, Summer Games, Bowling, and Fall Festival.

These milestones are only possible through a combination of three core pillars: a positive athlete experience, exceptional volunteer involvement, and unwavering donor support.

Positive Athlete Experience

Our athletes are at the heart of everything we do. In 2024, they continued to learn new skills, grow in confidence and courage, and form lasting friendships. High-quality facilities and programming, along with meaningful interactions with coaches and volunteers, contributed to these positive experiences. The new Summer Games app also enhanced communication and engagement throughout the season.

Quality of Volunteers

We are grateful for the dedicated individuals who serve in a wide variety of roles—Law Enforcement officers, coaches and assistant coaches, Unified partners, referees, umpires, officials, medical professionals, photographers, day-of event volunteers, corporate teams, board members, and many more. Their commitment and compassion truly elevate the experience for everyone involved.

Generous Donor Support

We are especially thankful for our generous donors and sponsors. Bank of America and DuPont served as co-presenting sponsors this year for Summer Games, while Chase continued its longstanding support of Fall Festival. Events such as the Plunge and Over the Edge continue to thrive thanks to loyal participants and contributors.

We are truly fortunate to be surrounded by such a passionate and engaged community. On behalf of the entire Special Olympics Delaware family, thank you for making 2024 a historic year. We look forward to building on this momentum together.

Christie Longo

Christie Longo, Board President
Special Olympics Delaware

David Halley

David Halley, President & CEO
Special Olympics Delaware

CORE VALUES

The Core Values of Special Olympics Delaware embody our culture, spirit, and commitment to do our best at all times. These values guide and inform our collaboration, our innovative programming, the design and delivery of meaningful opportunities, and our promotion of understanding, acceptance, and inclusion for the benefit of people with and without intellectual disabilities.

EXCELLENCE: We strive to embrace every opportunity to continually improve the program and experience by ensuring it is safe and of the highest quality.

RESPECT: We believe in honoring differences, individuality, and treating others the way you would want to be treated.

INTEGRITY: We strive to always do what is right, even when no one is looking, and to be truthful at all times.

INCLUSION: We believe that diverse backgrounds and experiences make us stronger. By respecting every individual and valuing our differences – in thought, style, cultures, ethnicity and experience – we contribute fully to the organization's success.

TRUST THE TEAM: We believe that the best outcomes are achieved when people work together across the entire organization. We believe great teams are built on promoting trust and open and honest communication in an atmosphere that encourages and respects self-expression and opinions.





WHAT IS SPECIAL OLYMPICS?

Special Olympics is a global movement uniting more than **4 million athletes** along with **600,000+ Unified Sports partners** across **177 countries and territories**. It offers year-round sports training and competition in **30+ Olympic-style sports**. Delaware's sports are offered at no cost to our athletes and their families—something that makes our program truly special.

But this is about much more than athletics. Special Olympics fosters inclusion, dignity, confidence, and community—on and off the field. With thousands of events and hundreds of thousands of volunteers, it transforms lives, challenges stereotypes, and builds more welcoming societies for people with intellectual disabilities.

DELAWARE'S NUMBERS



SPORTS

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
ATHLETES & UNIFIED PARTNERS



16 OLYMPIC-TYPE
SPORTS

ATHLETES

PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES (ID)

4,380



UNIFIED PARTNERS

(PEOPLE WITHOUT ID)

1,976



COMPETITIONS



190

LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY

AREA LEADERS



83

ATHLETE LEADERS

38

COACHES

1,038



VOLUNTEERS

3,962

EDUCATION & YOUTH



UNIFIED SCHOOLS

210



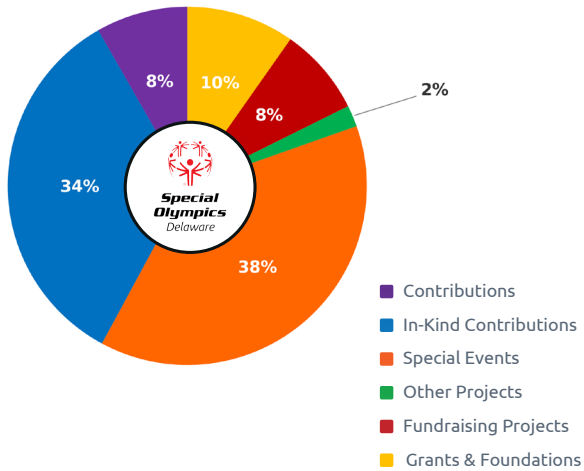
UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

100

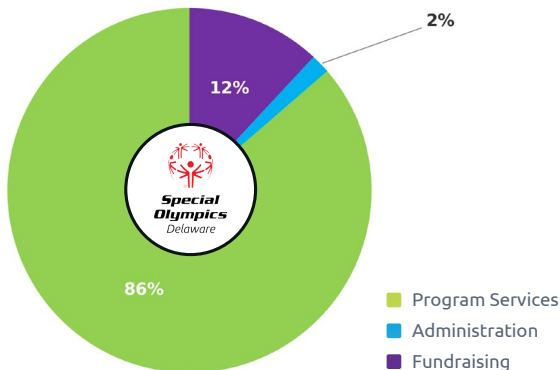
2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

In 2024, Special Olympics Delaware achieved a record-breaking year for fundraising. Thanks to our dedicated staff, innovative strategies, generous individual contributions, and robust corporate partnerships, we maintained a strong financial foundation while profoundly impacting the lives of our athletes.

REVENUE



EXPENSES



86%

\$0.86 of every dollar directly fueled sports programs that empower Special Olympics athletes across the state.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES + CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

(For the year ended December 31, 2024)

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE	2024	2023
Contributions	\$345,030	\$419,432
In-Kind Contributions	1,415,791	1,343,812
Special Events Revenue, Net	1,600,772	1,395,742
Other Project Income	80,543	65,320
Fundraising Projects	331,337	202,840
Grants & Foundations	407,000	487,896
Total Public Support and Revenue	\$4,180,473	\$3,915,042
EXPENSES		
Program Services	\$3,361,843	\$2,873,467
Management & General (Administration)	67,002	19,215
Fundraising	464,698	437,460
Total Expenses	\$3,893,543	\$3,330,142
Change in Net Assets before Non-Operating Activity	\$286,930	\$584,900
NON-OPERATING ACTIVITY		
Interest & dividend income, net of fees	\$128,475	\$103,394
Capital gains distribution	14,537	1,222
Realized gain on investments	62,485	11,818
Unrealized gain on investments	112,246	126,660
Miscellaneous income	0	2,496
Total Non-Operating Activity	\$317,743	\$245,590
Change In Net Assets	\$604,673	\$830,490
Net Assets, Beginning Of Year	\$3,998,911	\$3,168,421
Net Assets, End Of Year	\$4,603,584	\$3,998,911

At Special Olympics Delaware, we believe cost should never stand in the way of participation. That's why all of our programs remain completely free for athletes and their families. Every dollar raised goes directly toward creating opportunities—providing access to training spaces, competition venues, equipment, uniforms, and the tools our athletes need to succeed. With the continued support of our community, we're removing financial barriers and opening doors to inclusion through sport.

MILESTONES & MOMENTUM

UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

SO College (UD and DSU)

Students at the University of Delaware and Delaware State University competed head-to-head on a unified playing field for the first time. The schools faced one another in Unified Flag Football at DSU and on the hardwood at UD for Unified Basketball, playing alongside athletes from the Kent Wild Kats, MOT Tigers, and Newark Dragons. DSU's Hornets won both games—better luck next year, Blue Hens!

School Bocce Expansion

Fall 2024 marked significant growth for our Unified Bocce program in schools. Fifteen district-wide events engaged 106 schools and 3,373 athletes and unified partners—a 75% increase in participation from 2023. The momentum reflects the growing impact of inclusive sports across Delaware's schools.



SPORTS AND COMPETITION

Chase sponsored our **Fall Festival competition** for the 26th year. It marked a transition in leadership with the retirement of Sarah Lammers, but Chase's commitment to SODE remains as strong as ever. Held on the picturesque campus of St. Andrew's School in Middletown, athletes competed in Bocce, Flag Football, Long Distance Running, and Soccer at first-class athletic facilities.

Special Olympics Delaware's **Summer Games** had its highest involvement ever with 1,001 participants, exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Athletes competed in Bocce, Powerlifting, Softball, Swimming, Tennis, and Track & Field, supported by a dedicated team of coaches, volunteers, and Unified partners. The event showcased the power of sport to bring the community together and celebrate the abilities of every athlete.

A total of 273 **Healthy Athletes** screenings were conducted across five disciplines: Fit Feet, Healthy Hearing, Opening Eyes, Special Smiles, and Fun Fitness. With a presence at three statewide competitions, the program helped identify health issues, relieve pain, and provide services that athletes might not otherwise receive. It also served as hands-on training for healthcare students and professionals to improve care for individuals with intellectual disabilities.



2024

DEVELOPMENT

Lewes Polar Bear Plunge

Record shattering results were achieved with the most-ever bears and most-ever funds raised in the plunge's 33 year history.

Law Enforcement Torch Run®

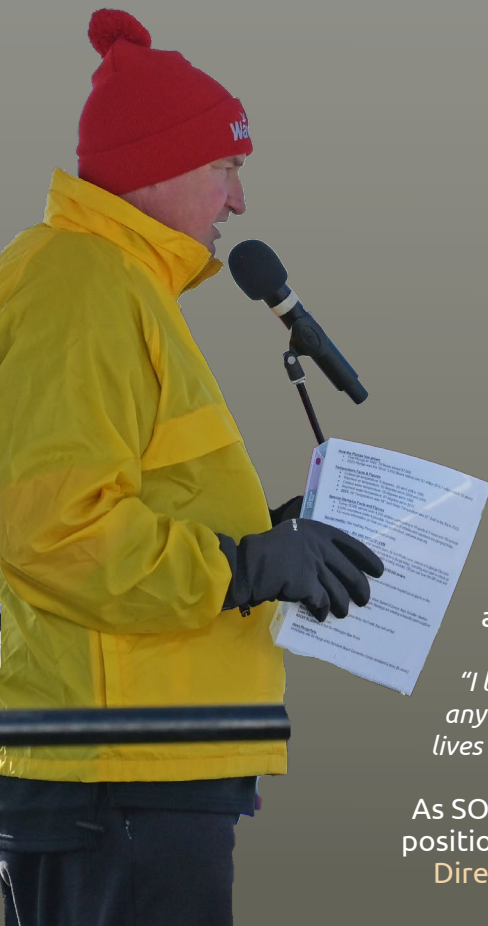
The Torch Run experienced a banner year with the most funds ever raised. It also marked the most runners except for the Stronger Together Virtual Torch Run held in 2020. Our torch runners are fully committed to raising funds in support of our athletes.

Tip-A-Cop

A new venue was found with Texas Roadhouse and yielded an extremely successful event which included all 5 restaurants across the state. Law enforcement officers and athletes volunteered side by side raising awareness and resources to fuel SODE's life-changing mission.

Over the Edge

A record number of funds were raised and the event sold out for the second year in a row with 98 edgers. Nearly half of the edgers listed an affiliation to one of Delaware's schools from across the state with Caesar Rodney School District leading the way.



A FOND FAREWELL, A BOLD NEW BEGINNING

Jon Buzby retired at the end of December after 35 years of service with Special Olympics Delaware. His roles were many and included overseeing sports, coaches' education, Unified Champion Schools, and media relations. Known as the "Voice of SODE," he was the go-to emcee for sports competitions and fundraisers alike. We are thankful beyond words for the difference Jon made.

"I loved the event management part of it; I loved the coach's education part of it. There wasn't anything I didn't like about it, and most importantly, I was somehow making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities." ~ Jon Buzby

As SODE continues to expand its programming beyond the pandemic, two new positions have been created to strengthen Marketing and Development efforts: **Director of Digital Media** and **Director of Development**.

ATHLETES AT THE HELM

Special Olympics Delaware continues to champion Unified Leadership by empowering athletes to step into meaningful roles that influence health, sports, and organizational decisions. Whether as Health Messengers, Fitness Captains, committee members, or board representatives, these athletes lead with purpose and inspire change across our movement.

FITNESS CAPTAINS



Fitness Captains are athletes who lead their teams in promoting fitness and healthy lifestyles. They motivate teammates, model consistent physical activity, and encourage positive habits at practices and competitions. SODE proudly supports 16 trained Fitness Captains, each leading warm-ups, cool-downs, and wellness routines across various sports teams—ensuring fitness is woven into every athletic experience.

HEALTH MESSENGERS



Health Messengers are Special Olympics athletes trained to lead in health and wellness. They serve as advocates and role models, promoting healthy habits within their teams and communities. This year, four SODE Health Messengers participated in a national training in Washington, D.C., gaining hands-on leadership experience and building connections to strengthen their impact.

LETR STATE COMMITTEE



In 2024, athlete leadership on the Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) State Committee continued to grow. Tommy Fields of the Wilmington Wizards served as Athlete Chair, with Richard Dunning of the Kent Wild Kats as Vice Chair. Launched as a pilot in 2023, these roles give athletes a direct voice in event planning, promotion, and building partnerships with law enforcement.

SUMMER GAMES COMMITTEE



Jerry Foskey of the Wilmington Wizards made history as the first SODE athlete to serve on the Summer Games Committee. His insight and experience brought valuable perspective to planning one of our largest sports events.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Also contributing at the highest level, Gene Giuliani (left) and Chris Truono (right) continue to serve as athlete representatives on the SODE Board of Directors—helping shape the future of our programs.



**Special
Olympics**
Delaware

2024 FUNDRAISERS

We acknowledge the outstanding support of the following individuals in their efforts to raise funds for Special Olympics Delaware's Law Enforcement Torch Run, Lewes Polar Bear Plunge, Over the Edge, and Ride to the Tide.

\$50,000+

Irv & Phyllis Levin

\$10,000 - \$19,999

Steff DiMartine
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2024 CHAMPIONS TOGETHER GIVING SOCIETY

WITH THANKS AND GRATITUDE

The Champions Together Giving Society is made up of individuals who pledge a minimum of \$1,000 annually for five years to support Special Olympics Delaware. We are profoundly grateful for these donors' commitment to transforming lives through sport, fostering inclusive communities, and enhancing our athletes' quality of life.

Will and Jean Beck
Shane and Susan Breakie
Bradford Bugher
Connie Callahan
Edward Capodanno
Steven Cason
Thomas and Leigh Corrigan
Chris and Kathy Crowell
Gina D'Alfonso

Lucille D'Alfonso
David and Jeanette Failing
Mary Jones Gant
Ann Grunert
David Halley
Jordan Hellstern
Mary Ward Hutchison
Paul Jungling
Greg and Ruth Lavelle

Christie Longo
William and Kim Lovett
James Madden
Richard McCabe
Jeromy and Erika Newton
Bobby and Heather Pancake
Richard Perry
Eric Reinhold
Dave Repass

Jeffrey and Ida Rowe
Christopher Schatzschneider
Patty Shipper
Lynne and Terry Sklar
Thad Truitt
Marichu Valencia
Bill and Mary Jane Willis

2024 DONORS

Our deepest thanks to the following individuals and organizations who power our movement through their generosity.



MISSION PARTNER

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics Delaware is our largest grassroots public awareness and fundraising vehicle. Their year-round commitment includes presenting medals, volunteering, and numerous fundraising activities. In 2024, they raised over \$1.3M.

YEAR-ROUND PARTNER

Draper Media

SILVER (\$50,000 - \$99,999)

Camp Barnes (in-kind)
State of Delaware
The Wawa Foundation

BRONZE (\$20,000 - \$49,999)

Bank of America
Delaware Department of Correction
Jersey Mike's
JPMorgan Chase & Co.
New Castle County Council

GUARDIAN (10,000 - \$19,999)

Delaware Department of Transportation (in-kind)
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Delaware State Troopers Association
Del-One Federal Credit Union
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Cape Gazette (in-kind)
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Gatorade Play it Forward Fund

Your investment changes the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and the communities they live in.

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Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation for the Benefit of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities.