

# CONNECT



## Celebrating Volunteers

# WELCOME!

Hello everyone,

As we come to the end of our current strategic period, I wish to thank and congratulate each of you for your tremendous commitment to Special Olympics Ireland. For some of our athletes, the culmination of the period was their participation in the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens from 25th June to 4th July.

This edition of CONNECT brings you some memorable images from the Games which I think capture the magic of the Special Olympics in all its splendour. Many of you have helped them get there by your work in coaching and managing their competition events. However, as we all know, there is much more to the Special Olympics Programme than the World Games. There are over 11,000 athletes training every week in over 400 clubs around Ireland. Events take place throughout the year in every corner of the country, allowing athletes the opportunity to further develop their sporting skills.

None of this would be possible without the 24,000 volunteers who are the backbone of Special Olympics Ireland. I have had the honour and privilege of being the Volunteer Manager for 20 months now and every day, YOU, our volunteers, astound me with your dedication, commitment and enthusiasm for the Special Olympics Programme.

We are in the middle of the European Year of the Volunteer (EYV2011), which has been designated as such by the European Union to recognise the greatness of volunteers throughout Europe. Its purpose is also to encourage more people to volunteer in their communities. By sharing YOUR Special Olympics volunteering story you will inspire others to volunteer. I encourage you to go to [www.eyv2011.ie](http://www.eyv2011.ie) and read the volunteering stories that are up there already. You may see one or two Special Olympics stories there. Why not put pen to paper and share yours? You can email it to Kate McDonagh, the Irish Project Officer for the European Year of the Volunteer, at [kate@volunteer.ie](mailto:kate@volunteer.ie). She would love to hear from you!

I am delighted to report that one of our volunteers, Pam Beacom, has been recognised at National level for her commitment to Special Olympics Ireland. Pam received a "Volunteer in Irish Sport" award for her outstanding service to our programme at a special ceremony in the Aviva Stadium on May 31st. Congratulations Pam, we are all so proud of you; your award is richly deserved.

There will be an opportunity for you to nominate a volunteer for the Ireland Involved Awards which are due to take place in November. I will circulate details of this as soon as they become available.

In the meantime here are some key dates for your diaries:

**August 22nd-26th** – the EYV 2011 Roadshow comes to Ireland. This is a free week-long public event; it's a volunteering recruitment fair and provides an opportunity to promote and celebrate the work that all organisations do, including Special Olympics Ireland. It promises to be a fun, family-friendly event so do come along! We look forward to meeting you there.  
Venue: The Public Space and EP Conference Room, EC House, 18 Dawson Street, Dublin 2. Public opening hours are from 11.00am to 4.00pm daily.



*Pictured above L-R: Donagh Morgan, Assistant Secretary for Sport at the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport, volunteer Pam Beacom, recipient of a 2011 Volunteer in Irish Sport award and Matt English, CEO Special Olympics Ireland. On the front cover Pam is pictured with Donagh Morgan, Matt English, Michael Ring T.D., Minister of State at the Dept. of Tourism, Transport and Sport, Pam's daughter Aisling Beacom, and Liz Callery, Regional Director, Special Olympics Ireland Eastern Region.*

**Saturday September 24th** – Annual Volunteer Forum which will be held at eircom HQ, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road, Dublin 8 (across the road from Heuston Railway Station) – this is open to all volunteers to provide feedback and input into organisational plans and developments for the Volunteer Programme. It coincides with the second Annual Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day (EKS Day).

**Friday September 30th** – National Day of Volunteering – the aim of this day is for everyone to give volunteering a try – so perhaps you can persuade your brother, sister, friend or neighbour to volunteer with Special Olympics that day. For more information on the day please go to [www.volunteer.ie](http://www.volunteer.ie) or check out our website in the coming weeks for more information.

I hope you enjoy this edition of CONNECT and, on behalf of the Volunteer Programme Team here at Park House, I want to wish you all the very best for the summer holiday period. I hope the sun shines brightly!

Stephanie McDermott  
Volunteer Manager



## Have you seen our new free iPhone App?

Special Olympics Ireland are delighted to have recently launched our very own iPhone App. The app was developed free of charge through the collective efforts of Alan Haverty ([www.outlier.ie](http://www.outlier.ie)), Cian Pas ([www.creamgraphics.ie](http://www.creamgraphics.ie)) and Roland Gröpmair ([www.mapps.ie](http://www.mapps.ie)).

The App includes an up-to-date news feed with all our latest news stories, lots of photographs, our athlete blogs and lots more.

We'd like to thank Alan, Cian and Roland for their enthusiasm and creativity in making this happen for Special Olympics Ireland. It's fantastic for us to be able to reach out and connect with people via their mobile phones, and raise awareness on the work of Special Olympics Ireland.

It is now available to download free from the iTunes store.





## On the cover



By now you have all probably heard about the incredible successes of Team Ireland at the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens. As always our athletes did us proud. They travelled to the Games representing more than 11,000 Special Olympics Ireland athletes who meet and train year round in 403 clubs throughout Ireland.

Much of Team Ireland's success can be attributed to the dedication and commitment of the volunteers and coaches who ensured that the athletes were as well prepared as they could possibly be. While 49 coaches travelled to Athens with the team and prepared them at their monthly Team Ireland training camps, countless others ensured that the athletes' training programmes continued in their local clubs on a weekly basis prior to the Games.

The main picture on the front cover of this edition of Connect shows Special Olympics athlete Alan Quinlan from Cappamore, Co. Limerick with his coach Dorothy Kavanagh from Old Pallas, Co. Limerick. Dorothy has been a volunteer with Special Olympics Ireland for over 20 years and is a coach with the Lisnagry Special Olympics Club in Limerick.

We say a huge 'THANK YOU' to the Team Ireland Coaches and all of the club coaches and volunteers throughout the entire island of Ireland who worked so hard to prepare our team for the World Games, and who continue to provide a quality training programme for our athletes on a year-round basis.

## A legacy from 2010 Games



Special Olympics Town ran during the Special Olympics Ireland Games in Limerick last June. It offered a host of different activities which athletes and their families could participate in, outside of competition time. There were dance groups, drama and tai chi workshops, nail art, face painting and massages, photography, music and crafts! For 4 days, the SO Town marquee was teeming with creativity and excitement.

One of the many groups who supported these activities was the National Gallery of Ireland. Along with a team of artists, two National Gallery of Ireland staff (Dr. Marie Bourke, Keeper, Head of Education and Ms. Brina Casey, Education Officer, Outreach) ran a "Creative Day" workshop to which all athletes were welcomed. Each athlete produced their own piece of art – a felt panel decorated with their name and symbols representing their

interests, achievements and participation in the Games. It proved extremely popular with the participating athletes and the fantastic team of artists were kept on their toes all day!

Following the Games, a presentation was made to Special Olympics Ireland CEO, Matt English, of a "memory" created from a collection of panels produced by the athletes during the Creative Day. We would like to extend our thanks to Dr. Marie Bourke and Ms. Brina Casey for all of their work in ensuring their Creative Day was a great success! The "memory" now hangs proudly in Special Olympics Ireland's offices for all to see!

## Special Olympics Ireland 2012 – 2015 Strategy

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the development of Special Olympics Ireland's Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015. We are now delighted to announce that the Strategy was signed off by the Board of Directors on 11 June 2011 and is available to download from our website at [www.specialolympics.ie/strategy](http://www.specialolympics.ie/strategy).

## Welcome to the July edition of Connect Magazine from Special Olympics Ireland. Here are the articles included in this edition:

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# TEAM Ireland

## 2011 World Summer Games, Athens

After many months of preparation, Team Ireland departed these shores for Greece and the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games on Monday 20th June. The 176 strong team waved goodbye to family and friends as they set off for the island community of Rhodes, Greece, where they participated in the Host Town Programme.

This programme is a traditional element of international Games for Special Olympics. Athletes and coaches are welcomed by local communities in the host nation and provided with some valuable acclimatisation and training time, but also, with a chance to experience something of the culture and history of the area, to meet with local people and visit famous sites. The Irish delegation joined over 1,800 other delegates from across the world in Rhodes for 4 days.

Following the Host Town, Team Ireland returned to Athens to get down to the business of competition. The spectacular Opening Ceremony took place on June 25th in the Kallimarmaro Stadium, also known as the Panathanaikon stadium, which is the ancient stadium that was the home of the first modern Olympics in 1896. Team Ireland competed in 12 sports – Athletics, Swimming,

Badminton, Basketball (Men's and Women's), Bocce, Tenpin Bowling, Equestrian, Football (Men's 11-a-side, Men's and Women's 5-a-side), Golf, Artistic and Rhythmic Gymnastics, Kayaking and Table Tennis.

Kayaking featured for the first time for Special Olympics Ireland with four athletes taking to the waters of the Schinias Olympic Rowing and Canoeing centre, home of the rowing and canoeing competitions in the 2004 Olympics/Paralympic Games. Similarly, one Team Ireland athlete competed in the Open Water Swim as a demonstration event, for the first time ever.

All 126 athletes worked extremely hard over the past eight months preparing for these Games. Each and every one of them participated to the very best of their ability and they returned home with an incredible 107 medals, 10 personal bests and countless place ribbons. Dublin Airport was awash with colour and welcome home banners on 5th July to greet the team on their return from the Games.

We congratulate all of the athletes, their families, club coaches, and Team Ireland coaches on their tremendous success at the Games.





# MEET OUR EXTRAORDINARY TEAM

## Athens Volunteer Team

The Road to Athens has been a year in the making for this volunteer group. At final count, a group of 187 volunteers set off for Athens on June 23rd to volunteer at the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games.



These volunteers attended a series of training sessions over the course of the last 9 months in preparation for the trip. They came from all over Ireland in the early hours of the day to get to Dublin for training, and for this, we say thank – you all epitomise the true spirit of volunteering.

The majority of the volunteers worked in Games Organising Committee roles across the following functional areas: Aquatics, Powerlifting, Golf, the TRAIN Programme, Spectator Services, Healthy Athlete and Awards. In addition, eleven volunteers assisted Team Ireland in Equestrian, Golf, Aquatics, Athletics, Gymnastics and Table Tennis, two volunteers were golf caddies and two were on the Volunteer Management Team. Each and every volunteer was a fabulous ambassador for the Special Olympics Ireland programme. Their dedication, expertise and enthusiasm was widely acknowledged by numerous international delegates throughout the Games. When not on duty, they could be seen as a “sea of green” cheering on Team Ireland in competition. Each volunteer raised a minimum of €3,250 in order to make the trip a reality. This money contributed towards the cost of sending Team Ireland to Athens. Each volunteer rose to the challenge with huge enthusiasm and energy. The fundraising activities ranged from Santa Grottos, to fake weddings, to cross-country 5-day Walkathons to sponsored cycles. Great creativity came to the fore in raising this money in these challenging times and, for this, we wish to salute and thank all of the volunteers for the successful achievement of their targets. We also want to acknowledge and thank all the volunteers who fundraised for the trip but were unable to travel.

## 2011 Distinguished Service Awards

At the Special Olympics Ireland AGM held on June 11th two of our volunteers, Bernie Priestley and Patricia Hickey, were presented with a Special Olympics Ireland Distinguished Service Award, an award made by the Board of Directors. This award is presented to individuals who have shown dedication and commitment to the promotion of Special Olympics, have contributed pro-actively to the development of the programme, have given outstanding contribution and long-standing service to Special Olympics.



*Pictured is Special Olympics Ireland Chairperson, Ronan King with Ciaran Priestly who accepted the award on behalf of his mother Bernie.*

Bernie Priestley has been involved with Special Olympics since the mid 1990s. While working for Basketball Ireland she first began to volunteer at Special Olympics Ireland events. In the years since then, Bernie's involvement has continued and her role has evolved to assist the organisation in a number of different areas including sport, code of ethics, organisational development and planning. Bernie currently sits on the programme's Basketball Development Team. She has played a key part in developing the Basketball Grading tool and

is developing a Basketball Grading DVD. She has been the Sports Advisor for Basketball for Special Olympics Europe-Eurasia and was selected to take the officials' oath at last year's European Summer Games in Warsaw.



*Patricia Hickey is pictured above speaking at the AGM on receipt of her Distinguished Service award.*

Patricia Hickey has been involved with Special Olympics for approximately 16 years and has fulfilled a range of roles at local, regional and national level. She set up a Special Olympics club in her home town of Bruff, Co. Limerick and subsequently played a key role in the development of the Families programme in Munster and at a national level. In the role of National Family Coordinator, she has represented family members at Board level and has attended a number of international conferences where

she promoted the value of family involvement. In 2003, Patricia took on the role of Family Coordinator with Team Ireland for the World Summer Games. She has also held the role of Regional Chairperson with Special Olympics Munster and was Head of Delegation for the Munster team for the 2006 Special Olympics Ireland Games. The welfare and development of the athlete has always been Patricia's primary concern and she recognises the important role that Special Olympics plays in bringing about life changing experiences for both the athletes and the many other stakeholders involved with the programme.

Congratulations to Bernie and Patricia and thank you for your continued dedication to Special Olympics Ireland.

# CONNAUGHT

## Connaught athletes shine at the 2011 Special Olympics World Games

Congratulations to the 24 athletes and 13 coaches from Connaught who travelled as part of Team Ireland to the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens. All athletes performed exceptionally and represented their country with great pride. The dedicated coaches supported and motivated the athletes while in Greece and will continue this great work in their local clubs throughout the year.



Aquatics athlete Joseph Cullen from Strandhill, Co. Sligo with Teresa McCabe, Assistant Head of Delegation for Team Ireland, also from Sligo.

Mary McDermott from Swinford, Co. Mayo shows off her gold and silver medals won in the bocce competition.

Gary Cunningham from Oranmore, Co. Galway who was a member of the bronze medal winning basketball team.

## FAI After-School Soccer Programme goes to Kilnadeema

It was a terrific day for the Connaught Ladies Development Squad recently when Coach Eric Lavine from the FAI After Schools Soccer Programme took a skills session for the squad at Leitrim Kilnadeema Sports Ground in Loughrea. For a few hours the squad was put through a rigorous workout and came through it with flying colours despite the windy conditions. The squad is made up of ladies from various clubs around the Connaught Region who come together once a month for a training session. Eric was assisted on the day by Patric Evason, Terence Flynn (Loughrea Training Centre), Phillip O'Connor (Creagh, Ballinasloe) and, of course, Johanna Lahart, Regional Ladies Football Coordinator also from Creagh Training Centre.



The Connaught Ladies Development Squad are pictured above in Kilnadeema during their participation in a skills session as part of the After School Soccer Programme.



Mayo Minister meets Mayo volunteers in Greece!

Pictured above is Michael Ring, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport with volunteers Katie Duffy, Megan Cleary and Helen Shannon all from Kiltimagh and Patricia Gilmartin from Ballina.

## Connaught Volunteers for Athens

18 volunteers from the Connaught region travelled as part of the Irish volunteer team to the World Games. All volunteers took on their roles with great dedication and interest, still making time to support Team Ireland at every opportunity. Special Olympics Connaught takes this opportunity to thank the volunteers for their time and commitment to the programme.

## Roscommon Club

6 teams from the Roscommon Special Olympics club took part in the Connaught Special Olympics Postal Bowling competition this year. Five of the six teams qualified for the finals in Galway where one team won Gold, three teams won Silver and one team won Bronze.

During the year, the Club travelled to Longford Special Olympics Bowling Club to take part in an Inter-Club event and returned the invite to Longford at a later date. Two great nights of bowling took place, in a fun-filled setting, and the two clubs are already making plans to meet again next season.

Michael O'Connor, of "Ros Bowl", once again held a bowling night in memory of Joanne O'Connor and donated the proceeds to Roscommon Special Olympic Club. The club members would like to thank Michael and his family for their generosity and support throughout the year.



On the final night before the summer break, a club tournament was held with five teams taking part. Medals were awarded to the teams that were 1st, 2nd and 3rd. A plaque was awarded to Francie Brennan (pictured) who was the highest individual scorer on the night. Thank you to Michael and Oliver Hanley who sponsored the medals for the tournament.



# LEINSTER

## Equestrian



Special Olympics Leinster held 3 Equestrian Events during the month of April in Castle Hill Equestrian Centre on 4th April, in Baltinglass Equestrian Centre on 6th April and in Stradbally on 14th April.

Over 70 athletes from across the region participated in these events. The days were a huge success and we would like to thank all our volunteers, especially the venue liaisons and our volunteer event teams, without whom the events would not have been possible.

## Motor Activities (MATP) Coaches' Training Day

The third chapter of the Motor Activities Training Programme is now complete and ready to be incorporated into the training programme. A Motor Activities Training Development Day took place on Thursday 24th March at Newbridge Sports and Leisure Centre. The focus of the day was for coaches to see the new activities in action and what type of adaptations could be made to meet the need of their individual athletes. Examples of the equipment that could be used for these new activities can be seen in the photos below.



## Mini-Javelin introduced at Special Olympics Leinster Athletics

The annual North Leinster athletics event took place in Clairmont Stadium in Navan, Co. Meath on 7th May. The event was a major success with almost 100 athletes taking part in over 14 different disciplines. A new event, the Mini-Javelin, was introduced for the first time. This event is similar to the javelin event, except that the design of the mini-javelin is shorter and made from a hard plastic material. An introduction to this new event was given by Bart Rodgers from the Athletic Association of Ireland. Bart said of the mini-javelin discipline "It is great to see athletes be so enthused about such a new and different type of skill and hopefully it will be a major success in years to come"



## Special Olympics Leinster Sports Gear now available to buy

Check out our website at [www.specialolympics.ie/leinster](http://www.specialolympics.ie/leinster) to see the full range of clothing and prices.



## Basketball Development Event

Our basketball development event took place in Gormanstown College, Julianstown in Meath on 12th April. Our primary aim in hosting an event was to encourage athletes to progress from the Special Olympics skills level to participating and playing within a team.

This event was supported by a new Competition and Event Management Team which comprised of volunteers from Basketball Ireland and the Irish Air Corps. The success of the day was attributed to the efforts, planning and expertise of this team and the pageantry that the Air Corps brought to the event was quite special for our athletes. Some of the participants in the event are pictured above.

## North Leinster Family Day

The Knightsbrook Hotel in Trim, Co. Meath hosted the North Leinster Family Day on May 22nd. Over 70 family members attended and took part in some fun activities as well as having the opportunity to meet with each other and also gain information about Special Olympics.

Pat O' Keeffe, the newly elected Leinster Committee Family Representative, spoke on his involvement in Special Olympics to date and his commitment to the development of the family programme. The draft Strategy 2012-2015 was presented to the group, as well as sports related information about inter-club events and the Selection and Divisioning process. Thanks to Cadbury's Spots and Stripes who provided a range of activities including sack races, hula hoop, bowling, welly throwing and giant jenga which brought out the competitive streak in many of the families! Thanks also to all involved in planning and organising the day.

## Special Olympics Leinster GOLF CLASSIC

**MONDAY 29th AUGUST 2011**

**Knightsbrook Hotel & Country Club  
Trim, Co. Meath**

**Team of 4 entry fee (including meal)  
€160 before 12 noon or €200 after 12 noon**

**For Tee Time Reservation, please call  
01 6296999**

# EASTERN

## 2010/11 – a season of Education and Development for Athletes and Coaches

As most of you probably know, the focus for the 2010/11 season in the Eastern Region was development and education. The purpose was to give coaches and athletes the chance to take a step back, look at how things are going, learn new skills, network and prepare for the start of the Advancement Cycle 2011/12.

A development event, coach workshop, come and try day or coaching course was held in most sports. Participation numbers of athletes and coaches was high in all events. Some examples of the events organised include an Artistic Gymnastics workshop, a category 3 Aquatics workshop, the launch of the first Bowling tournament, four athletics workshops and numerous coach workshops. The feedback from these events has been very positive and many coaches have seen changes or development in their athletes and have gained new ideas, tips and networks for themselves.

## St. Benildus' 8th Annual Integration Sport Day

Bright sunshine and good humour lit up the 8th Annual Integration Sport Day held in St. Benildus College, Kilmacud on April 10th. Organised jointly by St. Benildus College and the South Dublin Special Olympics Club since 2004, this sports event is a wonderful example of inclusion and great fun also. Over two hundred and twenty athletes and students played sport together and enjoyed each other's company.



The participants were drawn from St. Benildus College, St. Raphaela's Secondary School and 10 Special Olympics Clubs in the Eastern Region. Also present were guests from schools in Germany and Latvia to observe an inclusive activity event. The students and young adults took part in football and basketball leagues organised by teachers Ms. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Maxwell and Mr. Mac Eoin. Although the games were fast and furious in the unseasonable heat, they were played in a spirit of friendship and fun.

At the Awards Ceremony held afterwards on the Basketball Court, Ms. Sile Hassett, long-time Special Olympics volunteer and coach, spoke warmly of the young people and the wonderful spirit evident. "Events like these", she said, "can teach us other lessons about life and add a new dimension to our education". Much credit is due to the very many teachers, parents and friends who helped out on the day organising teams, refereeing matches, distributing refreshments or just supporting. Thanks were expressed to all the young people who turned up, all contributing to the success of the event. On a remarkable day in St. Benildus College, when the sun shone brightly, everybody was a winner.

Pictured above is St. Benildus College teacher Liam McLoughlin with athlete Aisling Beacom from Wicklow.

**5th Annual Coach Forum** took place on 28th May in the National College of Ireland. Forty coaches from the region attended the forum. Matt Williams was the guest speaker and those who were there would agree he was absolutely inspirational. The topics included a Regional Review, Advancement Cycle, Regional Events Format, New Entry Forms, Event Entry Process, Coaching for Competition, and Athletes training for specific events. We would encourage more coaches to attend next year's event to meet and share experiences with fellow coaches.

As the World Games ends one cycle, a new chapter opens for all athletes with the first step on the Advancement Cycle beginning in September. Please keep your eye on the website at

[www.specialolympics.ie/easternregion](http://www.specialolympics.ie/easternregion)

for upcoming events and volunteering opportunities.

## Fundraising Events Saturday Spin to Wicklow!

Join us for our inaugural Motorcycle Rideout / Car Spin from Garda HQ in Phoenix Park to Wicklow Gaol on Saturday 13th August.



Itinerary for the day is as follows –

1. Meet at Garda HQ in Phoenix Park at 9.30am for a 10am start
2. Garda escort through city (exact route to be finalised)
3. Arrive at Wicklow Gaol in Wicklow Town at 12noon
4. Meet with some local Special Olympics athletes,
5. Tour of Wicklow Gaol for all participants
6. BBQ in Gaol courtyard

All we ask is that each rider / driver raises a minimum of €50 in sponsorship or €80 for two people.

This promises to be a fantastic day and we would love all bike and motoring enthusiasts to join us!



Pictured is Timothy Morahan from Rathmines, Dublin, running the last leg of the 4x100m relay at the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens. The team came in 2nd to win Silver medals in a time of 1m 17.79s. Congratulations to all our Eastern athletes who did us proud in Athens.



## UCD Football Club supporting the Eastern Region

Special Olympics Ireland Eastern Region is University College Dublin AFC's chosen charity for 2011. Team Ireland were celebrated at the UCD Bowl in May as they prepared to head off to Athens to compete in the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games.

Furthermore, a Womens Football League day, which took place on April 10th, was a fabulous day for football and a little something extra for the 5 womens teams. After playing two league matches, the women were joined by UCD FC Manager, Martin Russell, and other UCD players in a training session for coaches and athletes. The aim was to work on some technical aspects of their game and to give coaches some new tips on how to improve the players' skills. The ladies and their coaches really enjoyed the day. A huge thanks goes to Martin, the team and particularly Philip Bourke (Promotions Officer with UCD FC).

Dundrum Special Olympics Club and Stillorgan Eagles Special Olympics Club will also be special guests at the UCD Bowl Stadium throughout the season as well as enjoying the benefits of being season ticket holders with UCD FC!



*Pictured above are athletes from Walkinstown Association (stripes) and Cabinteely Special Olympics Club (white strip) who were presented to the crowd at Airtricity League of Ireland match between UCD and Shamrock Rovers*

## SPORTS UPDATE

### Alpine Skiing

Six athletes and three coaches travelled from Kilternan Karvers to Austria on the 26th January for a European Ski Event led by Head of Delegation, Tony McGuinness. The athletes returned home to a hero's welcome in Dublin Airport on Sunday 30th January with four gold medals, three silver medals and one bronze medal along with four 4th place ribbons. The Regional Alpine Ski event took place on 16th April. Thirty athletes took to the slopes for a fantastic day of competition. The Special Olympics Ireland Alpine Skiing event will take place in 2012 in Kilternan.

### New Special Olympics Clubs!

Special Olympics Eastern Region is in the process of setting up a new community based athletics club in Celbridge and aquatics club in Maynooth. If you are an athlete or volunteer who would like to get involved with either of these new and exciting ventures, or would simply like to find out more, please contact Susan O'Sullivan, Regional Development Officer, on 01-8691619 or [susan.osullivan@specialolympics.ie](mailto:susan.osullivan@specialolympics.ie)

### Welcome Avondale All Stars Special Olympics club!

Special Olympics Eastern Region would like to say a big WELCOME to the new Special Olympics Bocce club in Rathdrum, Avondale All Stars! If you would like to find out how you can get involved with this club as an athlete or a volunteer, please contact Brendan (Membership Officer) on 086-4066599 or alternatively you can email [avondaleallstarsoc@gmail.com](mailto:avondaleallstarsoc@gmail.com)

## SO Unlimited

SO Unlimited is a radio show on Dublin City 103.2 FM which is totally dedicated to Special Olympics Ireland.

The show covers events, important announcements, workshops, training sessions and fun days out, as well as interviewing athletes, volunteers, fundraisers and Special Olympics staff members to stay up-to-date with what is going on in the programme.

Topics also include training tips, marathon and running advice, nutrition information, athlete stories and facts about the different areas and programmes within Special Olympics Ireland, while also looking to the world of Special Olympics abroad for news and event information.

If you would like to contact them about an idea for the show or an event or news you wish to promote or have covered, they are always delighted to hear from you. Please email [sounlimited@dubincityfm.ie](mailto:sounlimited@dubincityfm.ie) and they will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thanks to the SO Unlimited team for their continued support - Executive Producer: Robbie Daly, Producer: Rebecca McAdam, Reporter: Michelle Lynch, Reporter: Danielle Holmes, Sound: John O'Donnell



*Pictured are ALPs athlete Fiona Byrne, Eastern Region ALPs Officer, Laura Beausang, and ALPs athlete Nicole Redmond with Producer Rebecca McAdam and reporter Michelle Lynch at a recent visit to the radio station.*

# Special Events around the country



Freezin' For A Reason



45 brave volunteers embarked on a marathon fundraiser in aid of Special Olympics Ulster in March. They plunged into a pool of freezing water every hour on the hour for 24 hours! The event was organised by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Law Enforcement Torch Run Committee in order to raise awareness and funds for Special Olympics.

Pictured on the left are (top), Tim Craig from the PSNI, organiser of the event, and (middle and bottom) Assistant Chief Constable Duncan McCausland plunging to support Special Olympics Ulster.

Photo Credit: [www.sportnips.co.uk](http://www.sportnips.co.uk).

## Special Olympics athletes open new Boots store in Castlebar

Photographed cutting the ribbon at the new Boots store in the Harlequin Centre, Castlebar are Debbie Smith, Managing Director, Boots Ireland, Special Olympics athletes Paul Kavanagh and Deirdre Garvin and Caroline McCaffrey, Store Manager. Paul and Deirdre are members of Special Olympics Team Ireland for the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens.

Photo Credit: Keith Heneghan / Phocus



## International Dance Festival in Galway

The 2nd International Dance Festival was hosted on May 14th in Galway in aid of Special Olympics Connaught. The event was organised by members of staff from NUI Galway and Sisters of La Retraite.

Dancers from around the world, wearing traditional costumes, represented their countries performing traditional dances. Mexico, Argentina, Philippines, Brazil, Russia, France, Bangladesh, Cuba, Peru, India and Ireland, amongst others, were represented at the event.

Special Olympics Connaught athletes, including some members of Team Ireland, commenced the show with a Parade of Athletes.





# COLLECTION DAY 2011



As you know Special Olympics Ireland's annual collection day took place on Friday 15th April. This is the biggest annual fundraising event in aid of Special Olympics and is of significant importance to us as an organisation. We are delighted that over €600,000 has been lodged to date which is a fantastic achievement in the current economic climate.

From an operational perspective, this year's Collection Day was our most successful to date with more volunteers than ever getting involved - over 3,000 in total. The awareness level on the day was fantastic with so many people commenting on the fact that they heard us on the radio, read about it in the paper or saw it on Facebook. For the first time ever Special Olympics Ireland became a trending topic on twitter due to the volume of tweets about the Collection Day.

An increased number of clubs, volunteers, family members, supporters and athletes lent their support and many people gave us feedback on the fact that the volunteers were so friendly and knowledgeable on Special Olympics.

On Collection Day this year there was entertainment in 9 cities and towns which helped raise the profile of the day and put Special Olympics very much back in the minds of the general public. It also created awareness that there was an amazing team of athletes going to represent Special Olympics and their country on an international stage at the World Games in Athens.

Thank you to everyone who assisted us either by collecting on the day, driving around collecting the money, counting money, arranging entertainment or indeed performing on the day and also thank you to every single person who donated to us on the day.

Please check out just some of the pictures from the Collection Day on our facebook page, where you can also leave a message of congratulations for our athletes who travelled to Athens for the World Summer Games

<http://www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsIreland>

A sincere thank you from everyone at Special Olympics Ireland!

## A marathon effort for Special Olympics!

Spin 103.8 DJ Brian Maher undertook an incredible journey in April to raise funds for Special Olympics Ireland. "Challenge 126" saw Brian run a mile for each Special Olympics athlete on Team Ireland for the 2011 Special Olympic World Summer Games.

Commencing in Limerick on Monday 11th April, Brian ran 5 marathons on 5 consecutive days, arriving into Dublin on Collection Day, Friday 15th April.

Brian is pictured on the right presenting a cheque for €10,000 to Special Olympics Ireland CEO, Matt English, at the end of the run. The fundraising continued and to date Brian has raised almost €15,000 for Special Olympics.

Huge thanks to Brian, Spin 103.8, sponsors Spar and Lifestyle Sports and the support team for ensuring the success of Challenge 126.



# MUNSTER

## Johnson & Johnson announce Association for 2011

Following the success of the ongoing association with Special Olympics Munster, which has been running for the past six years, Johnson & Johnson announced the programme of events for the 2011 Special Achievers Club at a reception held in their Vistakon facility in the National Technological Park in Limerick on Wednesday 13th April 2011.

Limerick City Mayor, Cllr. Maria Byrne, who officially launched the 2011 Association, congratulated the Special Achievers Club volunteers and the J&J family of companies on their fantastic efforts in support of Special Olympics and wished them well with their programme for the coming year. Other personalities in attendance included Brid Richardson, Limerick Rose 2010, Tony Buckley and Damien Varley, from Munster Rugby, and Conor O'Mahony, All-Ireland Winning Tipperary Hurler 2010.

The Special Achievers Club involves volunteers from five J&J companies in Munster - Cordis in Cashel, DePuy Ireland, Janssen Pharmaceutical and Janssen Biologics (Ireland) in Cork and Vistakon Ireland in Limerick.



The Club was formed in 2005 to ensure that the spirit of the Special Olympics World Games, held here in 2003, was kept alive and this year will see over 400 volunteers organising and running six events in sports such as Gymnastics, Basketball, Bocce, Football, Athletics and Swimming for nearly 1000 athletes.

Representing the J&J family of companies; Barry O'Sullivan thanked the Special Achievers Club volunteers for their commitment and congratulated the athletes on their determination and undoubted ability to excel. He said. "We are in awe of the commitment and resolve of these athletes. They are an example to us all. We are really proud to be associated with this unique and enjoyable initiative and we know it will be a rewarding experience for all those involved."

## Regional Artistic Gymnastics



The Regional Artistic Gymnastics event took place on Sunday 10th April in Colaiste Mhuire, Crosshaven, Co. Cork. We had a Special Olympics club visit the event for the day from Wexford, which added to the athlete numbers. The event team from Depuy Johnson and Johnson delivered high quality support for the event and congratulations to our first time competition manager, Mary O'Donovan, and her judges for a wonderful day

The photograph above shows athlete Conrad McCullough, from St. Clare's in Ennis, participating in the event.

## J&J Cordis Staff get the Bocce Bug!



The Volunteers from Cordis in Cashel, one of our Johnson and Johnson group companies, recently set up a bocce court in their canteen at work. Initially the plan was to ensure that all the volunteers working at the Munster Bocce event knew the rules of the game, however it soon developed into a hotly contested staff league being played at every break time throughout the shifts. It's now 24 hour Bocce in Cordis!

The final of the Cordis league was played during the lunch break at the Special Olympics Munster bocce event in May.

Well done to all the volunteers in Cordis!

## Basketball Cup Competition

The basketball Cup competition was held in the University of Limerick Arena and was a great success. Ten teams competed on the day from all over Munster. The event was supported by Vistakon Limerick.

The volunteers made the day very pleasant for everyone involved. Well done to the volunteers, all the athletes and their coaches.

### Winners of Male divisions

Division 1 Waterford Sharks  
Division 2 Waterford Tigers  
Division 3 Ennis Magic

### Winners of Ladies divisions

Division 1 Carriglea  
Division 2 Waterford Ladies  
Division 3 Lisnagry Ladies



## Garda Mountain Climb for Bruff All-Stars Special Olympics Club



Retired and serving members of an Garda Síochána from the Bruff Garda District completed the Mangerton Mountain Climb raising much needed funds to support the athletes of Bruff All-Stars Special Olympics Club.

The Club held a 'Thank You' reception in the Hospital Family Resource Centre, where athlete Brendan Cronin and volunteer coach John Aylmer presented Superintendent Tom Lundon with a plaque in recognition of the contribution and commitment of the Gardaí in Bruff. Athlete Emma Brett made a speech on behalf of the Club while other athletes presented the guards with 'beanie' hats bearing the Mangerton Climb logo. Garda Annette Courtney was given a Munster calendar for her help in organising the event.

Bruff All-Stars would like to thank everyone for their support during the past twelve months and to the Hospital Resource Centre, John the Baptist Community School and St. Joseph's Foundation for providing ongoing social and training facilities.

Bruff All Stars Special Olympics Club has 18 athletes training all year round, competing in athletics and bocce, and supported by 10 volunteer coaches and family members.

Pictured above are Superintendent Tom Lundon Bruff Garda Station, athlete Brendan Cronin, and Volunteer John Alymer.

## Regional Table Tennis

The Regional table tennis event took place in Cope Foundation's beautiful John Bermingham Centre in Cork. 70 athletes competed in the event. Well done to our newest sponsor company Assurant, who provided the volunteers for the event, and the competition organisers Phyllis Naughton, Rory O'Connor and Terrence McSweeney.

Event Manager Karena Devane from Assurant the sponsor company is pictured below presenting medals at the event.



## Special Olympics Munster Welcomes Finisk River Riders Special Olympics Club

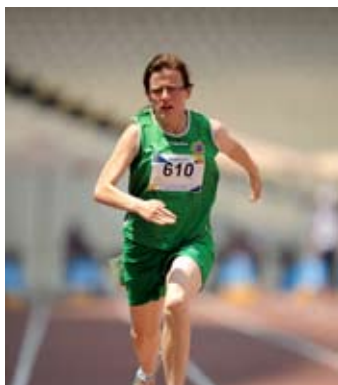
Special Olympics Munster is delighted to welcome Finisk River Riders Special Olympics Club. Finisk River Riders is an equestrian club based in West Waterford.

The club has 15 athletes who train on Tuesdays and Saturdays outside Dungarvan. For further information or to contact the club, please contact the Club Secretary, Therese White on 087-9348879. New athletes are always welcome to join.

Finisk River Riders Special Olympics Club have a very dedicated group of enthusiastic volunteers and SO Munster would like to acknowledge all their hard work in setting up the club. We wish them every success within the Special Olympics Programme.

## Munster Athletes in Action at the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games

Congratulations to all of the Munster athletes who participated in this year's World Summer Games. Here are just some of our athletes as photographed by Special Olympics Ireland's official photographer, Ray McManus from Sportsfile, during the Games.



Rachel Ryan from the Ormond Special Olympics Club, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary on her way to winning a bronze medal in the 100m.



Footballers Colm Brennan from Kilbarry, Waterford and Michael Neville from Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare.



Lisa Maher from Waterfall, Cork, shows off her two bronze medals that she won in the bocce competition.



Gary Fleming from Monkstown, Co. Cork with his caddy Donal Dedy from Buree, Co. Limerick.

# ULSTER

## Events Round-Up

The completion of four events in postal bowling, bocce, motor activities and alpine skiing kept our volunteer event organisers very busy over the past few months. These were very exciting events as some were new in the Region.

### Postal Bowling League

Brunswick Super Bowl in Derry played host to the Final day of Special Olympics Ulster Postal Bowling League on Friday 25th February. The league, sponsored by local company James Doherty Meats, saw two hundred athletes across Ulster competing for a place in the Finals day. Over one hundred and fifty athletes, coaches and volunteers converged on Derry for this exciting first-time venture.

### Alpine Skiing



Special Olympics Ulster hosted its first Alpine Skiing Event on 7th April at Silverwood Golf and Ski Centre, Lurgan. Seventeen athletes competed in the Slalom and Giant Slalom at Novice and Intermediate Levels. The event was a great success with coaches, athletes, volunteers and family members all enjoying the sunshine and great skiing on display.

*Cyril Walker, from Eagers Special Olympics Club is pictured at the Alpine Skiing Event. Photo credit: www.sportnypics.co.uk*



### Motor Activities

Special Olympics Ulster hosted its second-ever Motor Activities event in Melvin Hall, Strabane on 3rd March. Over twenty athletes from across Donegal and Cavan took part in a variety of events including Wheelchair Push, Short Bowling and the Bean Bag Lift. Darragh McNeeley from Scoil Aodh Rua is pictured above participating in the event.

### Bocce

On Thursday 24th March, Omagh Leisure Centre hosted a highly competitive Bocce Event. Forty five athletes from Tyrone, Donegal and Cavan competed, displaying great talent and ability.

Thank you to all the event teams, volunteers, venues, sponsors, schools, coaches and athletes who helped make each one of these events a special occasion.

## Victoria Square's 'Charity of the Year'

Special Olympics Ulster has been named Victoria Square's 'Charity of the Year'. Victoria Square is Belfast most prestige shopping centre and home to over 50 stores including House of Fraser, Cruise, Reiss, H&M and Top Shop.

Sally Smyth, Deputy Centre Manager at Victoria Square said: "We are delighted to be able to support a charity that makes such a positive impact on the lives of thousands of local athletes. We look forward to supporting Special Olympics Ulster and helping them in their future fundraising initiatives which will allow them to continue their great work in communities across Northern Ireland."

Ronan McCay, Regional Fundraising Coordinator for Special Olympics Ulster said: "We are delighted to have been selected as Victoria Square's Charity of the Year and look forward to working with them to raise vital funds to support the work of Special Olympics in Ulster. Special Olympics are an inspirational sporting organisation which demonstrates the transformational power of sport. We rely on the generous support of volunteers and partners like Victoria Square to keep our programme of sports training and competition going and are delighted to have been selected as their charity partner".



*Salto Special Olympics Club athlete Una McGarry is pictured above with Sally Smyth, Deputy Centre Manager, Victoria Square.*



*Left: Collection Day 2011 - an employee of PWC collecting outside Victoria Square.*

*Photo credit: sportnypics.co.uk*





## Welcome to our new clubs

### Skiability Special Olympics Club

This new skiing Club is based at Silverwood Ski Centre in Craigavon and offers athletes training in skiing on Monday evenings. Please contact Margaret Connolly (Club Secretary) on 077 07265774 if you are interested in joining the club as an athlete or getting involved as a volunteer.

### Roe Valley Special Olympics Club

A new Special Olympics Club has been established in Limavady offering athletes from the area training in athletics. The Club meet every Wednesday night at the Roe Valley Leisure Centre in Limavady. Anyone interested in getting involved with this new club as an athlete or volunteer should contact Helen O'Hara (Club Secretary) on 077 45678687.

### Club Development

There are some exciting developments taking place in Ulster with the development of a number of new Special Olympics Clubs. There is a new football Club being developed which will be based at Playball in Stormont Estate, Belfast. There is also development work being carried out in order to establish a new Special Olympics club in the Armagh area. The sport and venue for this club are yet to be decided but it will be a great boost to the athletes in the area and to the local community.

Anyone interested in getting involved in any of these new clubs as an athlete or volunteer should contact Christine on 028 90239023 or [christine.carson@specialolympics.ie](mailto:christine.carson@specialolympics.ie)

## New Ulster Regional Committee Elected

Fifty delegates attended the Ulster Annual Regional Meeting on Wednesday 13th April 2011 in the Strule Arts Centre, Omagh. The evening included a talk on the Athlete Leadership Programme by athlete Nicola McIntyre and a DVD presentation by staff on the Region's achievements in 2010 and a look to 2011 and the future.

The formalities of the evening ended with a presentation to the outgoing committee members by Regional Director, Shaun Cassidy and outgoing chairperson, Mick Quinlivan. The new committee members are as follows.

Regional Chair	- John McKernan
Secretary	- Angela McGee
Treasurer	- Fiona Donaghy
Sports officer	- Roisin Henry
Volunteer Officer	- Donna Semple
Events Officer	- Karl Redmond
PRO	- Roy McCune
Athlete Representative	- Nicola McIntyre
Ulster West Representative	- Bill McIntyre

We would like to wish the new committee the best of luck and we look forward to working with them over the next year.

## Newry City Special Olympics squad show their leadership



Newry City Special Olympics Club (pictured above) have had a busy few months in competition and training. Recently crowned the Irish Football Association Belfast Regional League Winners for Group 1 and Group 2, the club members have also been completing their Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership.

Sports Leaders UK qualifications are recognised on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and are designed to promote leadership skills and qualities in young people. Funded by Southern Investing for Health Partnership, this Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership will enable members of the club to assist in coaching sports and activity sessions in local schools and community groups. Esther King, of Newry City Special Olympics Club, said "this course has been great fun and the squad members have grown in confidence as we have progressed. Athletes have improved their communication skills while others are better equipped at overcoming challenges. We have noticed that all of the group are more comfortable in expressing their views".

Course Tutor, Ryan McConville, stated of the club that "Football training and Leadership skills complement each other as witnessed throughout Newry City's league performances recently and added to a successful, holistic approach to sports development within Newry City FC". He added, "The tremendous work done by the coaches, Esther King, Jim Fox and Jonathan Carroll and the skills that the squad members have learned and demonstrated is producing a formidable club".



Family members at the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens showing their support for Joyce Haughian and Ciaran Mallon from City Strikers Special Olympics Club, Newry.

# SPORTS ROUND-UP

## National Men's and Women's Football Cup May 2011



On May 7th 2011, Special Olympics Ireland held the men's and women's National Football Cup in St. Joseph's Boy's Football Club in Sallynoggin, Co. Dublin. This is an annual event, run as part of European Football Week. The concept of European Football Week is to have one week each year where everyone in the European football community commits to doing something to expand opportunities in their game for players with intellectual disabilities.

The event provided many exciting games throughout the course of the day and it was a day to remember for all the athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators present at the event.

Nine teams participated in the women's 5 a-side cup which was played in a very fair and competitive manner with each player giving 100% for their team in every game. The women's cup final was contested between Newry City and North West Special Olympics Club in a very close and tight encounter. North West SO Club gave it their all but Newry City emerged victorious as Cup Winners. The Player of the Tournament award was presented to Newry City's Aoife Kearney. The Plate Final saw BOC South Tipperary beat Prosper Fingal in another extremely close final. Tipperary's Kelly Delaney won the Player of the Tournament award. The Ladies Division Three Final was won by Cabinteely United Warriors with Kerry Stars finishing runners up in a very good sporting affair. The Player of the Tournament award went to Margaret O'Donoghue.

Eight men's 11-a-side teams took part in the cup which proved very competitive. The cup and plate finals were two brilliant show case events for all the spectators. The cup final saw Cheeverstown defeat cup holders Donegal in a pulsating and intense final. The Player of the Tournament award for the cup was presented to Mark Duffy of Cheeverstown. The Plate Final saw Limerick Celtic emerge victorious over Stillorgan Rangers in another thrilling final. The Player of the Tournament award went to the very impressive Ciaran Chua of Stillorgan Rangers.

The event once again provided a fantastic day with all the athletes playing to the best of their abilities and providing some very exciting games. Ray Houghton, former International player, was a guest on the day and was very impressed with the talent on display in both the mens and women's cup.

The event also received great support from the FAI and St. Joseph's boys FC. Their support was greatly appreciated by all organisers and athletes. Thank you to all coaches, athletes and volunteers for making the event such a fantastic day.

## GAA social Initiative and Special Olympics Ireland

The GAA Social Initiative arose as a result of President Mary McAleese and her husband, Dr. Martin McAleese, noticing an absence of older men in attendance at official functions during their many visits to local communities over the years. They came to the conclusion that many men, because of the changing patterns of life, were falling through cracks in the system and either risking or already experiencing isolation and loneliness. Subsequently, the 'GAA Social Initiative', was launched in 2009.

The Initiative uses the GAA Club network as a vehicle to engage older men who are not currently participating in local community life. It involves the clubs organising activities and events aimed specifically at older men. Inevitably, many of the activities are GAA-oriented; however, the 'Initiative' is not exclusive to GAA members - all older men are made welcome. Some of the activities organised to date include social gatherings and outings, attending matches, reunions and health-related activities such as walking groups and music sessions/dancing.

Due to the growing needs of our athlete population, Special Olympics Ireland has been in contact with the GAA in relation to this initiative. There are currently over 90 GAA clubs taking part in the initiative and they would welcome any of our athletes who would like to take part in activities in their local GAA club. For more information on how to get involved in this initiative please go to their website [www.gaa.ie/clubzone/gaa-social-initiative/](http://www.gaa.ie/clubzone/gaa-social-initiative/) or contact Sean Kilbride at [sean.kilbride@gaa.ie](mailto:sean.kilbride@gaa.ie).

## Healthy Athlete Screening at the 2011 National Football Cup

At this year's National Football Cup, for the first time, two disciplines in the Healthy Athlete programme - Special Smiles and Health Promotion - were offered. At the Special Smiles discipline volunteer dentists screened athlete's oral health and provided education on oral hygiene. Colgate and Pamex kindly supplied the oral health giveaways. As part of the Health Promotion programme, screenings on athletes' Body Mass Index, waist circumference and diet were carried out. Information on 'healthy eating' was also distributed. Fyffes and Dunnes Stores provided fruit for athletes to snack on, which went down a treat! 60 athletes were screened altogether with positive results from the Special Smiles team in terms of the oral hygiene of participants. However, the Health Promotion volunteers found it noteworthy that there are many athletes with body mass indices in the overweight and obese categories.

For more information on the Healthy Athlete Programme contact: Carol Farrell Health Promotion Project Officer on +353-1-8691669.





# VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

## Munster

**Brothers of Charity South Tipperary, Cashel** - Looking for volunteers in the evening time for South Tipperary Clubs in the sports of bocce, athletics and basketball. All other sports train during the working day. Contact Louise O'Toole 087 6593130.

**Ennis Eagles Special Olympics Club, Ennis** - Looking for general volunteers to help out at their bowling club on a weekly basis. Contact Clodagh Power 086 8680228

**Inniscarra Blues Bocce Club, Co. Cork** - Looking for any volunteers in the Cork area to help out with bocce. The club meets on Tuesdays. Contact Anne Highland 087 7606332.

## Eastern Region

**Arklow Vikings** - Need general volunteers for basketball and table tennis. The club also needs general volunteers to support their Motor Activities Programme, a non-competitive training programme. They meet on Friday evenings at Arklow Leisure Centre.

**Stillorgan Rangers** - Football Club at Alexander College, Milltown, Dublin 6 require general volunteers for Monday evenings.

**Stillorgan/Mount Merrion** - Bowling Club based at Stillorgan Leisure Centre need general volunteers for Tuesday evenings.

**Blanch Spinners** - Table Tennis club that meets in St. Brigid's Community Club in Blanchardstown need a coach for Monday evenings.

**South Dublin Special Olympics Club** - Require a Rhythmic Gymnastics coach. They meet in Cheeverstown House on Saturday mornings.

**Sports Club 15** - Need a Basketball coach for Monday evenings in Ongar Community Centre.

**Tallaght Tornados** - Require general volunteers for bowling on Sunday mornings at Leisureplex Tallaght

**NAC Sharks** - This swimming club meets on Wednesday evenings at the National Aquatic Centre and need some general volunteers.

If you are interested in any of the above please contact the Eastern Region office on +353 1 8691626

## Connaught

**Splashin' Penguins** - This club meets on Monday evenings in Sligo Regional Sports Centre and they require volunteers who are comfortable in water to assist athletes in the shallow end of the pool. The club also needs volunteers to assist with teaching swimming to athletes who can already swim to improve their strokes. This second group of volunteers need to hold qualified Assistant or Full Teachers swimming qualifications. Please contact Pat O'Malley on +353 71 9161841 or +353 86 8543046 if you think you can help.



**Finding it difficult to recruit volunteers for your club? Want to help win €30,000 for Special Olympics Ireland? Here's how you can "Play your Part"!**

www.irelandinvolved.ie is a new website launched by Volunteer Ireland\* for all those interested in volunteering in Ireland. It is the first nationwide searchable database for volunteers in Ireland. Special Olympics Ireland can list our volunteer opportunities free of charge on it. We are supporting Ireland Involved and by registering our vacancies and advertising our volunteer opportunities we can nominate Special Olympics Ireland to win €30,000 this Summer.

So what are you waiting for? Go to [www.irelandinvolved.ie](http://www.irelandinvolved.ie), register your club, promote your vacancies and nominate Special Olympics Ireland to be in with a chance to win. Don't forget to notify your regional office of your vacancies too. Potential volunteers can search and apply for opportunities advertised in their own locality but please note that the usual registration process still applies, i.e. the volunteer will need to complete a Special Olympics Ireland volunteer application form and undergo a background check.

*\*Volunteer Centres Ireland and Volunteering Ireland have now merged to create Volunteer Ireland, a single national volunteering organisation for Ireland.*

## Ulster

**Administration** - the Special Olympics Ulster volunteer support centre is looking for new members for Thursday day or evening. No previous administration skills required as training will be provided. For further information please contact Emma at the Regional Office on 0044 28 9089 2993.

**Lisburn 2gether** - is a swimming club seeking new volunteers to assist at their training sessions. They meet on Tuesday evenings at the Leisureplex in Lisburn. For further information contact Fiona Deans on 078 34627597 or e-mail [flo\\_deans@hotmail.com](mailto:flo_deans@hotmail.com)

**Omagh and District Club** is seeking volunteers to assist with their Golf and Swimming training. Volunteers are not required to have any coaching qualifications, however it would be beneficial. For further information contact Rosemary McAleer on [rmaleer@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rmaleer@hotmail.co.uk)

**Ripples Club** - is seeking volunteers for their swimming sessions. Volunteers are needed to assist in the pool and would therefore need to be a competent swimmer. The club is based in Portadown and Craigavon areas. For further information please contact Jackie McConville on [jackiemc22@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jackiemc22@hotmail.co.uk)

## Volunteer Training Update

Have you registered as a volunteer in the last year? Have you completed your Volunteer Induction Training? If not, even if you have taken up a role, please complete the course online as soon as possible. Log on to <http://moodle.specialolympics.ie/moodle> and click on "create new account".

Any questions, please contact Anne Hughes at [anne.hughes@specialolympics.ie](mailto:anne.hughes@specialolympics.ie) or +353 1 8691620.



## Northern Bank announce sponsorship of the Special Olympics Ulster Athlete Leadership Programme

Special Olympics Ulster is celebrating the launch of a new partnership with Northern Bank. They will team up to support the Athlete Leadership Programme (ALPs), a programme which offers current and former Special Olympics athletes opportunities for personal development.

The launch took place on Wednesday 22nd of June at Northern Bank, Donegall Square, Belfast. It was attended by members of staff from the Northern Bank, members of the Special Olympics Ulster Regional Committee and members from the All Starts, Salto, Strabane and District, Lisburn 2Gether and Pin Pals Special Olympics Clubs.

Shaun Cassidy, Regional Director, Special Olympics Ulster: *"We are delighted to team up with Northern Bank for the ALPs programme. This exciting partnership will enable our athletes to develop their skills outside the sporting setting and produce a cohort of new Special Olympics leaders. We know that personal development goes well beyond sporting achievement and we are delighted that Northern Bank will be helping our athletes go that extra mile. Northern Bank's support is crucial to the ongoing development of the Athlete Leadership Programme and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for partnering with us."*

## ALPs Connaught Healthy Living Workshop



The ALPs Connaught team met on Saturday 7th May in Mountbellew with the focus of this session on Health Promotion. Nichola Sweeney, on work placement from IT Sligo, gave a presentation on healthy eating and general health. Athletes and mentors learned of the benefits of healthy eating, proper rest and exercise. Maria Quigley,

Mountbellew Tigers assisted Nichola with the presentation. Also included on the day was the committee meeting, where a lively discussion took place regarding the upcoming Regional ALPs elections, which will take place in September.

Nicola McIntyre, who is taking part in the programme and working towards her silver award, delivered a presentation on the Athlete Leadership Programme at the launch said: "I am really enjoying taking part in the ALPs programme. It has given me the chance to take on new challenges, gain new skills and make lots of new friends. I am working towards my silver award at the moment and with more hard work I hope to achieve the gold award soon!"



Pictured above is Maria Donnelly from Northern Bank with Special Olympics athlete, Adam Morrisson, from Salto Special Olympics Club.

## Mentors needed in the Eastern Region

We currently have a number of Athletes who each require a mentor. Find out more about the ALPs programme or contact Neil O'Sullivan on +353 1 8691609.



## New Facebook page for Women in Sport

Women in Sport is an Irish Sports Council initiative to encourage and increase the participation of women in sport and physical activity. A new Facebook page has been set up with the aim of providing opportunities to promote events, submit photographs and engage with other groups and individuals involved in the provision of sporting and physical activities for women.

The Irish Sports Council will moderate the page to ensure that all content and posts on the page are appropriate and relevant.

The page can be found at

**[www.facebook.com/womeninsport](http://www.facebook.com/womeninsport)**



# CLUB CORNER

With many clubs taking a break over the summer, we thank all volunteers who helped out in their local clubs during the year. We also want to thank the sports teams, coaches and regional committees who ensured the success of events throughout the country.

Remember to keep an eye on our website for dates and venues of forthcoming events or contact your Regional office for more information.

## A Little Goes a Long Way

On 2nd May, North Down Special Olympics club hosted an inter-club athletics event in North Down Sportsplex. Events included Standing Long Jump, Shot Putt and Mini-Javelin. Track events included 50m walk/run, 100m, 200m, 400m and 800m.

The Mayor of North Down was on hand to make the presentation to each athlete. To finish off a great day a barbecue was lit! This gave all the athletes a chance to refuel after their hard work at the track and a chance to socialise with their new friends.

Inter-club events are great not only for the athletes, but for the coaches and volunteers. It is a great way of developing links and encouraging good communication between clubs and for individuals to pick up new training techniques. These events are not difficult to organise and when you see how much they benefit the athletes you know it is all worth it. We would strongly encourage more clubs to get involved with organising inter-club events. We at North Down agree that a little hard work goes a long way with the outcome being extremely positive for all!

## Connaught Inter-Club events

Special Olympics Clubs in Connaught have been busy over the past few months hosting inter-club events. These events offer extra training and competition for athletes in the clubs. In April, Roscommon Special Olympics Club and Longford Special Olympics Club each organised an inter-club bowling event between each club. Bowlers got to travel to a new bowling alley and play team games at each event, with the results carrying over from the first event to the second. There was plenty of pizza and refreshments provided to all who attended. Coaches from both clubs have committed to organise these inter-club events on an annual basis going forward.

The basketball clubs in the region decided to run with tournaments this year. The first of these events was hosted by the Sligo All-Stars Special Olympics Basketball Club last November. There were no mixed gender teams permitted on the day which resulted in some clubs having to combine players to make up a team on the day, due to either a lack of players in a club for a specific gender or some players unable to travel on the day. National Basketball Coordinator, Antoinette Campbell, attended this event and was delighted to see the efforts been made by all clubs to promote single gender teams going forward. Each club has hosted an inter-club event since.



## Inter-Club Athletics in Munster

On Sunday 24th March 2011, the third Annual Inter-Club Athletics Event took place in Ennis. The event involved the athletes from Bruff All-Stars, Doneraile Rockets and Shannon Flyers.

The purpose of the Inter-Club Event was to give athletes the opportunity to compete in their events and have their times and distances measured and recorded under competition conditions.

38 athletes along with club volunteers and family members made their way to the Clare County Council sport facilities at Lees Road, Ennis for what was an enjoyable day. Thankfully the weather was kind to us.

Volunteers from the clubs met and decided on the venue and date. All other business was completed by phone calls and e-mails. Volunteers from each of the clubs made themselves available for roles on the day, e.g. timekeeping, registration, staging and recording results.

A programme of events was put in place and each athlete was divisioned according to times and distances supplied by their coaches.

All athletes competed in each of their events twice and some recorded personal bests. We also had the use of a starting pistol which was a bonus as athletes only hear a pistol at competition. Each athlete also wore an identification badge with their name, their club and their events on it.

The day began at 12 noon with training for the timekeepers and all track events were completed by the lunchbreak. The field events took place after lunch and all were finished and on their way home at 4pm.

Pauline Nugent, athletics co-ordinator for Special Olympics Munster, gave us huge support on the day with technical issues, training the timekeepers and running a shot putt clinic for the athletes and coaches. Pauline also organised a turbojavelin clinic for the athletes, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all who participated.

Our thanks is extended to the clubs and especially to Cathy Colgan, Frank Fitzgerald, Eileen Carroll, Margaret Moloney and Pauline Nugent. Our thanks also goes to the Special Olympics Munster Office who provided support and extra equipment, to the Order of Malta who provided First Aid cover and to Clare County Council for the use of the facility.





**Special Olympics**  
WORLD SUMMER GAMES  
ATHENS 2011

**The Irish Volunteers**

