



25 Years of smiles.



Message from Paul Donovan, CEO eircom Group



eircom has been involved with Special Olympics now for 25 years and we are immensely proud of this longstanding **partnership. It's been an absolute privilege** to watch Special Olympics develop into the proud and strong organisation it is today. Our relationship with Special Olympics has been a great source of inspiration to many of our staff throughout the years. It has been truly amazing and encouraging to see so many of our staff getting involved each year in Special Olympics programmes, both as volunteers and fundraisers. It is an organisation very close to the hearts of all the staff at eircom.

The fact that the 2003 World Summer Games took place here in Ireland is testament to the enormous achievements of the Special Olympics movement in Ireland. It was a very special and momentous time for the country which has given many people long-lasting memories.

Special Olympics Ireland is a hugely important organisation which makes a significant difference to the lives of so many people across the country. The 2010 Special Olympics Ireland games is a great opportunity to showcase everything that Special Olympics represents – sportsmanship, skill, determination, bravery and most importantly – fun!

Congratulations to all the athletes and their families, the volunteers and all the staff at Special Olympics. We are delighted to have carried the torch with you over the last quarter of a century and we look forward to four days of fantastic sport in Limerick.

Best wishes to everyone, and enjoy the games!

Paul Donovan
CEO, eircom



Message from Mary Davis Chairperson, Special Olympics Ireland

Hello everyone,

I know this is a very busy time for all involved in Special Olympics Ireland with the regular activities in centres, schools and clubs, all the local and regional competitions, the fundraising activities and the huge preparations for the Ireland Games in Limerick. I want to thank all of you who are working so hard as volunteers, coaches, families and staff. Your effort is helping athletes to participate more regularly in their chosen activities and to provide greater quality in the programmes we offer but it is also helping to bring more people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to take part and experience the joy and excitement of Special Olympics.

The recent collection day showed the massive support and generosity that exists throughout the Island for the programme but it also showed the difference that Special Olympics makes in the daily lives of the athletes and their families. I was collecting in Grafton Street and a number of people approached me to say how much they admired Special Olympics for the work it was doing and the positive influence it was for their families and friends.

You should all be proud of your own individual contribution and the difference you are making to so many people.

We are excited for the Games in Limerick and recognise the incredible work that is going on by staff and volunteers and the support from the entire County of Limerick is both encouraging and overwhelming.

I can guarantee you though that the memory will be a never-to-be forgotten one. Because we will all make discoveries as a result of our involvement in the Games. We are going to discover that we are working with athletes whose determination is total, whose concentration could give the rest of us lessons, whose pride in their achievement and in their counties is exactly the same as when, for example, the Munster Rugby team lines out at Thomond Park.

Best wishes

Mary Davis

Chairperson, Special Olympics Ireland



2010 Games Opening Ceremony – your chance to be there.


The Opening Ceremony of the 2010 Games is to be held in the magnificent Thomond Park Stadium in Limerick on the night of Wednesday 9th June. This promises to be a night to remember for our athletes, their families and all in attendance. The Ceremony will comprise of a number of elements culminating in the lighting of the Flame of Hope and the official opening of the Games. A host of performers will take to the stage and pitch, with Limerick band The Cranberries topping the bill.

The Families and Affiliated Groups of athletes participating in the games will receive an allocation of complimentary tickets. If you would like to be there to share in the moment, tickets are available to purchase from www.ticketmaster.ie or by phone on 0818-719300 as well as usual agents nationwide. Tickets will range in price from **€10 - €20 for seating/standing areas** – group discounts available (booking charge applies). Tickets will also be available from the Thomond Park Stadium ticket office from 10-4, Monday to Friday or via their website on www.thomondpark.ie.




The Pressure is Off!

The excitement is definitely mounting in Limerick in the build-up to the Games and once again Munster is answering the call in tremendous style. The Games Organising Committee and Venue Management Teams are working extremely hard to ensure everything is ready for June 9th. All 3,500 volunteers have received their assignments (picture on left shows some of our volunteers & staff celebrating the completion of the assignment letters). Special Olympics Ireland would like to welcome all our new volunteers to the team. We hope and trust you will have the week of your lives volunteering for the Games. We look forward to sharing in the joy and excitement that is integral to a Special Olympics event. Thank you all for your support.



To show their support for the 2010 Games Hula Hoops have launched an in-store promotion in over 600 retail outlets throughout Ireland to celebrate the athletes participating in the Games. In addition Hula Hoops will supply 26,000 packets of Hula Hoops for the lunch packs during the Games. Keep an eye out for your local athletes and club members featuring on promotional materials in a store near you!!



Leinster News



Motor Activities Training Programme Development Day

A Motor Activities Training Development Day was held in Kerdifstown house, Johnstown, Co. Kildare recently. The aim of the day was to give athletes and coaches the opportunity to participate and practice in four new aspects of the programme namely; *kicking and striking* and *agility and balance*. Coaches were given an opportunity to offer feedback regarding these new elements of the programme and of course our athletes enjoyed the new challenges these new activities had to offer.



Football Development Day

The fantastic Leah Victoria Park, home of Tullamore town football club was the venue for a football development day which took place on Tuesday the 20th of April. Over 80 athletes, whose ability ranged from skills participants to team players, were lucky enough to avail of the chance to be coached by FAI staff. The day offered athletes a fantastic opportunity to increase their skill level by participating in enjoyable, fun exercises and drills that allowed every athlete develop their skills. We would like to offer a huge thanks to all the FAI Development Officers that helped on the day. Their skill and proficiency in coaching was outstanding, and no doubt the ideas and tips they offered will stand to our athletes and coaches in future training sessions and competitions.



"Kilkenny Kats Take over the City Hall"



Kilkenny City Mayor Malcolm Noonan invited the club to have their launch party in the City Hall. After some lovely speeches from the Mayor, Councillors and our Chair Sarah Butler, the Mayor let all the athletes sit in his chair and even let them wear the chain for a photos. (He was lucky to get it back!)

The club (KKSO) was formed in early February of this year by parents and volunteers to cater for 6 to 16 year olds with an intellectual disability. There are currently over 22 athletes and volunteers. KKSO club wants to give every young person in Kilkenny city and county with an intellectual disability an opportunity to access a year round Special Olympics programme in their own community. KKSO club also seeks to provide opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities to develop skills, reach their potential, make new friends and be a real part of their community. At the moment the club is concentrating on basic motor skills of the athletes by means of circuit training, but hopes to offer a wider variety of sports such as swimming, soccer and badminton as the club develops.

CLONAKILTY SPECIAL OLYMPICS AGM

The AGM of Clonakilty Special Olympics Club was held recently, with a good attendance present. Manager and Chairperson, Rose Dempsey welcomed and thanked everyone who made the club so successful over the last year. Top of the list were the athletes who make being in the club so enjoyable and make all club members so proud of them. She also thanked the volunteers and committee members who are the backbone of the club as well as all in the community who fundraise and donate money to the club.

Looking forward, club athletes will be participating in a Code of Ethics course, and new tracksuits are on order for the basketball players. Secretary Mary McCarthy gave a detailed month by month account of activities over the last year. Her 10 minute report showed how vibrant and busy the club has been. PRO Cionnaith Ó Súilleabháin thanked the local print, broadcasting and internet media who have always been very positive in carrying news from the club that he submits. The election of officers took place.

Anyone wishing to find out more information about Clonakilty Special Olympics Club should contact Manager Rose Dempsey on 086-8844087.

Cionnaith Ó Súilleabháin, PRO.

Enjoy an evening in the Quad

The annual "Summer's Evening on the Quad" concert will take place in University College Cork on Friday the 11th June 2010 at 8.00pm. This years concert will feature Brian Kennedy, Fiona Murphy and the band of An Garda Síochana.

Special Olympics Munster has been named as one of the joint beneficiaries from this Charity event so if you fancy a great night out while also helping to support Special Olympics why not think about buying a ticket or maybe 2.

Tickets are €40 and can be purchased from the Special Olympics Munster Regional office at 021 - 497 7192



Once again the Order of Malta Ambulance Service attended the Training Day organised by several clubs in the mid-west region. Thankfully their services were not needed on the day but the athletes always like to meet the personnel who give their time voluntarily whenever the need arises.

Bruff All-Stars, Doneraile Rockets and Shannon Flyers got together for a second year to organise a successful day for their athletics athletes. These training days provide a more accurate evaluation of times in a competitive environment.

Many thanks to our volunteers, Ennis Athletics Track and the Order of Malta, who made the day such a success for our athletes.



New Club

There is now an 11 a side football club in Cork City. Cork City Special Olympics Football Club has been in the pipelines since October 2009. Through much work and dedication from volunteers and the committee the club was set up in March 2010.

This is a great opportunity for many existing athletes and new athletes to participate at this level in the national league. Welcome to the Special Olympics Munster programme and we wish you all the best.

Johnson & Johnson Special Achievers Club 2010 Programme Launch

On Wednesday March 24th Johnson & Johnson Cashel Campus, in partnership with Special Olympics Ireland, hosted a reception to launch this **year's programme of events**, which will see over 1200 athletes and 500 employees, families and friends participating in various sporting events organised by volunteers from J&J companies.

On the night music was provided by Mary-Kate Geehan, followed by speeches from Councillor Eddie Bennett Mayor of Cashel, Gearoid McDermott General Manager of Alza Ireland Ltd and Patricia Hickey Chairperson of Special Olympics Munster. MC on the night was Karina Holohan from Tipperary Special Olympics and Catherine McCarthy from Brothers of Charity South Tipperary spoke of the importance of this programme of games to her.

Ger Deegan Regional Director of Special Olympics Munster made a special presentation of a book of **snapshots 'Changing Lives Together'** to each of the Irish J&J company directors to commemorate five years of **J&J Special Achievers Club's involvement** with Special Olympics Munster and also to Jim Murphy who is the founder of the Special Achievers Club.

A mini-production of 'Grease' by Special Athletes from Waterford was the highlight of the event, with food provided for all 100-odd guests by Sodexo, the catering company for J&J Cashel Campus.

Employees of J&J Ireland set up the Special Achievers Club (SAC) in 2003. The SAC supports the running of provincial sports events organised by Special Olympics Ireland. Our support includes Event Management, Staging for Games, Health & Safety, Security, Catering, Awards & Communication. This has been a tremendous success and the volunteer list has grown significantly over the years as this is an event that is thoroughly rewarding to all participants.

Connaught News

Youth Club breaks Football Guinness World Record in aid of Special Olympics Connaught



Club Next Youth Club with Special Olympics athletes from Claremorris, Swinford and Kiltimagh Special Olympics Clubs

Club Next Youth Club from Mayo recently became the third organisation in the country to break a Guinness World Record in 2010. They broke the record for the longest played 5-a-side soccer match. The match was played for a record total of 33 hours at the Barnacarroll Sports Centre in Claremorris. Public Relations Officer for the club Sharon Lynskey said the existing record they had to beat was 31 hours, set by a group in Liverpool. 16 players and subs remained at the sports centre for the total 33 hours and there were always five players on the field. The event was filmed, independent witnesses and people were in attendance as part of the criteria. Parents and friends provided much needed refreshment for the players throughout the weekend. Special Olympics Connaught would like to thank all associated with Club Next Youth Club for all their fundraising which looks set to reach €5,000 and offer congratulations to all involved in making a new Guinness World Record.

Galway Affiliated Groups Fundraising Walk

The walk took place on 28th March @12pm in the grounds of Brothers of Charity, Kilcornan, Clarinbridge. There was a great turn out of about 120 athletes, coaches, volunteers, family members and friends from different clubs of Galway city & county enjoyed by all in perfect weather. This was organised by the Galway Network to help clubs raise funds for athletes travelling to Ireland Games. Each club fundraised for their club and were very pleased with the money received. We want to thank all involved in the organisation of event and Brothers of Charity for use of grounds and facilities. Well done to all and thanks to all who helped in any way.

Monivea Charity Ride



Athletes and Coaches from St Joseph's Special School and the Galway Equestrian Special Olympics Club attended the Monivea Charity Ride in April. Money raised on the day was given to both groups to assist with ongoing Special Olympics activities.

We've Moved!

Call in and see us if you are in the neighbourhood.

Hi Everyone.

We have moved to our new offices. Special Olympics Connaught's new address is The Gateway Building, Northwest Business Park, Collooney, Co Sligo. Our new office number is 071 911 8320 and email address is still connaught@specialolympics.ie



Skylark and Kilcornan athletes and coaches visited new offices at Special Olympics Connaught

Roscommon Special Olympics Club



Swimmers from the Roscommon Special Olympics Club attended the Disability Sport Northern Ireland Swimming Championships recently. Athletes competed in various events and brought home plenty of awards from the day. Head Coach Maire Allen was delighted with the athletes who competed and made improvements on previous results.

Calendar of Sports Events

Wed-19th May 2010	Bocce League Finals Day	11.00am - 4.00pm	Toghermore
Thurs- 20th May 2010	Golf Area 2	11.00am - 2.00pm	Tuam Golf Club
Wed- 26th May 2010	Golf Area 1	11.00am - 2.00pm	Carrick On Shannon

Eastern News

Women's Football 5-A-SIDE Finals Day Sunday 11 April 2010

The Eastern region Women's football league has recently finished its first full year of existence. The league began in October 2009 with the finals day taking place at Rathcoole FC. On the finals day the league went down to the wire with *Prosper Fingal* and *St John of God Menni Services* reaching the final. This proved to be a close affair and Menni turned around a 5-3 deficit to force penalties. Valerie Doyle was the hero of the day to secure the win for Menni Services after a well taken penalty.

Bernard Clarke and Ger O'Brien from League of Ireland team Sporting Fingal took time out of their busy schedules to come and see the girls play and present the awards afterwards. They compared the final to the Liverpool/ AC Milan Champion Final!!

Men's Football 5-A-SIDE Finals Day 18 April 2010

Throughout the year 18 teams have been playing in the **Eastern Region Men's 5-a-side Football Leagues**. On Sunday 18 April, a warm day with a fresh breeze, the final fixtures of these leagues were played in the DCU Sports Grounds. We expected a day of high drama and we were not disappointed.

4 Leagues, 21 Games, and 184 Goals who needs the Premiership?

Division 4 was the setting for some of the most dramatic scenes of the day. Prosper Fingal needed to win all of their games to force a play off with Sunbeam House and **that's exactly what they did. They managed to** secure the title with a hard fought 2-0 win over Sunbeam who deserve enormous credit for their consistency **throughout the year. Sports Club 15's Paul Mullen was** the winner of the Division 4 Player of the Year Award.

To wrap up a magnificent day awards were presented by **Sahra O'Neill, Director of Marketing, Communications** and Fundraising for Special Olympics Ireland and Conan Byrne of League of Ireland team Sporting Fingal. Finally, many thanks to all the dedicated volunteers and coaches who gave their time so generously week in week out at training and blitz days over the last 7 months.



Paul Cullen Sports Club 15



Sunbeam House



Prosper Fingal



Fingal All Stars Athletes



Gavan O'Dwyer is an athlete with both Bray Lakers Special Olympics Club and Festina Lente Special Olympics Club. In the past he has taken part in Equestrian and Football events but he seems to have found his true passion in Golf.

On Tuesday 2 March Gavan participated in the Regional Golf competition in *Charlesland Golf Club* and on the par 5 9th Hole, shot an **Eagle (that's a 3 for those unacquainted with golfing terminology!!)**. Stepping up to the tee, facing the dog leg Par 5 fairway the talented golfer bravely took on the water and left himself with a shot he was able to take on with a pitching wedge. With this shot he left himself a 6 foot putt for eagle and he calmly rolled the ball in to complete a remarkable hole.

Gavan will be representing the Eastern Region in the Special Olympics Ireland Games in Limerick which take place from the 9th-13th of June and as with all of our athletes we wish him the best of luck.

Ulster News

Clones Erne East Special Olympics

It has been a busy year so far with the weekly activities continuing to take momentum. We recently welcomed a number of new enthusiastic volunteers from Lurgan College. We hope they enjoy the spirit of being part of such a worthwhile organisation. Four of our coaches recently attended the Introduction to Bocce Training Course on 27th March in Loughside Recreation Centre, Belfast. Seeing our coaches develop their skills and pass them on to our athletes is very exciting for the club. The club is hoping that it will now be able to offer our athletes the opportunity to train and compete in bocce in the near future. We would like to thank all those who organised and facilitate the training session.

We are looking forward to the months to come and the prospect of our club growing from strength to strength.



Regional Sports Co-ordinators appointed

Regional Sports Coordinators are key volunteers that work closely with the regional staff to coordinate and promote the development of areas such as coaching and competition in a specific sport in their respective region. Special Olympics Ulster is delighted to announce the appointment of the following sports co-ordinators:

ATHLETICS

Katrina McGivern
Newtownabbey SOC

BOCCE

Ann Wright
Salisbury SOC

FOOTBALL

Declan O'Neill
Foyle SOC

GYMNASTICS

Hazel Coates
SALTO SOC

BASKETBALL

Bill McIntyre
Strabane & District SOC

EQUESTRIAN

Fran Warden
Ards SOC

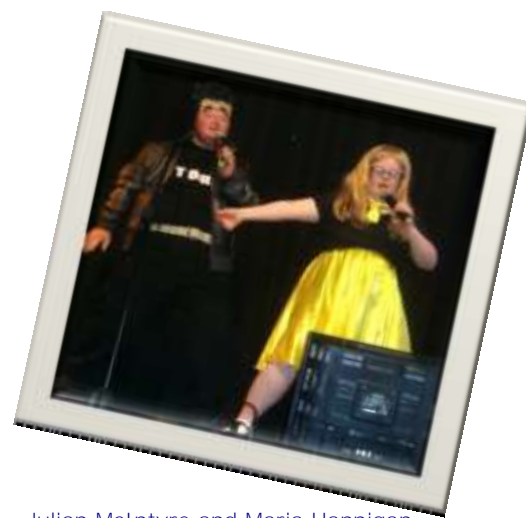
GOLF

Philip Patterson
Birdies SOC

KAYAKING

Gerry McAnuff
Boots 'n Paddles SOC

If you are interested in contacting any of these co-ordinator or receiving additional information please contact Paddy at the Regional Office.



Julian McIntyre and Maria Hannigan

'Stars In Their Eyes' For Special Olympics

Athletes and volunteers from North West and Strabane and District Special Olympics **Club's put their best foot forward** for Special Olympics at their recent fundraising event. Athletes and volunteers in both clubs took part in a **'Stars in Their Eyes' fundraising event in St Patrick's Hall, Strabane on 14th April**. Volunteer Tommy McCay put on his best Tom Jones to open the evening with volunteer Margaret Dunne lighting up the stage as Dolly Parton. However the night was stolen by the athletes; with the coveted First Place taken by Julian McIntyre & Maria Hannigan for their rendition of Summer Loving from Grease.

The Fundraiser was also attended by Micky Joe Harte and All-Ireland Talent Contest Winner Chloe Coyle who both agreed that the athletes were the stars of the show.

The show is due to roll on to the Mount Errigal Hotel, Letterkenny on 19th May and the Clubs would like to invite anyone who is interested in attending to contact either the North West or Strabane & District Clubs.

North West volunteer Margaret Crerand said the event **was an "absolute blast and the next one should be as good"**.

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David Willis Bocce Player of the Year presented by Dennis Doran and Jim Kirkwood

Lisburn Together Acknowledges Successes

Lisburn Together recently celebrated the success of their athletes with an awards ceremony in Lagan Valley Island Centre. The event was hosted by local comedian Nuala McKeever with awards presented by Jim Kirkwood, Linfield Footballer Michael Gault, Lisburn Cllr David Archer and Special Olympics Ulster Regional Director Shaun Cassidy.

Special Olympics European Summer Games Warsaw 2010

Team Ireland will participate in the European Summer Games in Warsaw, Poland from the 18th to 24th September 2010. A total of 36 athletes will represent Ireland in the following 5 sports:

athletics (10 athletes); badminton (4 athletes); bowling (6 athletes); women's 7 a side football (panel of 10 athletes); and table tennis (6 athletes).

The management team travelling with Team Ireland consists of 16 volunteer members. Sonia Farrell, the Head of Delegation (HOD) will lead this team which includes a number of Head coaches and coaches in addition to a sports coordinator, a medical coordinator and a family coordinator.

The Team Ireland training sessions are currently integrated with the regional sports specific training sessions to reduce the impact on all involved. The first European Games Team Ireland training day will take place on the 26th June 2010.

We wish Team Ireland the best of luck with all their training and preparation for the Games and look forward to hearing more about their progress in the near future.



Health in Focus

Focus on Sun Safety

Yes I know it sounds optimistic! However did you realise that skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland? According to the Irish Cancer Society this is very true. The good news is that you can greatly reduce your risk just by following a few sun safety tips. What to do to protect ourselves from the sun:

Wear Sunscreen

- Sunscreen should have a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15
- **It should be 'broad spectrum'**
- Apply 20 minutes before going outside
- Reapply every 2 hours and after swimming

Choose the right Clothing

- 1.-Wear a hat- 2. Wear a t-shirt - 3.-Wear sunglasses 4.- Seek shade from 11am - 3pm

Remember we should wear sunscreen on all our exposed skin even when it is cloudy outside. The harmful UV rays of the sun can still work their way through the clouds.

For more information on how to be sun safe visit www.cancer.ie/sunsmart



Healthy Athlete Programme 2010

As we all know summer is fast approaching and with it brings the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games. The Games will play host to the Healthy Athlete Programme. This year the programme will offer the following:

1. Special Smiles – dentistry 2. Fit Feet – podiatry 3. Opening Eyes – optometry

Health Promotion

Athletes who participate in the Healthy Athlete programme will get the opportunity to meet with health professionals who will provide a health screening and education service. Within the Special Smiles Clinic the dental staff will screen athletes, make referrals where necessary and provide information on keeping your teeth healthy. Fit Feet will screen for gait problems etc and make referrals when necessary; athletes will also get advice on how to **care for their feet and how to identify foot problems.** At the Opening Eyes Clinic, **athletes' sight will be screened and where necessary athletes will be prescribed a complimentary pair of glasses which will be made up on site.** Finally athletes can pay a visit to the Health Promotion centre where they will find lots of practical advice on healthy eating, physical activity, heart health and much more. There will be lots of accessible health information available also.

This year family members may accompany athletes to the Healthy Athlete Programme as we are aware that coaches don't always have the time to ensure all athletes have the opportunity to attend. It takes just a few minutes to visit Healthy Athletes and don't forget this is free of charge for athletes. We would not be able to offer this service without the health professionals who have volunteered their time, so please make the best use of it and visit Healthy Athletes during the Games. We look forward to seeing you there.

Club Corner

Ballymena Special Olympics Bocce Inter Club Event



Hi, I help run the Special Olympic bocce club in Ballymena. Over the years we have asked other clubs down to play with us to offer our athletes more competitive opportunities. Some have taken us up on our offer and a lot of fun has been had. **It's great to see all the athletes on all teams getting on together.** A huge advantage of organising these sessions is that you can talk to other people in a relaxed way and learn from each other. It is good to learn how the other teams overcome their problems as you may be in the same situation one day.

The photo was taken when we invited Banbridge Special Olympics Club down to play against us. This was arranged after I got talking to one of the volunteers from Banbridge at a Regional Special Olympics competition.

There were no additional costs involved in organising this session. It was a great day and we are always willing to arrange similar opportunities again in the future. Andrea McCready, Chair of Ballymena Special Olympics Bocce Club.

Further information on organising Interclub events please see our new information leaflet, 'A Guide to Organising Interclub Events', which can be found on the Special Olympics website in the resources section.

LOCAL ATHLETES REACHED FOR THE STARS AND TOUCHED THEM ALL!!

Fingal All Stars Special Olympics Club celebrated the official launch of their Athletics club on Sunday 28th March. Athletes were delighted to demonstrate their skills to an audience of friends, family and special guests and wowed everyone with their abilities. An Cathaoirleach, (Balbriggan Town Council) Monica Harford, congratulated the athletes and praised the families and all the volunteers for their commitment and dedication and said she would follow the club's progress with interest as she believes Fingal All Stars will go from strength to strength. Athletes had a fantastic day celebrating their big event and especially enjoyed the giant inflatable obstacle course kindly donated by 'Adventure Bounce.ie' and goodies donated by SuperValu Balbriggan. If you are interested in joining the club please contact the club secretary, Sonya Sands on 086 8689250 or email fingalallstars@gmail.com. The Athletes train every Tuesday evening in Gormanstown College Sports Hall from 6pm to 7pm. There is no upper age limit for athletes.



Did you know??

All Community Clubs require a Club Constitution by Annual Affiliation 2010. It will be mandatory for all Community Clubs to have a constitution in place by the Annual Affiliation 2010. Clubs currently without a constitution will be sent a reminder regarding this.

This does not apply to Service, School & Centre based Affiliated Groups.

Volunteer Membership Cards

By now all fully registered volunteers assigned to your club who have submitted a photograph should have received their photographic membership cards. Volunteers should bring their membership card to all training sessions and events. If you have any volunteers who have not as yet received

a card, they may not have submitted a photograph, their registration may be incomplete or they may not be actively assigned on our database. You can check the status of volunteers by emailing volunteers@specialolympics.ie or phoning 0818 300053.

Another Season Coming to an End...

Yet another Special Olympics Sporting year is drawing to a close. There has been phenomenal work done throughout the organisation in Affiliated Groups all around the island. Now is a great time to think about how best to thank your volunteers for the incredible commitment that they have demonstrated this year. **This doesn't have to be at any expense** – it could be as simple as getting all the athletes to give the volunteers a round of applause at the last training session.

Preparing Your Athletes for Competition

The Limerick 2010 Ireland Games are nearly here but how do we ensure that our athletes are psychologically ready to achieve their best? Here are a few considerations adapted from the Special Olympics **International 'Preparing Athletes for Competition'** that may be useful in preparing athletes to achieve their best at the Games.

Identify Your Athletes Source of Motivation

Understand your athletes' source of motivation and why they participate in Special Olympics. E.g. does your athlete compete for the thrill of the sport OR does your athlete compete for the praise?
Choose and use rewards according to your athlete's motivation source.

Set Realistic, Yet Challenging Goals

- Athletes with intellectual disabilities may be more motivated by short-term than long-term goals. Goals are important as they help drive the action for the athlete in both training and competition.



Develop Sport Confidence

- Sport confidence is gained through experiencing success, time and time again, in the same or similar situation.
- Devise your coaching sessions around repetition in settings similar to the competitive environment in the run up to the Games.
- Developing sport confidence in athletes helps to make participation fun and is critical to the **athlete's motivation**.
- A considerable amount of anxiety is eliminated when athletes know what is expected of them. If an athlete is lacking confidence drop back into easier skills to increase the athletes confidence.

Attitude and Effort

- Place emphasis on the importance of improving a personal best and giving maximum effort at all times during training and competition.
- Reward the athletes when goals are achieved (verbal e.g. brilliant, or well done; nonverbal e.g. thumbs up or clapping; tangible e.g. pat on the back).
- Motivate and challenge the athlete through well-planned training sessions. Establish guidelines for acceptable behaviour and expectations by creating positive cues and reinforcements.

Anxiety and Stress Management

Anxiety and stress can be controlled through proper preparation. A winning attitude and confidence will equip an athlete with coping skills to handle his/her emotions when confronted with a stressful or anxious moment. Below are a few hints a well-prepared coach might consider to better prepare his athlete for competition.

- Repetition in a familiar environment can help alleviate a lot of stress when preparing the athlete for competition. Include mini meets in practice that simulate the competition.
- Provide athletes with additional competition opportunities at as many local-level meets as possible.
- Have athletes perform in front of spectators and peers.
- Teach your athletes visual imagery to help them practice the event in their mind before competition. Review the rules of competition with your athletes.



Winning and Losing

- Coaches and athletes must remind themselves that winning is measured by how well they apply all their effort and maintain self-control in pressure situations. An athlete is never a loser if he/she gives maximum effort.
- Well-prepared athletes will handle their performance and the performance of their competitors in a positive and sportsmanlike manner in **accordance to the Athlete's Code of Conduct** and the Official Sports Rules for your sport.
- **The athlete's effort, attitude and personal skills**

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BOCCE EQUIPMENT SALE

Following the Special Olympics Ireland Games in June, the Bocce sets which will be used for the Games will be available to purchase at a reduced **price of €40. This set will include 4 Green Balls, 4 Red Balls, a Pallina and a Carry case.**

If you are interested in purchasing one of these sets, please contact Elaine Twomey at 8691610. They will be sold on a first come, first serve basis and there are 10 sets available.

Arrangements for collection will be made directly from the Games.



Athlete Leadership Programme Update

ALPs News From All Regions

LEINSTER REGION



ALPS WORKSHOP MCMAHON CENTRE KILCULLEN

On Saturday morning March 20th we all went to the McMahon centre in Kilcullen for our first Alps workshop of 2010 and we had a great day. We learned all about sports divisioning in Special Olympics games and had some fun with pretend competitions afterwards. Anita O Connor from Carlow Alps groups then gave a photo presentation and after lunch we had fun with face painting. Mentors and athletes got their faces painted by each other and we had a great day.

By Barry Olwill



EASTERN REGION

ALPs Committee

The ALPs programme has been busy as ever since Christmas. We had our very last SOER ALPs Committee meeting in January which saw some ALPs athletes finishing 2 and 4 year terms of office on the committee. We would like to **thank Susan Murray, Aisling Beacom, Paula Carroll, Sile Maguire, Claire Byrne and Brendan O'Connor for their hard work over the past few years.**

We are delighted to welcome our new SOER ALPs Committee who met for their very first committee meeting on 22 April 2010 in Park House. The elections for this new committee were held in February and the following athletes were elected on the night;

Elected Area Reps to the Eastern Region ALPs Committee:

Area 1 – Caitriona Brady (Blue Dolphins) Area 2 – Claire Adams (Northside2gether)
Area 3 – Fiona Halpenny (Blanch Blitzers)

Remaining elected members to the Eastern Region ALPs Committee:

Area 1 – Charles Spencer (Stillorgan/Mt Merrion) & Paul Kennedy (Cheeverstown)
Area 2 – Suzanne Hyland & Lynn Conroy (both Northside2gether)
Area 3 – Alan McLoughlin & Julie Carroll (both Blanch Blitzers)

Congratulations to all elected members, also a special thanks to all the candidates who applied for a position, we hope you will put your name forward again in the near future!!

Athlete Sub Committee

Although some of the athletes maybe leaving the current ALPs Committee, they aren't getting away that easily! Susan, Aisling, Paula and Sile as well as other athletes have formed an athlete Sub Committee whose role is to spread the word of ALPs and to try and establish a communication channel between athletes on the ground and those that sit as representatives on committees.

ALPs athletes will be contacting all Affiliated Groups to arrange a visit from them in order to talk about ALPs in the near future. The ALPs athletes would appreciate the support of the Affiliated Groups with this project.

Code of Ethics to ALPs Athletes

As part of the programme An Information Training Course is planned for 8 May in Park House to ALPs athletes on the Athletes Code of Ethics and Good Practice. This course provides athletes with information on their role, responsibilities and rights as an Athlete. It will tell you about the behaviour expected of you as an Athlete and what you should do if you have a worry about the behaviour of anyone involved in Special Olympics Ireland.

Events to look out for in ALPs programme in the Eastern Region in 2010:

Cookery Workshop (September 2010)
3rd Annual ALPs Conference (November 2010)

Meet One Of Our Extraordinary Athletes

Jamie Murnane from Graiguecullen in Co. Carlow is very much looking forward to travelling to Limerick in June 2010 to participate in the Special Olympics Ireland Games which are due to take place there. Jamie, who is twelve years old, attends St. Lazerians School and he is also a member of Carlow Special Olympics Club. He first became involved with Special Olympics Ireland approximately three years ago **when his Mum's friend, who is involved with the Carlow Special Olympics Club, suggested that he come to the club to have a look. It didn't take long for Jamie to** know that this was something special which he definitely wanted to be involved with and so one or two visits to the club and a night out to the annual club barbeque later and Jamie was all signed up. Not only was Jamie signed up but so too were his Mum and Dad, who became involved as volunteers for Special Olympics.

Jamie says making lots of new friends and having the opportunity to take part in sports which he really enjoys are the best things about being involved with Special Olympics Ireland. Jamie has achieved lots of success on the sporting field to date. He has won gold, silver and bronze medals for bowling and looks forward to increasing his collection as he travels to Limerick in June for the 2010 Games. Jamie is very proud of the fact that he will be the only athlete representing Carlow Special Olympics Club in the 2010 Games.

Jamie found it difficult to define a particular special moment which he has enjoyed since becoming involved with Special Olympics Ireland. Instead he says **"Everything I do with Special Olympics Ireland is special and lots of fun because all the people involved in the club are my friends and they make it special for me"**.

The theme of Special Olympics Ireland is 'Changing Lives' and for Jamie this certainly rings true. Jamie says **"Before joining Special Olympics I did not have much, if any, involvement with other people with disabilities. I tried most mainstream sports but did not enjoy them as much as I do the Special Olympics sports"**. He also goes on to say **"I am now involved in sport with people of similar abilities, I have made really great friends that I enjoy being with and I go to fun places with my club so life is much happier and more fun"**.



Meet One Of Our Extraordinary Volunteers

Inspired by her son Brian, an athlete with an intellectual disability, Carmel Malone founded the Irishtown Special Olympics Athletics Club in 1989 with the help of her friend Bernie Griffin. Carmel has acted in a number of roles including Club Manager, Secretary, Treasurer, Athlete Protection Officer and Head Coach over the last 21 years.

Carmel was one of twelve Irish Sports volunteers who were honoured at a special ceremony – the 2009 National Awards to Volunteers in Irish Sport - in Farmleigh, Dublin, in February. **She was selected as "Adult Coach of the Year" by a Committee chaired by Olympic Gold Medal Winner, Dr Ronnie Delaney.** In the words of then Minister for Sport,

Martin Cullen, **the winners "represent a wide group of people who have given their time, not for recognition or for reward, but in a spirit of true generosity. Recognition today of their valuable contribution should also be associated with recognition of everybody who gives their time voluntarily to sport. I hope that the awards will also provide additional encouragement to other volunteers and reach out to inspire new volunteers for the future."**

In Carmel's own words, **"I never expected to win an award for what I do with the athletes, I love with we do with the athletes and that will never change"**. As for her involvement with Special Olympics as a volunteer, she says, **"it's been 21 amazing years and it's great to be able to give something back to the athletes. I hope the next generation have the commitment for the development of Special Olympics community clubs."**

Congratulations to Carmel from all in Special Olympics Ireland and thank you for your inspiring example.

Families, Athletes & Volunteers, if you would like to share your Special Olympics story with us, please email us at volunteers@specialolympics.ie as we would like to feature you in a future edition of Connect. We look forward to hearing from you.

Volunteer Vacancies

Get Involved - We Need Your Help

Club Opportunities –EASTERN

Blue Dolphins Special Olympics Club is looking for a qualified Athletics Coach to help train their athletes on Saturdays 2-4pm at Greystones Athletic Track. Contact Susan Smullen 087 7644065 or email susansmul-len1@gmail.com if you can help.

Knocklions Special Olympics Club is now set-up and training in Athletics on Thursday evenings from 6pm-7pm **in St. Colmcille's Community School, Scholarstown Road, Knocklyon, Dublin 16.** Volunteers who would like to get involved with this club, please contact Lisa (Secretary) on 086 3184402, or email her on oconnorlisa101@hotmail.com

New Club in Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow

Special Olympics Eastern Region is looking to set up a new Special Olympics club in Rathdrum. Any volunteers in the area who would like to get involved in this new and exciting venture, please contact Susan O'Sullivan on 01 8691619 or, alternatively, email her on su-

san.osullivan@specialolympics.ie to find out more

Flying Arrows Special Olympics Badminton Club

Our Club is 5 years old and is located at Terenure Badminton Centre on Whitehall Road. We meet every Friday from 6 to 7:30pm. We currently have 14 athletes and 4 active coaches (plus 2 absent for the next while). Our athletes range in age from 16 to 60. We are looking for volunteers to help with the coaching (no experience required). We will be running through to the end of June and then taking a summer break until the beginning of September. So if badminton is your love and you would like to get involved with our club, please contact **Rocky O'Halloran (Club Secretary)** on 087 2351064 to find out more

Ulster Vacancies

LISBURN volunteers needed. Lisburn 2gether SOC are looking for volunteers to assist at their weekly training activities in Bocce, Aquatics or Football. NO sport knowledge necessary, all volunteers welcome. If you are interesting in getting more information please contact Victoria at the Regional Office.

TENPIN BOWLING volunteers needed. Pin Pals SOC are looking for volunteers to assist at weekly training session in Odyssey Arena, Belfast on Wednesday evenings. NO sport knowledge necessary, all volunteers welcome. If you are interesting in getting more information please contact Victoria at the Regional Office.

SPORTS CO-ORDINATORS. The Region still holds vacancies in the following sports for volunteer co-ordinators Alpine Skiing, Aquatics, Badminton, Bowling, Motor Activities, and Table Tennis. Knowledge of the sport is essential. For additional information please contact Paddy at the Regional Office.

ADMINISTRATION. The Special Olympics Ulster volunteer Support Centre is looking for new members for its Thursday evening shift from 5pm-8pm. No previous administration skills required, training will be provided. For further information please contact Emma at the Regional Office.

ATHLETE RECRUITMENT

Knocklions Special Olympics Club is now set up and training in athletics on Thursday evenings from 6pm-7pm in **St. Colmcille's Community School, Scholarstown Road, Knocklyon, Dublin 16.**

If there are any athletes who would like to get involved with this club, please contact Lisa (Secretary) on 086 3184402, or alternatively you can email her on oconnorlisa101@hotmail.com

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2010 Collection Day Thank You! Thank You! Thank

Once again Special Olympics volunteers took to every road, street, shopping centre and train station around the country and made Special Olympics Ireland 3rd collection day a massive success.

To date €750,000 has been counted and lodged but there is still money coming in and we are very optimistic that we are going to reach our target of €1 million.

North and South, over 3000 people gave up their time to help us collect. Everyone at Special Olympics THANKS YOU, we couldn't have done this without you!

This year the sun shone from early morning which was a big improvement on last year's weather as so many of you know. Once again the general public showed their feelings of goodwill towards this fantastic organisation and gave generously.

Every collector we spoke to on the day said how much fun they were having and that everyone who donated was so friendly to them.

For those of you who took the day off or gave a couple of hours to collect at so many points around the country – we cannot thank you enough.

Thank you to all the transition students who collected on the day – your schools should be proud of your commitment and enthusiasm.

As always there are many stories of generosity – **one volunteer rang in with this story "A guy just gave me a shopping bag full of coins, his wife and he had been saving up coins for years. They couldn't decide on a charity, saw us out collecting and decided that we should receive this money—aren't people so thoughtful"**

There are lots of clips and pictures on Special Olympics facebook page so go on and have a look at what went on around the country at facebook.com/specialolympicsireland



Out & About



The Lucky Ducks—Team Leinster's aquatics athletes had the fantastic opportunity to meet President Mary McAleese at a recent training session. The President was opening a crèche in Portarlington Leisure and Community Centre, home of our very own Portarlington Friend's Special Olympics Club and also the venue of our Team Leinster swimming training. Although she was on a strict schedule she stopped by to wish our athletes the best of luck during Ireland Games.



Olympics athletes Sean Keogh and Shane Kelliher officially open the DocMorris Pharmacy on William Street in Limerick. DocMorris are proud supporters of the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games.

FAMILIES PROGRAMME

The Eastern Regional families' team of volunteers held two families areas at recent area events:

Regional Aquatics Event on 27 March 2010 in the ALSAA pool. Men's Football Finals Day in DCU on Sun 18 April.

The Family Areas provided light refreshments, information on the family programme, as well as some DVDs on Special Olympics on show. If you like to be part of this family team please contact the region on: (01) 8691626 or by email erfamilies@specialolympics.ie

Events to look out for in the Families programme in the Eastern Region in 2010:
Family Halloween Social Event (October 2010)



Killruddery Midsummer's Eve 10km Run in aid of Special Olympics Ireland

Special Olympics Ireland has been chosen as Alive Outside's charity of the year for 2010. Alive Outside is a new sports events company developed to satisfy the growing appetite for sports in Ireland. As well as organising top quality running events, Alive Outside will be hosting soccer leagues, triathlons, swimming workshops and lots of other events throughout the year all over the country. They are also the main sponsors of the Irish Tag Rugby Association's nationwide adult leagues.

Alive Outside's main objective is to attract new people to the different sports and create a relaxed, friendly atmosphere that encourages participation over winning. Check out www.aliveoutside.ie or call 01 2147355 for more details.

One of the many fundraising sports events being organised over the coming months is the Killruddery Midsummer's Eve 10km Run. Proceeds from the Run will be donated to Special Olympics Ireland so why not walk, jog or walk around Killruddery House & Garden on Monday 21st June 2010, taking in the spectacular views, sampling the amazing Midsummer's atmosphere. Register now on

Special Olympics Goes Techtastic



Official Launch of the New Photographic Volunteer Membership Cards



Pictured here is Alan O'Malley, Managing Director of ADC Plasticard Ltd. presenting our CEO Matt English with his membership card, alongside Stephanie Mc Dermott, Volunteer Manager. ADC Plasticard Ltd. is producing all the volunteer membership cards for Special Olympics Ireland and has part-sponsored this initiative.

Thank you to Alan and all at ADC Plasticard Ltd. for your support.



Are you on Facebook?

With over 10,000 fans online our Facebook page really has taken off. Its the quickest and easiest way to keep up to date with all things Special Olympics. We regularly add photographs from around the country so keep an eye out for people you know. It is also a great way for you to contact us directly or advertise an event.

You can find us at www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsIreland and keep up to-date on all the latest news, pictures and videos from Special Olympics Ireland.



Volunteers: Please complete your online Induction Training.

Help us to reach 1,000 volunteers inducted online by 1st June 2010

Have you recently joined Special Olympics as a volunteer or missed the Volunteer Induction session in your region? Did you know that you can now access your Volunteer Induction training from the comfort of your couch! Take the online training at <https://moodle.specialolympics.ie/moodle>.

Note: Please go to the "Is this your First time here" page even if you have registered as a volunteer online as it is a separate website.



Tacutext – making communication easier

Are you using TACUTEXT yet? It is a simple, free, mobile phone messaging service that offers a cost-effective way for volunteer teams to communicate with each other... It's safe, reliable and convenient for all... If your volunteer role in Special Olympics requires you to communicate to the rest of the team on a regular basis be it as a volunteer in a club, on a committee, member of an events team etc. we can now make your life easier and cheaper thanks to TACUTEXT.

All you need to do is email: tacutext@specialolympics
Content of email: Name of your group (e.g. 1234

Club) and your own mobile number;
estimated number of people in your group;
Your role in this group: e.g. club coach; secretary; volunteer coordinator for event etc.

You will then receive a reply email from Special Olympics with instructions on how to set up the group. Any text message you send thereafter to the group does not cost you anything and you only need to send one text to reach the entire group instead of many individual texts to every member of your group.



Puzzle Page



The Weather!!

WINDY

Balmy
Blue Sky
Breeze
Cloudy
Cold
Cool
Dry
Fine
Floods
Freezing
Frost
Gale
Hot
Ice
Lightening

Rain
Rainbow
Showers
Sleet
Snow
Storm
Sunny
Thunder
Warm
Wind



P E G O D H P K B L W W F T B
E V G R C X F S U U V U I C P
V K K F R A J I H G W Z L O M
W K A E U U Q J N O A K I U O
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A W O N S O U B T Y J O G P I
B V K T Z L A L O K O T C K M
P Y T Z S F T O V L Z B Y C L



Please fill in your name and daytime phone number:

Name _____ Phone Number _____

The winners from our February edition are: Suzanne Hyland and Monica Towey

Answers to the questions above plus your completed Word Search to be submitted with your name and address to:
Volunteer Department, Special Olympics Ireland, 4th Floor, Park House, North Circular Road, Dublin 7

Contact Details Volunteer Support Centres

<p>Munster Support Centre Email: munvol@specialolympics.ie</p> <p>Tel: 021 4977192 Contact: Vivien Buckley</p>	<p>Leinster Support Centre Email: leinster@specialolympics.ie</p> <p>Tel: 01- 629 6999 Contact: Aine O'Driscoll</p>	<p>Ulster Support Centre: Email: ulstervol@specialolympics.ie</p> <p>Tel: 028 9089 2999 Contact: Emma McMenamin</p>
<p>Connaught Support Centre Email: connaughtvol@specialolympics.ie</p> <p>Tel: 071-9118320 Contact: Michael Gilroy</p>	<p>Eastern Support Centre Email: easternvolunteers@specialolympics.ie</p> <p>Tel: 01 - 869 1626¹⁸ Contact: Joan Shields</p>	<p>Central Office Support Centre Email: volunteers@specialolympics.ie</p> <p>Tel: 0818 3000 53 (ROI) +353 818 300053 (NI)</p>

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Year	Milestone
1985	Telecom Eireann become official sponsor of Special Olympics Ireland
1986	Special Olympics Ireland Games held in Belfast. Telecom Eireann major sponsor of this event – branding at venues and on volunteer uniforms
1987	Team Ireland, sponsored by Telecom Eireann, participate at Special Olympics World Summer Games, South Bend, Indiana
1988	Special Olympics celebrates 10 years in Ireland 1 st Special Olympics Clubs formed
1989	Mary Davis appointed Regional Director of Special Olympics Ireland. First Irish Torch Run in association with An Garda Síochána - raised £97,000. This money provided grants for setting up the first Special Olympics clubs
1990	Coach and Volunteer Training Schools begin in St Patrick's Teacher Training College. Second Torch Run , sponsored by Telecom Eireann raising £111,000. Team Ireland, sponsored by Telecom Eireann participate at European Games Strathclyde, Scotland
1991	Team Ireland sponsored by Telecom Eireann attend Special Olympics World Summer Games, Minneapolis
1995	First Regional Offices set up – Munster and then Connaught
1996	3 rd Torch Run sponsored by Eircell, historically involved both Polices forces, Garda Síochána & RUC, the torch crossing the border at Killeen Cross and being handed from one police force to the other made international news headlines
1997	Special Olympics Ireland, Each One, Reach One Road Show, sponsored by eircom (athletes and their families are asked to introduce at least one new athlete to SO during this campaign). Team Ireland, sponsored by eircom, participate for the first time at Special Olympics World Winter Games in Toronto.
1999	Team Ireland sponsored by eircom participate in Special Olympics World Summer Games, North Carolina. 2003 World Games bid, led by Mary Davis, is successful
2001	Team Ireland sponsored by eircom participate in Special Olympics World Winter Games, Anchorage, Alaska
2003	Special Olympics World Summer Games, Dublin. Eircom designated sponsor of the Final Leg of the Law Enforcement Torch Run
2006	Special Olympics Ireland Games, Belfast. eircom official Sponsor of the Games eircom's partnership with Special Olympics Ireland listed as a leading example of best practice in CSR in Ireland
2007	Team Ireland sponsored by eircom participate in 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games, Shanghai, China. eircom's partnership with Special Olympics Ireland listed as a leading example of best practice in CSR in Ireland by Business in the Community Ireland
2008	30th Anniversary of Special Olympics Ireland. Events held in communities throughout Ireland. eircom branding and representation at each event. eircom's partnership with Special Olympics Ireland listed as a leading example of best practice in CSR in Ireland by Business in
2009	All island Fundraising campaign, sponsored by eircom. I.T., logistical and volunteer support provided by eircom. €2.2 million raised. Team Ireland, sponsored by eircom attend Special Olympics World Winter Games, Idaho.
2010	25th Anniversary of eircom sponsorship. All Ireland Collection Day – April 23 rd - opportunities for eircom staff to volunteer and participate. 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games, Limerick – eircom premier sponsors of Volunteer Programme. Opportunity for eircom staff to volunteer. Team Ireland sponsored by eircom to participate at 2010 Special Olympics European Summer Games taking place from September 18 -24 in Warsaw