What is Special Olympics?

- Year-round sports training and athletic competition
- Persons with intellectual disabilities
- Other health-related programming
- Local, statewide, nationwide, worldwide
The Special Olympics movement began in the early 1960s when Eunice Kennedy Shriver started a summer day camp for people with intellectual disabilities.

- Special Olympics (2011) Participation
  - World 4,004,414
  - USA 665,276
  - Massachusetts 12,592

- This makes Special Olympics the single largest Amateur Sports Organization in the World!
A Real Sports Experience

Special Olympics
Massachusetts
Traditional Sports

- Train and compete through local practices and competitions to qualify for sectional and statewide events
- Must be at least eight years old to participate in local programs
- Required to train for at least eight weeks to qualify for statewide events

Massachusetts Sports Offerings

24 sports in 4 statewide sports seasons:

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<tr>
<th>Winter Games</th>
<th>Summer Games</th>
<th>August Sports Tournament</th>
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<table>
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<th>Fall Sports Season</th>
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Unified Sports

• Started in SOMA in 1984
• Brings together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities to train and compete on same team
• A primary goal is to equalize the ability level of Special Olympics athletes with their partners and to promote inclusion through team practice and competition.
Motor Activities Training Program

• Designed for persons with severe limitations who do not yet possess the physical skills necessary to participate in official Special Olympics sports
• Emphasizes training and participation rather than competition
• Provides the means for persons with severe limitations to participate in appropriate recreational activities geared to their ability levels.

Young Athletes

• Focus is on fun activities important to mental and physical growth
• Children ages 2.5 to 7 years old
• Games and activities that develop motor skills and hand-eye coordination
Transformative Education
School Day Games

• All elements of a traditional Special Olympics event
• Collaboration between classrooms, school district, and surrounding community

Project Unify

• An education-based project that uses sports and education programs to activate young people to develop school communities where all youth are agents of change – fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities
• Brings students with and without intellectual disabilities together through education and sports related initiatives, creating more inclusive school communities
R-Word Campaign

• What is the r-word?
• Why is this movement important
• What can each of us do?

Spread the Word to End the Word at www.r-word.org

College & University Partnerships

• NCAA III partnership
• Mirrors other Special Olympics education programs
• Local clubs in MA
Sustaining Athlete Health
Key Objectives

• Improve access and health care for athletes through event-based health screening
• Make referrals to local health practitioners when appropriate
• Train health care professionals and students about needs and care of people with intellectual disabilities
• Collect, analyze, and disseminate data on the health status and needs of people with intellectual disabilities
• Advocate for improved health policies and programs for people with intellectual disabilities

Healthy Athletes Initiative

Health screenings in 7 areas

• Fit Feet
• FUNFitness
• Health Promotion
• Healthy Hearing
• MedFest
• Special Olympics-Lions Club Opening Eyes
• Special Smiles
Community Building and Fundraising
Athlete Leadership Programs

- Global Messengers
- Athletes on SOMA Board of Directors
- Athletes as Coaches
- Athletes as volunteers and event organizers

Fundraising

- Direct donations
- Recycle for Gold
- Corporate Sponsorships
- In-kind donations
- Organized events
  - Polar Plunge
  - Jolly Jaunt
  - Over the Edge
Find a Program Near You
Special Olympics Massachusetts

- Visit [www.SpecialOlympicsMA.org](http://www.SpecialOlympicsMA.org)
- Yawkey Sports Training Center, 512 Forest St, Marlboro, MA, 508-485-0986
- Healthy Athletes: George Kent x 215
- Volunteer Opportunities: Martha Dove x 219
- Local Programs, Young Athletes, Motor Activities
  Training Programs: Terry Keilty x 224
Thank you.