

# General Orientation Session

*This slideshow and its quiz meet the SOI requirement for General Orientation to become a registered Volunteer. **IMPORTANT:** Follow the link at the end of this orientation and click on it to complete the form.*

**Special Olympics**  
Texas



# The Spirit of Special Olympics



*“Let me win.  
But if I cannot win,  
Let me be brave in the  
attempt.”*

- Athlete Oath



# What is Special Olympics?



# Special Olympics Texas Mission



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 the sharing of gifts, skills and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.



# In the Beginning

## *Eunice Kennedy Shriver...*

Started a day camp for individuals with intellectual disabilities in 1960 and saw the possibilities. Organized the first International Special Olympics Games at Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois in 1968.



# Special Olympics Starts in Texas



**June 1969** - Special Olympics gets its start in Texas, within the recreation division of the Texas Association for Retarded Citizens (TARC). The first Summer Games is held at Paul Tyson Stadium in Waco, with 350 athletes competing in 10 track and field events.

**June 2009** - Special Olympics Texas, Inc. celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

# Unique from Other Sports Organizations



- Sports opportunities for all ability levels
- Divisioning for equitable competition
- Awards for all participants
- Random draw for advancement to national and international levels of competition



# Our Athletes Deserve...

- To receive appropriate instruction and encouragement.
- Consistent training and coaching performed at a professional level.
- Opportunities to compete with athletes of *equal* abilities.
- New opportunities for life-changing experiences.



# How Many Lives Do We Touch Worldwide?



- In 1968, approx. 1,000 athletes participated in Special Olympics.
- In 2014, approx. 4.4 million people with intellectual disabilities in more than 200 countries participated in Special Olympics.

# Texas Athlete Numbers



**2010 – 40,773**

**2011 – 44,153**

**2012 – 44,541**

**2013 – 51,319**

**2014 – 52,446**

**2015 – 55,232**





# Worldwide Structure

**Special Olympics, Inc. Board of Directors** - oversees all programs around the world

**National Programs** - region-based, such as Special Olympics North America

**Chapter Programs** - state-based such as Special Olympics Texas

**Area Programs** - county-based

**Local Programs** - district/community based

# SOTX Chapter Structure



## **The Athletes**

**Board of Directors** - Set policies/procedures

**President & CEO** - Implements Board directives

**Chapter Staff/Committees** - Oversee implementation of policies

**Area/Program Directors** - Oversee Area Mgmt. Teams and local coordinators

**Development Directors** - Oversee fund raising at all levels

**Area Management Teams** - Oversee all (competition, training, fund raising, volunteers) at an area





# Athletes Must:



- Be 8 years or older to compete in local/area competition and 12 years or older to compete in a chapter competition.\*
- Have been identified as having intellectual disabilities or a closely related developmental disability.

*(\*may begin to train from 2-7 years of age via the Young Athletes™ program)*



# Definition of Eligibility:

Eligibility is limited to people who have closely related developmental disabilities such as those who have functional limitations, both in general learning and adaptive skills such as recreation, work, independent living, self-direction or self-care.

(General learning limitations refers to substantial deficits in conceptual, practical and social intelligence that will result in performance problems in academic learning and/or general life functioning. Adaptive skill limitations refers to ongoing performance deficits in skill areas considered essential to successful life functioning.)

*People with functional limitations based solely on a physical, behavioral, emotional, specific learning disability or sensory disability are not eligible.*

# Athletes Are Individuals Who...



*Demonstrate substantial limitations in present functioning characterized by:*

- Sub-average intellectual functioning
- Limitations in two or more areas of adaptive behavior
- Usually manifested before age 18



# Adaptive Behavior Areas



- Communication
- Self-care
- Home living
- Social Skills
- Leisure
- Health and Safety
- Work
- Academics

# Degree of Independence



*The athletes have varying degrees of independence:*

- Intermittent – support given only as needed
- Limited – limited support given on an as-needed basis
- Extensive – intense support in some environments
- Pervasive – high intensity in most environments

# Benefits for Athletes...



Demonstrated increases in performance at work, school, and home that correspond directly with the length of time an athlete spends in a Special Olympics program.

*(Yale University Study -1995)*

Significantly improved attitudes toward school and physical education activities after participation in Special Olympics.

*(Texas Tech University Research Study)*

# SOTX Offers 22 Sports



- Aquatics
- Athletics
- Basketball
- Bocce
- Bowling
- Cycling
- Equestrian
- Figure Skating
- Gymnastics
- Golf
- Kayaking
- Powerlifting
- Roller Skating
- Sailing
- Soccer
- Softball
- Speed Skating
- Table Tennis
- Tennis
- Triathlon
- Volleyball
- Flag Football

# A Place For All Ability Levels!



All Special Olympics sports have events to meet the needs of the various ability levels.

*For example, basketball offers:*

Individual Skills Contest

Team Skills Basketball

3-on-3 Half Court Basketball

5-on-5 Full Court Basketball

Unified Sports Basketball



# Motor Activities Training Program (MATP)



- Designed for athletes with severe or profound intellectual disabilities who are unable to participate in Official Special Olympics sports.
- The program helps prepare these athletes for sport-specific activities appropriate for their abilities.
- Opportunity to train for and perform their personal best at culminating motor development events, without comparison to others.



# MATP Activities

MATP will introduce athletes with severe disabilities to age-appropriate and functionally appropriate motor and sports activities. These activities include:

- Mobility – leading to gymnastics
- Dexterity – leading to athletics
- Striking – leading to softball
- Kicking – leading to soccer
- Aquatics – leading to swimming



# Young Athletes Program (YAP)



Program was developed for children with intellectual disabilities ages two through seven.

Sports play program is designed to introduce these children to the world of sports prior to SOTX eligibility at age eight.



# Young Athletes Program (YAP)



The program addresses two levels of play:

1. Activities focus on developing fundamental motor tracking and eye-hand coordination through a variety of developmental activities.
2. Young Athletes then apply these physical skills through a sports skills activity program to establish a foundation for sports participation.

The foundation is essential for these Young Athletes as they enter a lifetime of sports with Special Olympics Texas.

# Unified Sports



- Brings together athletes with intellectual disabilities and without intellectual disabilities (called partners) to train and compete on the same team.
- Concept first introduced in the United States in the mid-1980s to provide another level of challenge for higher ability athletes and to promote equality and inclusion.
- Enables athletes to improve their physical fitness, sharpen their skills, have new competition experiences, socialize with peers and develop new friendships.

# About SOTX Competitions



The competition must adhere to:

- National Governing Body rules (NGB).
- Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.
- SOTX Information Guide (SIG).

The competition must:

- Provide all athletes with the opportunity to excel.
- Utilize assessment and classifications for team sports.

# Where Can We Compete?



- Local Competitions
- Leagues
- Area Games
- Regional Games
- Chapter Games
- National Games
- World Games
- Community Programs
- Tournaments
- Scholastic Sports



# Training and Competition

- **Training for Competition** - *Athletes must train for a minimum of 8-10 weeks prior to a competition.*
- **Local Competition** - *Athletes must compete in two scrimmages or one local competition before becoming eligible for area competition.*
- **Area / Regional** - *Athletes must have participated in local meet(s) on file with area office to be eligible.*
- **Chapter Games** - *Athletes must have competed at area in the sport to be eligible.*
- **National and World Games** - *Athletes selected on an allotment / nomination basis.*

# Athlete Leadership Program (ALPs)



- Athletes as Volunteers, Coaches and Officials
- Global Messengers
- Committee Members
- Board Members
- Input Council and Athlete Congress



# Special Olympics Texas Allows Families to...



- Share the accomplishments of their athlete.
- Participate in year-round sports training and competition.
- Share Special Olympics joy with other families.
- Connect with other families.



# How Can You Get Involved as a Volunteer?





# You Make It Happen...



## 2015 Texas Volunteer Participation:

38,236 volunteers

4,051 certified coaches

# What Roles Do Volunteers Fill?

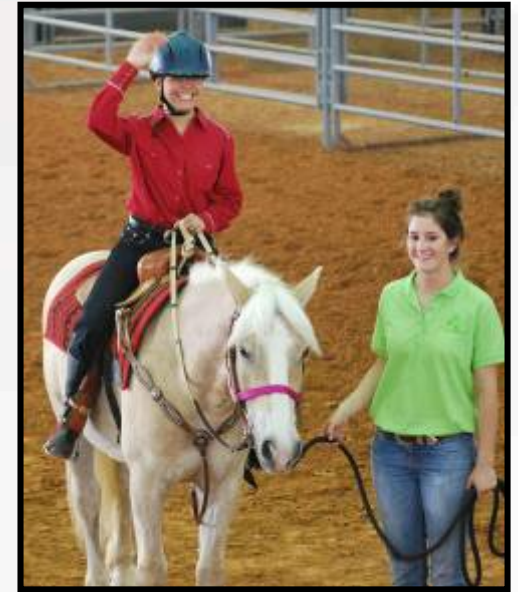


- **For the Athletes:** Certified Coach, Chaperone, Head of Delegation, Unified Partners
- **For the Competitions:** Day-of-Event Volunteer, Competition Director, Local Coordinator, Games Director, Sports Director, Official/Referee
- **For the Organization:** Committee Member, Board Members, Fund Raising, Training Managers/Directors, SOTX Office Support
- **For Your Profession:** Public Relations, Accounting/Finance, Legal, Medical

# Now That I Signed Up... How Can I Make A Difference?



- INCREASE the number of athletes and volunteers.
- IMPROVE the quality of coaching.
- PROVIDE inclusive sports opportunities.
- CREATE family opportunities.
- UPDATE public awareness.
- FOCUS on ability of athletes.





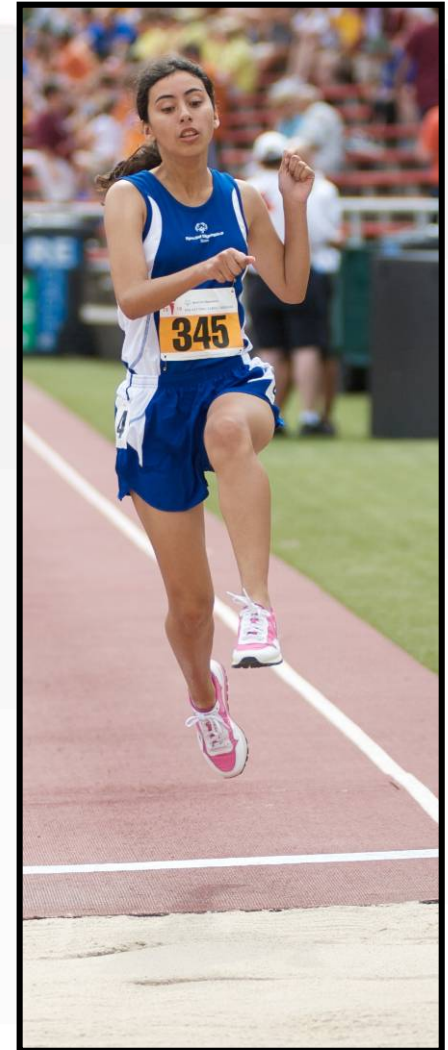
# Who Can You Help Reach?

- **Schools:** *elementary, middle, high, and transition programs.*
- **Work Settings:** *adults who are not yet affiliated with Special Olympics.*
- **Community Agencies / Parks and Recreation Programs:** *target “stay at home” athletes.*
- **Current Athletes / Families:** *keep in touch and follow up.*

# Objectives



- More athletes participating
- More volunteers, especially coaches and key sports/competition personnel
- Quality training and competition for the athletes
- Growth in Athlete Leadership roles
- Inclusive sports opportunities
- Increased family involvement
- Increased public awareness



# Athletes Will Leave With:



- Improved physical fitness.
- A sense of joy at their accomplishments and courage to reach for new heights.
- Additional opportunities for sharing their unique gifts and skills with others.
- Expanded friendships for themselves, their families, and their communities.





# Putting It All Together

- TRAINING *is the key.*
- COMPETITION *is the means.*
- *Skill, confidence, courage, and joy are the OUTCOMES.*
- *Better preparation for life is the GOAL.*
- *Lifelong skills and increased independence are the RESULTS.*



## IMPORTANT NEXT STEP:

Complete the General Orientation info form:

[https://sotx-reg.brtapp.com/  
GeneralOrientationInformation](https://sotx-reg.brtapp.com/GeneralOrientationInformation)