General Orientation

The first step to becoming an approved Special Olympics Class A Volunteer

Training for Life
Let me win.

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

Athlete Oath
General Orientation Goals

• Understand Special Olympics mission, philosophy, history and vision
• Describe intellectual disabilities as a concept
• Understand similarities and differences from other sports organizations
• Identify Special Olympics challenges/opportunities
• Advocate for persons with intellectual disabilities
• Become a dedicated, impassioned volunteer
What is Special Olympics?
The mission of Special Olympics is to provide:

- Year round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports
- for individuals age 8 and up with intellectual disabilities
- giving them opportunities to develop physical fitness,
- demonstrate courage
- experience joy and
- participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other athletes and the community
Mission Highlights

Components

• Year-round
• Sports training & competition
• Olympic-type sports
• Individuals aged 8+ with intellectual disabilities

Outcomes

• Physical fitness
• Courage & joy
• Sharing of gifts & skills
• Friendship
  • Families
  • Athletes
  • Community
In the Beginning . . .

Eunice Kennedy Shriver

• Started a day camp in her backyard for individuals with intellectual disabilities in 1960 and saw the great possibilities ahead

• Organized the first International Special Olympics Games at Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois in 1968
Vision

To help bring persons with intellectual disabilities into larger society under conditions where they are:

• Accepted

• Respected

• Given a chance to become useful and productive citizens
Special Olympics Credibility & Awareness

• 97% name recognition in the United States
  (Performance Research, 2001)

• Named the most credible charity in America
  (Chronicle of Philanthropy, 1995)

• 2001 Non-Profit of the Year
  (Direct Marketing Association, 2001)
Our Athletes Deserve

• To receive appropriate instruction & encouragement.

• Consistent training and quality coaching performed at a professional level.

• Opportunities to compete with athletes of equal ability.

• New opportunities for life-changing experiences.
Organizational Structure of Special Olympics - Worldwide

- **Special Olympics Inc. Board of Director**
  - Oversees all programs in over 180 countries worldwide

- **National Programs**
  - Region based (i.e. Special Olympics North America or Special Olympics Asia)

- **Chapter Programs**
  - State based (i.e. Special Olympics Oregon)

- **Local Programs**
  - County based (i.e. Special Olympics Oregon – X County)
SOOR Program Structure

• **The ATHLETES:** served by all involved

• **SOOR Board of Directors:** set policies/procedures

• **CEO – Margaret Hunt:** Implements Board directives, oversees Special Olympics Oregon (SOOR) staff

• **SOOR Staff:** Oversee the implementation of policies/procedures and programs.

• **Local Program Coordinators (LPC):** Volunteers who oversee the delivery of quality programs in a specific county or area

• **Local Program Management Teams:** Volunteers who support the work of LPC’s in the areas of training, fundraising, volunteer management, etc.

• **Volunteers:** Help coach, plan competitions, or raise funds, etc.
Who can participate in Special Olympics?
To be eligible to participate in Special Olympics, an athlete must:

- Be 8 years of age or older (may practice at age 6)

- Be identified as having an intellectual disability or a closely related developmental disability.

- Be registered, which means have a current Application for Participation (medical) on file with Special Olympics Oregon (SOOR).
Definition of Eligibility

- Eligibility is limited to individuals with intellectual disabilities or who have closely related developmental disabilities such as functional limitations both in general learning and in 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.
How Common are Intellectual Disabilities?

• **Incidence**
  - 300 million worldwide
  - 7.5 million in US

• **Prevalence**
  - 7 times more than deafness
  - 9 times more than cerebral palsy
  - 15 times more than total blindness
  - 35 times more than muscular dystrophy
How many lives do we touch?

**Worldwide** – over 2.5 million people with intellectual disabilities, in more than 180 countries, participate in Special Olympics

**Oregon** – serves over 7,000 individuals with intellectual disabilities . . . many are right in your community
Athletes are Individuals who:

Demonstrate substantial limitations in present functioning characterized by:

- Sub-average intellectual functioning
- Limitations in two or more areas of adaptive skills, such as recreation, work, independent living, self-direction or self-care
- Usually manifested before age 18

Training for Life
Degrees of Independence

Our athletes have varying degrees of independence

• **Limited** – support given on an “as needed” basis

• **Extensive** – intense support needed in some environments

• **Pervasive** – high level of support needed in most environments
How is Special Olympics the same as other sports organizations?

- Special Olympics follows the National Governing Body rules of each sport.
- Athletes train prior to competition.
- Competitions are held locally (Regional events) allowing athletes to qualify to advance to higher levels of competition (State events).
How does Special Olympics differ from other sports organizations?

- Sports opportunities are available for all ability levels.
- Athletes compete in divisions made up of individuals with equal ability levels.
- All participants receive an Award.
- Advancement to higher levels of competition (National Games and World Games) is done by random draw.
- Athletes are not charged a fee to participate.
SOOR offers 16 sports!

**Winter Season**

Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Snowboarding, Snowshoeing, Basketball, Powerlifting

**Spring/Summer Season**

Athletics (Track & Field), Bocce, Golf, Softball

**Fall Season**

Aquatics, Bowling, Soccer, Volleyball, Long Distance Running
A Place for EVERYONE

There is a way for individuals of all skill levels to compete in Special Olympics. Following is an example of the spectrum of choices for the sport of:

**Basketball**

Individual Skills – Target pass, spot shot, 10 meter dribble for athletes just learning basketball skills as well as athletes utilizing wheelchairs

Half Court – 3 on 3 for athletes just learning to play on a team

Team Play – 5 on 5 team following NGB rules regulation play

Unified Sports® Team – 3 athletes, 2 partners (individuals without disabilities) on a regulation team also regulation play
Who else do we reach?

Motor Activities Training Program (MATP)

- Comprehensive motor activities and sports skills lead-up training for individuals with severe disabilities.
- Athletes participate in a non-competitive Challenge Day event
Who else do we reach?

Unified Sports®

• Provides opportunities for athletes to participate in competitive sports on teams with peers without intellectual disabilities.

• Those involved have an opportunity to become teammates and friends.
Sports Rules

• Based on International and National Governing Body Rules
• Contain few modifications
• Provide sports & events for all ability levels
• Govern all Special Olympics competitions
• Available at www.soor.org
How do you make training work?

• Frequent repetition of a skill

• Frequent reinforcement of correct behavior

• Consistent use of key words to reinforce skill

• Appropriate levels of instruction

• Continuous assessment and advancement
Minimum Training Requirements

• Special Olympics athletes are **required** to participate in a structured training program before competing each sport season.

• Minimum training requirement is 10 hours over an eight-week period

• Additional training is encouraged
Training Resources

Where can a coach find help?

• Sport-specific Coaching Guides (available at: www.soor.org)

• One-day Coach sport-specific training for Coach Certification

• Official Sports Rules at www.soor.org

• International/National Governing Body Rules
Divisioning

- When athletes attend a competition, they are placed in a division (heat) with athletes of similar ability level.

- This provides all competitors a chance to excel
  - No more than 3-8 athletes or teams per division
  - Athletes are grouped by age and gender
  - Further separated by ABILITY
Competition Opportunities

Athletes may compete in a variety of ways:

• Leagues
• Local scrimmages & competition
• Tournaments
• School sports
• Community or club programs
• Invitationals
• Program-level games & competition
Progression of Games

Local
Regional
State
National
(every 4 years)
World
(every 2 years, alternating between Winter and Summer)
Criteria for Athlete Advancement (State, National or World Games)

Process

• Training requirement: 10 hours within 2 months prior to culminating competition
• Previous competition: Same sport
  • Quota driven
  • Random draw by event:
    • All first place finishers
    • If quota not filled, 2nd place finishers

Other considerations:

• Athlete not barred, due to prior competition experience at higher level of competition
• Additional criteria from Program, approved by appropriate governing body
How do Athletes Benefit?

- Improved strength, stamina & motor skills
- Improved self-esteem & self-confidence
- Become healthy, skill-dependable employees
- Greater independent participation in community
- A Yale University study (1995) stated that increases in performance at work, school and home correspond directly with the length of time an athlete spends in a Special Olympics program.
How do Families Benefit?

• Share the accomplishments of their children.

• Allow the extended family to participate in year-round sports training and competition.

• Share Special Olympics joy with other families.
Special Olympics Challenges/Opportunities

• More athletes need to be served

• There is a need for more volunteers - especially sport experienced coaches

• Providing enough opportunities for quality training & competition

• Providing inclusive sports opportunities

• There is a need for more family involvement

• Public education must be ongoing

Training for Life
YOU make it happen!

Oregon Volunteer Participation:

Over 7,000 volunteers are involved in Oregon!

SOOR is:

- Athlete Focused
- Volunteer Driven
- Staff Supported
How can my involvement make it better?

- Increase the number of athletes that can be served
- Improve the quality of coaching
- Provide more sports training opportunities
- Create family opportunities
- Update public awareness
What roles do volunteers fill?

• **For the Athletes:** Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Chaperone, Unified Partner

• **For the Competitions:** Day-of-Event Volunteer, Games Organizing Committee, Official/Referee

• **For the Organization:** Local Program Management Team Member, Fundraising Assistance, Coach Education Support

• **For your Profession:** Public Relations, Legal, Medical, Finance
On behalf of our athletes:

Thank you for the joy you will help bring
Complete the Quiz

To complete the quiz and receive credit for completing the General Orientation, click the link below:

http://orientation.soor.org/GO-Quiz.htm