

S.O. Alive



Special Olympics
Ireland

July 2010

What an exciting few months we have had so far this year in Special Olympics Ireland! Amongst the day to day activities of the organisation were two big milestones in the form of our All Ireland Collection Day in April and the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games in June.

Our All Ireland Collection Day took place on Friday 23rd April. This is our biggest annual fundraising event and saw thousands of people taking to the streets to shake a bucket and raise crucial funding for Special Olympics Ireland. The support we received on the day was fantastic and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the individuals, companies, schools and clubs who got behind the day to make it such a success.

Preparations for the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games got underway in the last quarter of 2009 when we announced details of the Games and what we would need to make them happen. At the time we highlighted the need for people and finance. In January 2010 we launched our volunteer recruitment drive. We needed to recruit 3,500 volunteers and were amazed at the huge response we received from people who wanted to get involved. After 14 information sessions, which were held in venues in Limerick, Clare and Tipperary we successfully reached our target and soon after the volunteers got busy in preparation for the Games in June.

We also received significant assistance and donations of products and cash to help off-set the running cost of the Games. Without the essential support of our sponsors, suppliers and friends the Games simply could not have happened.

Wednesday 9th June marked the start of the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games. The Opening Ceremony took place in Thomond Park, Limerick in front of a crowd of approximately 20,000 people. The excitement and joy of the Opening Ceremony set the scene for the four incredible days of sport that followed from Thursday 10th to Sunday 13th June. I would like to congratulate all the athletes, their coaches and families for preparing so well for the Games. I was lucky enough to see a lot



of the action and I can honestly say that it was an absolute joy. It is rare to see such dedication to sport on the part of such a large number of people and everyone associated with the Games should feel proud of their achievements.

The Games were an amazing experience for the athletes, their families, coaches and the volunteers involved and they would not have happened if it wasn't for the support and encouragement we received from so many people. I would like to acknowledge and thank everyone – eircom and The Irish Sports Council, sponsors, supporters, friends old and new for their generosity. I know that everyone who attended the Games left with a sense of joy, pride and privilege of having been witness to a truly extraordinary sporting occasion.

Matt English
Chief Executive



Law Enforcement Torch Run leads the way to Limerick!

From the 2nd – 9th June the Flame of Hope was carried throughout Ireland by members of An Garda Síochána and the PSNI. The Law Enforcement Torch Run, sponsored by eircom is one of the most high profile events organised by Special Olympics Ireland around Games time. It involves local members of both police services who carry the torch (Flame of Hope) as it makes its way through their District/Division. The torch visited 57 different locations, including many primary schools throughout Ireland on its way to Thomond Park for the Opening Ceremony of the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games. This year the torch made a special visit to the Head Offices of eircom as part of the 25 year celebrations of eircom's partnership with Special Olympics Ireland.



Deputy Commissioner Nacie Rice, An Garda Síochána, Special Olympics Athlete Ross Stewart from Belfast and Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland, PSNI pictured at the launch of the Law Enforcement Torch Run, Odyssey Arena, Belfast.

2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games



The 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games took place in Limerick and Clare from the 9-13th of June. On Wednesday 9th June Thomond Park, Limerick rolled out the red carpet to welcome the 1,900 Special Olympics athletes from all over Ireland who were participating in the Games along with 650 coaches and official delegates and 5,500 family members. The theme of the Opening Ceremony, which was hosted by RTÉ's Des Cahill and Today FM's Ian Dempsey, was 'Hand in Hand' – a celebration of sportsmanship and the coming together of people to make the extraordinary happen.

The Opening Ceremony featured performances from The Supermodel Twins, Daghdha Garvey Initiative, The Dublin Gospel Choir, Heathers, the Munster Rugby Choir and a much anticipated return to the Irish stage by The Cranberries. Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport Mary Hanafin, Denis O' Brien, Chairman Special Olympics Ireland Council of Patrons, Mary Davis, Chairperson Special Olympics Ireland and Paul Donovan, CEO eircom were all in attendance. In addition the assembled audience heard from Keith Wood, Face of the Games, Emily Hurley Athlete Face of the Games and Paul O' Connell. The Sports competition got underway in venues throughout Limerick and Clare on Thursday 10th June and ran until Sunday 13th June. A total of 14 sports were on offer, (including the non-competitive Motor Activities Training Programme (MATP) in venues throughout Limerick and Clare.

Spectators were treated to some incredible moments of sport over the four days and all the while the sun was high in the sky, the fun was felt by every passer-by and the atmosphere was electric. The 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games will live on in the hearts of all who experienced them and our hope is that they will open the door to even more people with an intellectual disability to be part of our extraordinary team.

To see highlights of the Games check out www.specialolympics.ie/LimerickGames



Billy Collins from Tallaght, Dublin in action during the Games.



Michael Walsh from Swinford, Co. Mayo participates in the Motor Activities Training Programme (MATP) event in The Tailteann Centre, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.



Dolores O' Riordan of the Cranberries joined on stage by Kim O' Kelly from Rathangan, Co. Kildare.

TEAM2010 and dedicated volunteers who gave of their time and expertise so generously.

TEAM2010, our extraordinary team of volunteers were involved in running every aspect of the Games and we were fortunate to have so many dedicated and fantastic volunteers come forward to give of their time and expertise so generously. To each and every volunteer we would like to express our sincere gratitude – you made it all happen for the athletes, their families and everyone who attended!



Athlete Michael Flynn, from Carrowreagh, Co. Mayo, with volunteers Muireann O'Shaughnessy and Aideen Hinch



Volunteers Peter Noonan and June Downey at the Opening Ceremony of the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games in Thomond Park, Limerick



eircom employees await the arrival of the Flame of Hope in eircom's Head Office, Dublin

Special Olympics Ireland & eircom celebrate 25 years carrying the torch together!

This year marks 25 years of Special Olympics Ireland's partnership with eircom. This is a hugely significant milestone for both organisations and one that we are extremely proud of. eircom are the premier sponsor of the Special Olympics Ireland programme as well as our volunteer programme, the Law Enforcement Torch Run and Team Ireland. A huge thank you to everyone in eircom for helping us to carry the torch for the past 25 years!

The Oldest & Youngest Athlete at the Games

George Hamilton (76) from Faythe, Co. Wexford and Meg Carr (9) from Letterkenny, Co. Donegal pose for photos on day 2 of the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games. George, whose sport is pitch and putt was the oldest athlete to compete at the Games while Gymnast Meg was the youngest athlete at the Games.



George Hamilton and Meg Carr

BE PART OF AN EXTRAORDINARY TEAM - TEAM2011

The 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games will take place in Athens, Greece from 25th June - 4th July.

7,500 Special Olympics Athletes from 185 nations will compete in 22 Olympic-type sports. Ireland will be represented by athletes in 12 different sports.

In 2005, 2007 and 2009 Special Olympics Ireland were represented at World Games by teams of volunteers who fundraised and then travelled to and worked at each of the Games. We are currently seeking expressions of interest from people who would like to volunteer at The 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games. If you are interested in being part of TEAM2011 please visit www.specialolympics.ie or email team2011@specialolympics.ie The closing date for receipt of expressions of interest is **Wednesday 1st September.**

All Ireland Collection Day thank you for helping us on our way!

Our All Ireland Collection Day took place on Friday, 23rd of April. Thousands of volunteers took to the streets of Ireland to raise essential funding for Special Olympics Ireland. In Dublin the day started off with a coffee morning held in the offices of Today FM and Newstalk. This was followed by street entertainment from 7am – 7pm on Grafton and Henry Street, including a special performance by Glen Hansard. In Limerick several members of the Munster Rugby team came out to collect and in Belfast the Lord Mayor Naomi Long held a Coffee Morning to celebrate the day. A huge thank you to everyone who came out to support us!

Check us out online!

www.specialolympics.ie

The new Special Olympics website is now up and running boasting many new features such as athlete blogs, picture galleries and interactive facilities including online registration and volunteer training programmes. It's an exciting, more vibrant place to find out all you need to know about Special Olympics in Ireland and will be updated on a daily basis. So please visit www.specialolympics.ie and add us to your 'favourites folder!'.

You can also join the 15,000 people who currently follow us on Facebook. Our facebook page contains messages from our fans as well as photographs and links to videos on Youtube and Twitter.

Special Olympics Ireland named as an official charity of the 31st Lifestyle Sports adidas Dublin Marathon

The 31st Lifestyle Sports adidas Dublin Marathon takes place on Bank Holiday Monday, 25th October and Special Olympics Ireland has been named as one of the official charities of the event. We are currently recruiting a team of runners to run the marathon and raise funds for us. If you are interested in joining our team please contact dublinmarathon@specialolympics.ie. For more information about the event or to enter visit www.dublinmarathon.ie



Rugby heroes Simon Best and Keith Wood take to the streets of Belfast with Special Olympics Ireland Athlete, Una McGarry.



Glen Hansard busking on Dublin's Henry Street.



Munster and Ireland Rugby star Keith Earls pictured with Nathan Broderick in Limerick.



Matt English and Ian Dempsey celebrate the announcement that Special Olympics Ireland is to be one of the official charities of the Lifestyle Sports adidas Dublin Marathon.

Please let us know if your contact details are incorrect or have changed so we can ensure you continue to enjoy reading each edition of S.O. Alive. Simply e-mail: info@specialolympics.ie or call +353 1 882 3972 with the correct information. Thank you!



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