

## **SPECIAL OLYMPICS**

As an organization, Special Olympics have been working with children, youth and adults with an intellectual disability for over forty years. Within this time, it has grown well beyond being an event to become a year-round movement with chapters in almost every province and territory.

### **HISTORY**

Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown to include nearly 3.7 million athletes in 229 accredited programs in 170 countries, including Canada.

On June 9, 1969, in Toronto, Ontario, the very first Special Olympics national competition was held, less than one year after the sport movement was born on Chicago's Soldier Field. It attracted 1,400 individuals with an intellectual disability from towns and cities across our country.

Competing in athletics, aquatics, and – no surprise here – floor hockey, they joined Harry "Red" Foster, the visionary who worked tirelessly to bring the sport movement to this country. The Canadian broadcast legend, advertising executive and philanthropist was inspired by what he had seen in Chicago, Illinois, one year earlier.

### **SPECIAL OLYMPICS TODAY**

Today, the movement has expanded across Canada and it is no longer just a cycle of national competitions. Special Olympics now enriches the lives of more than 34,000 children, youth and adults who are registered in its 17 Olympic-type winter and summer sport programs, as well as the lives of their family, friends and supporters. These programs run year-round out of local sport clubs.

We are proud that, for more than 40 years, Special Olympics has delivered one message to Canadians: people with an intellectual disability can and will succeed in life if given the opportunity.

Sport Canada, a government agency under the Department of Canadian Heritage, recognizes Special Olympics as the main provider of these services to people whose primary diagnosis is an intellectual disability.

The group is a national non-profit grass roots organization with more than 13,000 trained volunteer coaches. It provides its services through local sport clubs to more than 32,000 athletes. Its programs are supported by corporate sponsorship, fundraising activities, government funding as well as individual donors.

Special Olympics Canada is part of a global movement. It is structured into regional, provincial and national programs and competitions. National competitions are held every two years, alternating between summer and winter games with Special Olympics World Games held in the year following national games. Canadian athletes have the opportunity to participate along with more than 150 other countries in Special Olympics World Summer or Winter Games through selection in the national team program.

## **EMPOWER BEYOND SPORT**

For more than 30 years, Special Olympics BC has improved the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities and, in turn, the lives of everyone they've touched.

## **SPORTS AND PROGRAMS**

### **Summer Sports**

- 5-Pin & 10-Pin Bowling
- Aquatics
- Powerlifting
- Rhythmic Gymnastics
- Soccer
- Softball
- Track & Field

### **Winter Sports**

- Alpine Skiing
- Cross-Country Skiing
- Curling
- Figure Skating
- Floor Hockey
- Snowshoeing
- Speed Skating

### **Demonstration Sports**

- Basketball
- Bocce
- Golf

## **Long-Term Athlete Development**

- Active Start
- FUNdamentals
- Sport Start
- Club Fit

## **Healthier Athletes Initiatives**

- Healthy Athletes