

CONNECT



Donal Skehan & Gardaí sell Dolly's Donuts for Special Olympics! Full story page 13.



Celebrating Volunteers



WELCOME!

I hope that you had an enjoyable break over the summer months. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all back for the start of a new sports training and competition year. The year ahead will see the commencement of the new 4-year advancement cycle leading to the next World Summer Games in 2015 which will be held in Los Angeles in the United States. A comprehensive calendar of events has been developed in all of the regions over the last few months and the year ahead is going to be a busy one as athletes take their first steps on the advancement ladder. A busy year means lots of opportunities for you to volunteer – that is if you're not already engaged in our year-round programme – so look up our website and see when might suit you to get involved in one of the competition events or any of the other activities on offer.

Volunteer Ireland is organising two events which I would like to bring to your attention. Firstly, a Volunteer Managers' Conference is taking place in the Morrison Hotel, Dublin on Wednesday, November 9th, 2011. This conference may be of interest to you if you are supporting volunteers in a club or on an events team.

Training Update

Can you help?

- Are you a tutor, lecturer, teacher, trainer?
- Do you have 12 hours to spare in the next year?
- Can you help us train our new volunteers in your own county?

Please drop us an email to training@specialolympics.ie or give us a call on +353 1 8691620 to find out more.

2011 Induction - Reminder

Did you register as a volunteer in 2011? Have you completed your Volunteer Induction Training at one of our tutor-led sessions or online? If not, please go to:

<http://moodle.specialolympics.ie/moodle>

as soon as possible to complete your online Volunteer Induction course.

The course will take 45 minutes, at a maximum, to complete and is a requirement for all new volunteers.

If you have not yet visited the site, then choose "create new account", tab on the log-in screen and follow the instructions. If you do not have online access or have difficulty logging in, please contact us at training@specialolympics.ie or by phone on +353 1 8691620.

Transition Year Programme

We are in the process of developing resource materials for the Transition Year Programme – if you are a TY Co-ordinator we would love to hear from you to help with the development of this.

Included in this edition:

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It promises to be a very interactive and engaging day where you are sure to learn new skills and it will provide an opportunity for you to meet with other volunteers in similar roles. Secondly, the Ireland Involved Awards are taking place in Dublin Castle on Monday, December 5th 2011. Nominations opened on Wednesday, October 5th and will close on October 31st. Would you like to nominate a fellow volunteer for their outstanding contribution to Special Olympics Ireland? This is your chance! For more information and for details on how to submit a nomination please go to:

www.irelandinvolvedawards.ie

I would like to wish you all the very best for the coming year. As always, if you wish to share your volunteer story or get in touch email volunteers@specialolympics.ie

Stephanie Mc Dermott
Volunteer Manager

On the Cover



30 members of Team Ireland who competed at the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens were congratulated at a special reception hosted by President Mary McAleese and Dr. Martin McAleese on Wednesday, 28th September.

Addressing the assembled gathering of athletes and coaches President McAleese said "To get to the World Summer Games is itself a brilliant achievement and experience and I hope you all really enjoyed every minute of it, but of course it was no holiday and the months of training and preparation before hand took a lot of effort and organisation. So well done to you and to all the people who keep Special Olympics going at home all year round so that people can know the fun and fulfilment of taking part in sports, making friends, winning and losing, getting fit, getting really good at your sport and getting so good that you are chosen to represent your country".

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A message from the CEO

I'm sure that, like me, you wish our former Chairperson and CEO, Mary Davis, every success in her bid become the next President of Ireland. I'm delighted to include a message from Mary in our current edition of Connect.

Matt English
CEO Special Olympics Ireland



Dear Friends,

It has been my privilege to be part of Special Olympics over the last number of years. I have seen it grow from a small programme in Ireland to something we can be truly proud of. Special Olympics Ireland now has one of the strongest programmes world-wide and is recognised as an example of how it can be

further developed. As a volunteer-led organisation, there is a strong reliance on you to help continue this growth.

When Ireland was challenged with hosting the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games, this country responded magnificently. Over 30,000 volunteers worked to make the Games a resounding success. The scale of this volunteer effort and the willingness of Irish people to freely give their time and energy to such a cause continues to inspire me.

More recently I have had the opportunity to work in developing Special Olympics across 58 countries in Europe and Central Asia. In these countries, as in Ireland, Special Olympics is about creating a space for participation by those who often find themselves left on the margins.

I have taken a leave of absence from Special Olympics to run for election as President of Ireland. In doing so, I am inspired by all the people I have worked with in the movement over the years. I believe that all that is best about our country is represented in Special Olympics, and I hope that, as President, I can use this example to restore pride in Ireland at home and respect for Ireland abroad.

As President, I want to foster the spirit of volunteerism embodied by Special Olympics. I also want to bring Special Olympics values of inclusion, fairness and respect to the Presidency. Finally, I want to help us to regain our self confidence, so that we can be as proud as we were in hosting the World Games in 2003.

My three priorities for the Presidency

Today, Ireland needs a strong advocate on the international stage. If elected President of Ireland, this would be a core part of my work in the years ahead.

Ireland's tarnished reputation must be restored. The next President must tell the story of Ireland's recovery on the world

stage while working in every way possible to attract new investment to our country.

This is an important aspect of the role of President, and one that I understand completely. I have worked with countries across the world, and with major international institutions, to make Special Olympics a world-wide movement. Now, I want to use my skills to help repair Ireland's place in the world.

Ireland also needs a person who will champion fairness, equality and respect. As President, I would aim to be a strong embodiment of these traits for all Irish people, at home and abroad. From the start of my working life as a special needs teacher in Ballymun, I have worked to promote fairness, equality, respect and inclusion for some of the most marginalised people in Irish society.

Today, Ireland is a tough place for many people, and communities across the country are scarred by unemployment and emigration. If elected President, I will use the office to reach out to our fractured communities and using my voice as President to help them in whatever way I can.

Finally, Ireland needs a President who can help us to regain our self confidence so that we can once again be proud of our country and of our place in the world.

Sometimes you have to work against extraordinary odds to realise what you are really capable of. In Ireland, this has never been more true.

If honoured with the role of President, I would work to represent Ireland at home and abroad and champion fairness, equality and respect. Above all, this work would be directed to one goal – helping us, as a country and a nation, get back on our feet, find our confidence and retake our place on the world stage.

I need your support

Nobody can win an election campaign on their own – if I am to succeed it will be down to a massive collective effort by volunteers, supporters and campaign workers. I need your support and your encouragement.

Please do get in touch with your ideas, and visit my website to find out how you can support this campaign. Let's use this campaign to discuss the kind of future that we can create together.

Mary Davis
www.marydavis.ie



MEET OUR EXTRAORDINARY TEAM

The Connect and Share section of Special Olympics Ireland's website has some fantastic blogs written by our athletes, coaches and volunteers. To give you a taste of what to expect, you can read part of Oliver Boyle's blog below. Oliver is one of our Team Ireland athletes who participated in the II-a-side football team at the World Games in Athens and brought home a silver medal. Congratulations Oliver and thanks for sharing your story.



On Saturday morning, I was buzzing and I knew that today we would be silver medal winners no matter what. We got the bus to the pitch, got ready, and then the coaches had a few words with us. We did some warm-ups, got photos taken and then made our way to the pitch to get our names checked for the final time. This was like a big Champions League Group Stage match where the winner takes all. It was us or them for the silver!

I was down where the Irish fans were shouting and cheering us on and I really did super well in the 1st half, pulling 2 saves off. At half time it was 0-0. So just under 25 minutes to go and we would win the silver if we just drew with them.

In the 2nd half we stepped it up a bit and Great Britain didn't know what hit them. They struggled to get into the match. Then Adrian Clarke came onto the pitch and within 5 minutes, ran down the wing, hit the ball nicely from outside the box, it dipped right over the keeper's head and into the back of the net - Olé, Olé, Olé! The man from Donegal scores a wonder goal and the Irish fans were going mad! We were in the lead now and all we had to do was hold them off and we would win.

With 8 minutes to go, we gave a penalty away. I went to my right side but couldn't save it so GB scored to make it 1-1. All I wanted now was for the referee to blow his whistle and end the game 1-1. It felt so long. I kept coming off my line but also I didn't want to make any mistakes that could cost us the game.

At last, I heard the sound of the final whistle and it was music to my ears. I had a new silver medal in my hands and no-one was going to take that away from me or the rest of the 15 lads that came from the five parts of Ireland to be here.

You can't win every thing in your life time, all you can do is your best and there have to be winners and runners-up. For me, being in my 3rd World Games, I am proud to be going home for the 2nd time with a medal that I can hang up on my wall with my Ireland jersey.

I would like to say a special thanks to our Irish fans, families, friends and everyone else on Team Ireland who believed in us and helped us to bring the silver medal home. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

*Oliver Michael Boyle,
II-a-side Football Team*

A year later...what's happening now in Limerick?

Louise Harrison, Journalism student and volunteer at the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games in Limerick has interviewed a number of volunteers who have remained involved at a local level in Munster, here's what they had to say:

I recently met Martin Tierney, Volunteer Event Manager, and Jon O'Shaughnessy, Volunteer Operations Manager for the 2010 Special Olympics Games in the University of Limerick. "Having the Games in Limerick got more Limerick people involved and it gave a centre for Munster in Limerick" said Martin. Both were first-time volunteers and they enjoyed the Games so much they decided to stay involved. There have been four events held in Limerick since the Ireland Games: Basketball skills, Aquatics, Bocce and a Basketball Cup. Limerick has gained from the Games by retaining approximately 350 volunteers who work at a regional level as competition volunteers and some have joined the Regional Event Support Team.

After the Games, Martin and Jon concentrated on training volunteers with less experience to become members of venue management teams. There was a big push to get a core venue team. They were surprised with the level of response. "Now we have 40 volunteers for 15 places for the next event. Everyone will get a chance to try new roles. Volunteers will do whatever is needed." Martin and Jon hold two or three meetings a year and if there's a new event coming up they set up training for a new venue. "University of Limerick has been excellent since the Games - the basketball skills, aquatics and table tennis have been held there."

Limerick City Special Olympics Club has been able to take in more athletes and also increase the sports they are offering to include athletics, swimming and basketball. Nine athletes from the mid-west area represented Ireland at the World Summer Games in Athens. Vistakon, a Johnson and Johnson Company, sponsors the basketball competition in Limerick and supports the event with volunteers from their staff as part of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme.

Dell Computers donated laptops and PCs to Special Olympics Clubs in the mid-west area and Shannon Development have supported Special Olympics Munster with the i3 Open Water Swim in Killaloe which took place on September 17th, 2011.

CONNAUGHT

Athletes celebrate on board Irish Naval Service L.E. Eithne

Members of Team Ireland from Galway had the opportunity to celebrate their World Games achievements, in style, on board the flagship vessel of the Irish Naval Service, the L.E. Eithne, which docked in Galway harbour especially to host the reception. Sincere thanks are expressed to Commanding Officer Steve Walsh, Lt. Commander Erika Downing and the team of officers for their exceptional hospitality.



Important notice for all clubs

As we enter a new 4-year cycle, it is extremely important that all clubs are prepared and aware of how the advancement cycle works.

This year we will be running Area 1 & Area 2 competitions in the following sports:- Aquatics, Athletics, Bowling, Bocce, Equestrian and Golf.

Special Olympics Connaught Area 1 comprises of counties Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim and Area 2 comprises of Galway, Roscommon, Longford and parts of Westmeath.

Any athlete who wishes to be involved in the next 4-year cycle must compete in the relevant competition this year. **Any athlete who misses their area event in the coming year may not enter the following year's regional competition as THEY MUST COMPETE AT THE FIRST LEVEL OF ADVANCEMENT.**

For those sports that do not have area competition, the cycle will not start until next year's regional events (these sports are Table Tennis, Pitch and Putt, Badminton, Football, Basketball, Kayaking, and Gymnastics).

Our School's Got Talent



Athletes Michelle O'Keane and Denise Flattery pictured at the launch of Our School's Got Talent with members of last season's winners, The Big Band, Headford and Pat McDonagh, Supermacs.

Club Volunteer Opportunities

Team South Galway Special Olympics Club requires a swim coach, lifeguard and pool assistants to volunteer at their swimming session on Wednesday evenings, from 7.50pm to 8.45pm, in Kilcornan Centre, Clarenbridge, Co. Galway.

Please contact Jackie Moran or Nuala Keady on +353 86 170 0948 or email nualakeady@hotmail.com.

Lakeview Special School in Woodlands, Renmore Co. Galway requires male pool assistants to volunteer at their swimming sessions every Monday and Tuesday from 11.00am to 2.00pm.

Please contact Bernadette Hanley on +353 86 3873650 or email principalhf@gmail.com

Tuam Headford Special Olympics Club requires volunteers to assist with their swimming and gymnastics sessions.

Please contact Maire Hearty +353 87 2041679 or email mairehearty@hotmail.com.

Special Olympics Connaught's 'Our School's Got Talent' annual fundraiser was launched recently and is kindly supported this season by Supermacs. A number of heats will be hosted throughout October, followed by county finals and a regional final in the Royal Theatre, Castlebar. Last year, The Big Band from Presentation College, Headford was crowned Our School's Got Talent regional champions.

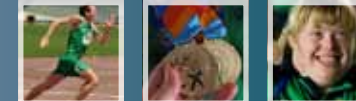
County Final Dates

| | | |
|-----------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Roscommon | Friday, Oct 28 | Hyde Centre |
| Sligo | Sunday, Oct 30 | Knocknarea Arena IT Sligo |
| Mayo | Friday, Nov 11 | Royal Theatre |
| Leitrim | Saturday, Nov 12 | Landmark Hotel |
| Galway | Saturday, Nov 19 | Radisson Blu Hotel |

Regional final

Friday, December 2 Royal Theatre, Castlebar

Volunteers are required for the heats throughout October. Any athletes wishing to attend the finals should contact Lydia Rogers on +353 71 911 8320.



Connaught Clubs



Roscommon Special Olympics Swimming Club

This year our membership has almost doubled and we are delighted that most of our swimmers have progressed to lane training and are now competing in 25m and 50m events. This is due in no small way to the dedication and expertise of our coaches Colin Dowd and Marie Keane.

Our swimmers had a very successful day in Leisureland Galway at the Special Olympics Connaught Area 2 competition. The swimmers won 5 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze medals, as well as 3 fourth places.

This year, for the first time, we held a club gala in Roscommon Leisure Centre on June 7th. 22 swimmers took part in this very successful event and 30 medals were awarded. We would like to thank the staff of Roscommon Leisure Centre for all their help and support throughout the year and Michael and Oliver Hanley, Star Trophies, for their generous sponsorship of medals for the gala. Some of the club members who participated in the gala are pictured above.

The club trains in the Roscommon Leisure Centre on Tuesday evenings from 6pm to 7pm and new members are always welcome.

Galaxy Special Olympics Club

On Friday 5th August, the club held their Annual ball at the Anne Brooke hotel in Mullingar. All the athletes, coaches and friends had a superb night which included a three course meal followed by a disco. The music was provided by local DJ Michael Sheerin.

The club also took part in a safe cycle programme each Tuesday during the summer months. On the final day of the cycle programme, the participants headed out to Tuddenham by the lake, after spending weeks pedalling around St. Lomans football grounds. A huge thank you to Mary, Kathy and the Westmeath Sports Partnership team for all their help with this cycle programme.



GALWAY CLUBS

- Does Your Club Need More Volunteers?

One of the challenges of running a club is having enough people to help out at training sessions, fundraising, or keeping the paperwork up to date. Did you know that there are a group of people ready and willing to get involved in volunteering? Galway Volunteer Centre has been working since 2006 to link people who want to help out in their community with non-profit organisations that need the help. To date over 6,000 individuals have registered with the Centre for support in finding volunteer work in Galway City and County. Organisations and clubs regularly advertise for volunteers using our free service.

So how does it work? If your club needs volunteers you can fill out a vacancy registration form that can be downloaded from www.volunteergalway.ie. Details required include information

on what the volunteer will be doing, any specific skills they might require, location and times of volunteering.

The details will be checked and then put on the Volunteer Galway website. It will also be emailed to almost 5,000 potential volunteers in the Galway City and County area.

Anyone interested in volunteering will contact you directly and Galway Volunteer Centre will follow up with you after a few weeks to see if they can be of any further assistance.

Contact details are as follows:

Address: 17/18 Mill Street, Galway
Phone: 091 539930
Email: info@volunteergalway.ie
Web: www.volunteergalway.ie

ALPs CONNAUGHT

At the recent ALPs Connaught Day, the committee for the coming two years was elected. The positions are:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Chairperson: | Deirdre Garvin South West Mayo ALPs |
| Asst. Chairperson: | Carmel Finnerty Loughrea Training Centre |
| Secretary: | Martin Fallon Toghermore |
| Asst. Secretary: | Carol Taheny Sligo PALS |
| Treasurer: | Kevin Hardiman, Loughrea Training Centre |
| Asst. Treasurer: | Margaret Grealley Loughrea Training Centre |
| P.R.O.: | Brid Walsh South West Mayo ALPs |
| Asst. P.R.O. | Phillipa Burke Loughrea Training Centre |
| Athlete Rep to Regional Committee: | Carol Taheny Sligo PALS |



Other members of the regional team include athletes from Mountbellew Tigers group, Swinford, and those clubs already represented.

The regional ALPs Awards night will take place on Thursday 10th November at the McWilliam Park Hotel, with a western theme being preferred by all the athletes.

Pictured above is Deirdre Garvin, the new Connaught ALPs Chairperson being congratulated on her return from the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games by Michael Ring, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport.

Connaught Calendar of Events 2011 - 2012

| Date | Event | Venue | Date | Event | Venue |
|----------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 19/10/11 | Badminton | Sligo Tennis Club | 25/02/12 | Basketball Blitz | Custume Barracks |
| 22/10/11 | Basketball Blitz | Ballina Sports Centre | 29/02/12 | Equestrian (area 2) | Creagh Centre, B'Sloe |
| 16/11/11 | MATP (area 1) | Aras Attracta | 03/03/12 | Bocce 7's finals | Kiltimagh |
| 23/11/11 | MATP (area 2) | Kilcornan T.C. | 10/03/12 | Bowling (area 2) | Oranmore |
| 26/11/11 | Basketball Blitz | Rochfortbridge, Mullingar | 21/03/12 | Aquatics | Leisureland |
| 29/11/11 | Basketball Skills | Sligo Sports Centre | 24/03/12 | Basketball Blitz | Calasanctius College |
| 30/11/11 | Football Develop. | Athlone I.T. | 28/03/12 | Football Develop. | Lecarrow, Roscommon |
| 01/12/11 | Table Tennis | GMIT, Castlebar | 18/04/12 | Golf (area 1) | Ballinrobe |
| 07/12/11 | Aquatics Develop. | Sligo Sports Centre | 21/04/12 | Bocce (area 1) | To be confirmed |
| 28/01/12 | Postal Bowling | Oranmore | 28/04/12 | Kayaking | Loughlanagh, Castlebar |
| 01/02/12 | Gymnastics | Athlone Gym Club | 03/05/12 | Football Blitz | Salthill Devon F.C. |
| 04/02/12 | Bowling (area 1) | Rollerbowl, Castlebar | 09/05/12 | Athletics (area 1) | IT Sligo |
| 18/02/12 | Coaches Forum | NUIG | 16/05/12 | Athletics (area 2) | Athlone IT |
| 21/02/12 | Football Develop. | Mullingar AFC | 26/05/12 | Bocce (area 2) | To be confirmed |
| 22/02/12 | Equestrian (area 1) | Sligo Riding Centre | 31/05/12 | Golf (area 2) | Tuam Golf Club |

Please check our website at www.specialolympics.ie/connaught for updates about forthcoming events.

If you are interested in volunteering at any of the above events please contact Michael Gilroy, Regional Development Officer for Events and Volunteers on +353 71 9118320 or email michael.gilroy@specialolympics.ie



EASTERN

We have a new home!

The regional office has moved to a new home in Finglas which provides us with the much-needed space to facilitate the further development of our region. Over the coming months we hope that many of our volunteers, athletes and family members will come to visit our office. The new office address is: North Park Offices (2nd Floor), North Park, Finglas, Dublin 11. Tel: +353 1 891 2000. For further information and directions please visit our website at www.specialolympics.ie/eastern

Fantastic FUNdraising!

We have some great fundraising events coming up over the coming months with something for everyone. For the more adventurous types there's a polar plunge or if you fancy something slightly more sedate we have a lovely musical evening with the Ladies Garda Choir.



Freezin' For A Reason

Freezin' for a Reason!

On the 10th December 2011, some hardy souls will take the plunge into the Irish Sea at the Forty Foot, Sandycove in aid of Special Olympics Ireland.

The plunge takes place at 11am and there will be warm up refreshments post-plunge. To participate you must raise a minimum of €25 – sponsorship cards are available. To register, please contact Brenda or Paul on +353 1 891 2000 or email us at easternregion@specialolympics.ie

National Lottery Dublin City Marathon

The National Lottery Dublin City Marathon takes place on Monday 31st October. Over 8,000 people will participate, many trying to accomplish personal bests, many to achieve a life-long ambition and many to raise funds for a charity close to their heart. Last year, 28 participants took the opportunity to raise funds for Special Olympics and raised close to €20,000!

Participants raising funds for Special Olympics Ireland will receive a sponsorship pack that includes a commemorative quick dry t-shirt. For further detail, please contact Paul Ahearne on +353 1 891 2005 or email dublinmarathon@specialolympics.ie.

Special Olympics Eastern Region to benefit from Ladies Garda Choir Concert

On 9th November 2011, the Ladies Garda Choir will perform at the Immaculate Conception (Adam & Eve) Church, Merchant's Quay, Dublin 8. The Concert will mark the 25th Anniversary of the choir and it will also help raise much-needed funds for Special Olympics Eastern Region. The concert will commence at 7.30pm and the cover charge is €10 per person. There will be light refreshments served and a raffle will provide the opportunity for patrons to win spot prizes. For more details, please contact Paul Ahearne, Fundraising Co-ordinator, on +353 1 891 2005 or Mary Flynn on 086 3475297.

Swim a Mile for a Special Smile



The Tiburon Mile is one of the most competitive and prestigious open water swims in the world. Athletes swim one nautical mile from San Francisco Bay's Angel Island to the shores of Downtown Tiburon.

There are a number of divisions so, regardless of ability, Olympic Gold Medalists, World Champions and tri-athletes can participate alongside local pool and open water swimmers.

Special Olympics Ireland is asking YOU to sign up TODAY to this amazing fundraising event!

If you are:

- Over 18yrs old
- A keen swimmer looking for a challenge
- Free to travel October 2012
- Committed to raising at least €3,000 for Special Olympics Ireland

We would love to hear from you today!

Contact: Brenda or Paul on +353 1 891 2000, email tiburonmile@specialolympics.ie or sign up online at www.specialolympics.ie/tiburon

CLUB EXPANSION

The following clubs are now recruiting new athletes. If you are interested in getting involved in any of these clubs please contact Neil O'Sullivan on +353 1 891 2008 or email neil.osullivan@specialolympics.ie

5-a-side Football

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Cabinteely Special Olympics Club | Killiney |
| Dundrum Special Olympics Club | Dublin 14 |
| United Warriors Special Olympics Club | Rathcoole |
| Mobhi Magic Special Olympics Club | Dublin 11 |

11-a-side Football

| | |
|--|------------|
| Stillorgan Rangers Special Olympics Club | Stillorgan |
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Badminton

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| Flying Arrows Special Olympics Club | Dublin 12 |
| S.E.A.S.O.N Shuttles Special Olympics Club | Dublin 4 |
| Tallaght Trojans Special Olympics Club | Dublin 24 |

Athletics

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|---|-------------|
| Irishtown Special Olympics Club | Dublin 4 |
| Fingal All Stars Special Olympics Club | Gormanstown |
| North City Striders Special Olympics Club | Dublin 11 |

Basketball

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| Mount Argus Tigers Special Olympics Club | Dublin 8 |
| Cabra Lions Special Olympics Club | Dublin 7 |
| Leixlip Special Olympics Club | Leixlip |
| Lucan Special Olympics Club | Lucan |

Bocce

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Lucan Special Olympics Club | Lucan |
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Table Tennis

| | |
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| Blanch Spinners Special Olympics Club | Dublin 15 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|

Bowling

| | |
|--|------------|
| Stillorgan/Mount Merrion SO Bowling Club | Stillorgan |
|--|------------|

Aquatics

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Jets Special Olympics Club | Dublin 13 |
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Alpine Skiing

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Kiltarnan Karvers Special Olympics Club | Kiltarnan |
|---|-----------|

VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

Team Building

The 2011/12 area advancement events will begin in November 2011 and run through until June 2012. We are now building teams of event volunteers to help with the organisation of these events. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Sinead Costello on +353 1 891 2004 or email sinead.costello@specialolympics.ie

Club Volunteer Vacancies

The following clubs require volunteers. Please contact Neil O'Sullivan on +353 1 891 2008 for more information.

Sports Club 15 - Basketball Coach

Ongar Community Centre, Monday 7-8.30pm

Free Spirit Club - Kayaking Coach Level 2

Celbridge Road, Leixlip, every second Sat 10.30am - 1.30pm

Speisialta Club - General Volunteers

Badminton: Clondalkin Sports & Leisure Centre, Saturday from 11.30am-1pm and 5-a-side football: Clondalkin Sports & Leisure Centre, Saturday 3-4.30 pm

Phoenix Flyers Club - Aquatics Coach

Coolmine Sports & Leisure Centre, Sunday, 1-2pm

Menni Movers Club - General Volunteers

Various locations across Dublin for football league. One Sunday a month Oct - May 10am - 2pm

Blue Dolphins Club - Athletics Coach

Charlesland Sports Centre, Greystones, Saturday 2pm - 4pm

Newpark Nemos Club - In-water aquatics volunteers

Newpark School, Blackrock, Sunday 3.50pm - 5pm

Fingal All Stars Club - General Volunteers for athletics

Gormanstown College Sports hall, Tuesday 6-7pm

Sporting Fingal - General volunteers for football

Loughshinny United Grounds, Wednesday 7-9pm

Stillorgan Mount Merrion - General volunteers for bowling

Leisureplex Stillorgan, Tuesday 6pm - 7.30pm

Blackrock Flyers - Qualified Basketball Coach, Ladies Team

Holy Child, Sallynoggin, Monday 7pm - 8pm

Eastern Region Family Fun Day Saturday 5th November, 2pm, RDS Simonscourt



The Eastern Region currently has 1,743 registered family members which is a fantastic number! In recognition of this, we are hosting our third Family Fun Day to thank them for all the dedication and support they give to their athletes and Special Olympics.

The Family 'Grease' Fun Day is for registered family members with the Eastern Region Family Programme.

However, if a family wishes to attend who are NOT yet registered with the Families Programme, please contact Neil O'Sullivan on +353 1 891 2008 or email neil.osullivan@specialolympics.ie

Places are limited!

So to avoid disappointment please adhere to the application deadline which is Friday 21st October 2011

MUNSTER

My Special Olympics Experience - Rachel Ryan

My name is Rachel Ryan. The club I train with is the Nenagh Ormond Special Olympics Club in Co. Tipperary. I was chosen to go to the 2011 World Summer Games Athens. I never thought that I would be chosen for the World Games after being chosen to go to the European Youth Games in Rome seven years previously. Before I went to Athens, I trained in Dublin with my club coach Pauline Nugent. Before I knew it, the time to go to Athens had come. It was a brilliant experience. I came third in both the 100m and 200m runs in athletics. I saw many ancient buildings including the Acropolis and the old villages of Greece.

I would like to thank my parents for supporting me and the people of Templemore and, most importantly, my coach Pauline for helping me. I made many new friends while at the Games. One in particular was a girl named Nicole Smith who previously ran with me at the National Games in Limerick. It was a once-in-a-life-time experience. I'm collecting all the kits I have from previous Games so that I'll be able to tell others about my experience and give inspiration to them. My ambitions would be to further my training in Special Olympics and hopefully become a coach in my club. I would like to thank Special Olympics for giving me the opportunity to achieve my goals.



Rachel Ryan is pictured above on her way to winning a bronze medal in the 100m final.



Finisk River Riders Special Olympics Club launches in Waterford

On Saturday September 17th, Finisk River Riders Special Olympics Club held their official launch day. The

newly-established club in Waterford is delivering an equestrian program to 18 athletes in the east of the county. On September 17th, the club formally opened its doors to family members and friends. All involved with the club have worked very hard to get the club up and running and were hugely excited about showcasing their hard work and effort.

Those who attended were treated to an impressive array of riding demonstrations that were provided by the athletes, showcasing their equestrian skills through pony games and drills. Once the demonstrations were complete, refreshments were provided and the celebrations commenced. Speaking on the day, Chairperson Phillipa McKelvie thanked all those present for their support and commended the committee on their hard work and dedication in establishing the new equestrian club. Finisk River Riders athlete, Christopher Sealy, added how much he enjoyed attending the club and expressed his thanks to his coaches and to all his new friends. Phillipa and Christopher then unveiled a plaque that had been commissioned to mark the official opening of the club.



Owenabue Special Olympics Gymnastics Club

Owenabue Gymnastics Club caters for boys and girls from the age of 6 years upwards. The club is running for 16 years and we cater for both Artistic (bars, vault, beam and floor) and Rhythmic (hoop, ball, ribbon, and clubs) gymnastics.

We currently have places available for boys, and a limited number of places for girls, in the Artistic Club that runs on Saturdays from 10-11am. The girls' places in the Rhythmic Club on Tuesdays 7-8pm are not limited and will cater for girls aged from 6 years upwards. This discipline suits young women also as the movement to music is usually enjoyed by them.

Over the years we have taken part in Munster Regional Competitions and our gymnasts have represented Munster at National Games since 2002. We have also had gymnasts as part of Team Ireland at European Games in Rome and World Games in Dublin and Shanghai. The club had the opportunity to travel as guests to Newry to do a display at an International Rhythmic Competition and it was a wonderful experience. We travelled to Poole in the UK last October and it was good for the gymnasts to be able to see what is happening elsewhere and a good experience travelling away without family members.

The club has only recently moved into a purpose built gymnastics centre and we work alongside the mainstream club. The facilities (Carrigaline Gymnastics Centre) now available to us are state of the art and our gymnasts deserve no less. Our coaches are all very excited to have such a facility to work with and we are looking forward to meet some new members. Please do contact us for more information on 087 98 25 225 or Owenabue.gymclub@gmail.com.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

EVENTS VOLUNTEERS IN LIMERICK & CORK

Special Olympics Munster is holding events in Limerick and Cork over the next few months as follows:

LIMERICK:

Sat 5th November Aquatics in University of Limerick Arena pool. One-day volunteers needed

Sun 5th February 2012 Bocce in Delta Soccer Dome, Ballysimon estate, Limerick: Event team and one-day volunteers needed

Sun 26th February 2012 Bocce in Delta Soccer Dome, Ballysimon estate, Limerick: Event team and one day volunteers needed

CORK:

Thurs 17th November 2011, Ten Pin Bowling Planet Cork (9am to 4pm)

Sun 20th November Rhythmic Gymnastics Ashton School Cork (9:30am to 4pm)

If you are interested in assisting at any of these events, please contact Vivien Buckley on +353 21 4977192 or email vivien.buckley@specialolympics.ie

ALPs REGIONAL TEAM

Any volunteers who are interested in becoming involved in an ALPs Regional Development team, please contact Eilish Harrington on +353 21-4977192

Special Olympics Munster divides into Areas

In order to continue to deliver quality competition to the ever-increasing number of athletes in Special Olympics Munster, it has been agreed to divide the region into 2 areas – East and West. East comprises of Waterford, Tipperary & East Cork while West Munster is Limerick, Kerry, Clare and West Cork.

This approach will be in place for the next four-year advancement cycle. This will mean that in the upcoming sports year, athletes in aquatics, athletics, bocce, bowling and golf skills will participate in either an East or a West Area event.

Athletes in all other sports will compete in a combined area event this year. Further information on this new development can be found on the Munster section of our website www.specialolympics.ie/munster



Over 160 athletes, coaches and volunteers attended the Munster basketball league divisioning day in Little Island on Saturday 1st October where teams were formed into divisions for the next league season. Awards from the previous season were presented afterward at the Radisson Blu Hotel. League Winners: Division One Male -Waterford Sharks; Division Two Male - Waterford Tigers; Division One Female - joint winners South Tipperary ladies and Lisnagry Ladies; Division one Female - Cope Foundation Ladies (pictured above). Congratulations to all the winners and participating teams and good luck to all teams for next season.

VOLUNTEER VACANCIES IN CLUBS

CO. CORK

Mallow United Special Olympics 5-a-side Soccer Club – general volunteers and those with coaching qualifications in soccer required – contact Julie Dwyer on 086 8599983 or by email: obol4@hotmail.com

Copstown Special Olympics Golf Club

Based in Newtwpothouse near Mallow – general volunteers and those with a background in golf to become assistant coaches required – contact Julie Dwyer on 086 8599983 or by email: obol4@hotmail.com

Owenabue Gymnastics Club

Based in Crosshaven/Carrigaline area – gymnastic coaches and volunteers with background in gymnastics required – contact Zelig Moran on +353 21 4831582

Inniscarra Blues Special Olympics Bocce Club

Based in Inniscarra Co.. Cork – volunteers required to assist with training and general duties – contact Anne Hyland +353 87 7606332 or email: annehyland60@gmail.com.

CO. KERRY

Kerry All Stars Special Olympics Club

Based in Killarney Town – mentors required for the Athlete Leadership Programme – males in particular but females also welcome.

North Kerry Eagles Special Olympics Club,

Based in Listowel and Tarbet – require volunteers with an athletics background who would like to assist with coaching the athletes, and also general volunteers to assist with the day-to-day running of the club during club sessions and fundraising.

CO. LIMERICK

Lisnagry Special Olympics Club club

Require volunteers for Wednesday evening for their 5-a-side soccer club. Also welcome are any volunteers who would be interested in helping to establish a badminton programme.

CO. WATERFORD

Waterford Special Olympics Clubs

Volunteer drivers, particularly those with a D1 licence required, also: Badminton coaches from 7-8pm on Mondays Swimming coaches Thurs 3-4pm and Tuesdays 12-1pm Athletics coaches Mondays 6-7pm

CO. CLARE

Shannon Flyers

General volunteers required; also training offered to anyone interested in becoming an athletics coach; Athletics coaches or those with experience in athletics required also – Contact Cathy Colgan on 087 2345522 or email colgan.c@eircom.net

MUNSTER FAMILIES DAY

The Munster Regional Families Day will take place Sunday, October 23rd in the Kilmurry Lodge in Limerick. It promises to be a great day – Information, food, and entertainment! All families are welcome but places will be limited. Please contact Eilish in the Munster Office on +353 214977192 for further information.

LEINSTER

South Leinster Bocce League

14 Special Olympics Clubs from South Leinster competed in the first ever bocce league over the summer months. This was the first time a league of this type was held in the region. We would like to extend a huge thank you to both CWCW Enniscorthy and Portarlington Community Centre who hosted the matches and congratulate all the athletes who took part. Gold medal winners for the Services league were Alacantha House (pictured top) and Portarlington Special Olympics Club for the clubs league (pictured right).



Special Olympics Leinster Golf Classic

Knightsbrook Hotel and Golf Resort Trim, Co. Meath hosted the annual Special Olympics Leinster Golf Classic on Monday 29th August 2011. Sixty teams took on the challenging course. Winner of the overall event, with a score of 91, was Billy Moore's Team from Mullingar Golf Club. Michael Brennan's team and Brian Higgins' team finishing second and third respectively. The longest drive was won by Conor Deegan from the Sports Surgery Clinic, Santry. A big thank you goes to all the participants, the volunteers and the organisers, John Tobin and Brian Osborne. A special thanks is extended to the hotel and to all our sponsors on the day for the terrific support shown.

Recognition for World Games Athletes

Twenty one athletes who attended the 2011 World Summer Games were recognised at two events held in the region over the summer.



Six athletes from County Meath were recognised at the Leinster Golf Classic. Brian Osborne acted as Master of Ceremonies for the evening and Matt English, CEO, Special Olympics Ireland spoke about the commitment of the athletes, their clubs and families in their preparation prior to and during the Games. A framed photograph was presented to each athlete by Des Smyth, International Irish Golfer and Ryder Cup player. Des spoke of the pride that Team Ireland had brought to their country, county and their families. Pictured above is golfer Laura Kelly making a presentation on behalf of the athletes and the region to thank Des for his attendance and his support to Special Olympics.

Fifteen athletes were guests of honour at a Garden Party and barbeque held at Delta Centre, Carlow. The athletes and their families were welcomed by Ann Hickey, ALPs athlete and Chairperson of Carlow Town Council, Tom O'Neill. Pat Deering T.D., congratulated the athletes on their achievements.

Equestrian athlete, Conor Mac Gearailt, and Irish Rugby player and ERC European Young Rugby Player 2011, Sean O'Brien spoke on the evening. Both talked about their experiences of representing their country on the global sporting stage. Special Olympics Ireland Chairperson, Ronan King, and Sean O'Brien presented each athlete with a commemorative framed photograph. Thanks to the management and staff of Delta Centre who played a large part in the success of the event.

Volunteers Needed

We need general volunteers for the following upcoming one-day events:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Aquatics | Drogheda Aura Saturday, 12th November |
| Aquatics | Saturday 19th (TBC) & Sunday 20th November Curragh Swimming Pool, Co. Kildare |
| Bocce | Tuesday 24th, Wednesday 25th, Thursday 26th January 2012 Heritage Golf & Spa Hotel |

No sports experience is necessary. Roles on the day vary from registration, escorting athletes to different areas, assisting in staging athletes prior to events and awards, etc.

If you are interested in volunteering at any of these events, please contact Ashling on +353 1 6296999 or email Ashling.kennedy@specialolympics.ie

Basketball Officials

We need your expertise for a League Day on Saturday December 3rd 2011. The venue for the League Day is Gormanston College, Co. Meath. If you are interested, please contact Ashling on +353 1 629 6999 or email ashling.kennedy@specialolympics.ie.

Medical Volunteers

We have a number of upcoming events taking place in Wexford and Kildare and we need people with a first aid qualification or a medical background to help out. Check our calendar of events to find out the location closest to you and if interested contact the office +353 1-6296999 or email leinster@specialolympics.ie

Games Management System (GMS) Volunteers

Are you technically minded? Interested in learning a new skill? If so, we need you! We are looking for people who are computer proficient to support our 2011 - 2012 events.

The Games Management System is a software package used to operate and manage our sports events. The programme can complete tasks such as registering athletes, generating reports and results.

It is a user friendly software package, so no computer programming/coding experience is required. Please contact us on +353 1 629 6999 if you would like to get involved.

Cops on Donut Shops

Gardaí sell Dolly's Donuts to support Special Olympics

Celebrity food writer and presenter of RTÉ's Kitchen Hero, Donal Skehan, was on hand to help Special Olympics Eastern Region volunteers and members of the Gardaí sell Dolly's Donuts on Saturday 24th September in O'Connell Street, Dublin, raising over €9,200 for Special Olympics. Not to be left out, members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) also travelled to Dublin to help, demonstrating the ongoing cooperation and friendship formed between the two police forces through their ongoing commitment to the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics.

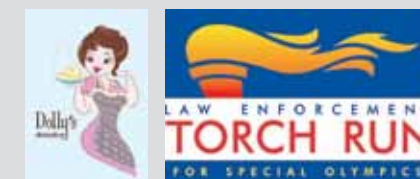


Pictured above are food writer and presenter of Kitchen Hero, Donal Skehan, Special Olympics athlete Sarah Boyne, Joy Moore from Dolly's Donuts and Deputy Commissioner Nacie Rice from An Garda Síochána

The delicious donuts which were kindly donated by Dolly's Donuts of Oldtown Hill, Tullaroan, Co. Kilkenny went down a treat with many customers coming back for seconds! Joy Moore of Dolly's Donuts and her team prepared the donuts in the small hours of Saturday morning and then transported them to Dublin for 8am to catch people on their way to work and some early shoppers. A team of over 40 from Special Olympics Eastern Region comprising of athletes and volunteers gave their support too and again we are hugely grateful to all concerned.

We would like to thank and acknowledge

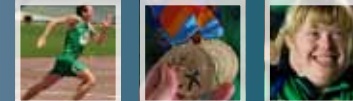
- Dolly's Donuts for providing the donuts
- An Garda Síochána from Store Street Station, particularly Louise Moran & Damien O'Hara and Gary Gordan from Kilkenny for their tireless work in planning the event and on the day itself
- Deputy Commissioner of An Garda Síochána Nacie Rice for lending his support.
- Donal Skehan for promoting our efforts and giving his time on the day
- FM 104 for giving their support on site and on the airwaves
- T Bear and Co. for providing Basil the Bear who captured the public's attention
- Burger King for providing lunch to the volunteers
- The Special Olympics Eastern Region volunteers and athletes for their time and effort



Have you got a few hours to spare weekly? Are you interested in helping in our regional office Support Centres?

Each of the five regional offices has their own Volunteer Support Centre. These Centres are run by volunteers who provide administrative support to the regional programme. Volunteer Support Centres are responsible for communication with our volunteers and tasks include database work, phone calls, emails, recruiting for events, mail-outs and much more. A great team spirit exists and the kettle is always on to make you feel welcome! Helping in the office gives you a wide knowledge of all programmes available in Special Olympics and you get to see all the behind the scenes action.

| Region | Address | Contact | Support Centre Times |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Connaught | Collooney, Sligo | Phone: +353 71 9118320 email connaught@specialolympics.ie | Tues: 12-4pm Wed: 12-9pm Thurs: 5-9pm |
| Eastern | Finglas, Dublin 11 (just off M50) | Phone: +353 1 8912000 email: eastern.region@specialolympics.ie | Mon & Tues: 9am-5pm Wed: 5-8pm Fri: 9am-5pm |
| Leinster | Nangor Road, Dublin 12 | Phone: +353 1 6296999 email: leinster@specialolympics.ie | Wed: 5pm-9pm |
| Munster | Monahan Road, Cork City | Phone: +353 21 4977192 email: munster@specialolympics.ie | Wed: 9am-8pm Fri: 9am-5pm |
| Ulster | Cromac Avenue, Belfast City | Phone: +44 28 9023 9023 email: ulster@specialolympics.ie | Wed: 9am-9pm Thurs: 9am-5pm |



ULSTER

Down Royal Racecourse welcomes Special Olympics Ulster

The latest fundraising initiative undertaken by Special Olympics Ulster, as part of our partnership with Victoria Square, saw us attend the Ladies' Day at Down Royal Racecourse in Lisburn. Team Ireland athletes Stephen Yetman, Patrick Donnelly and Joyce Haughian were there to showcase their sporting abilities and success, and to help with our fundraising efforts. Stephen demonstrated his equestrian skills in the parade ring, while Patrick, our very own Dungannon-based golfing star, and Joyce were delighted to meet 2011 Open winner, Darren Clarke.



Team Ireland athlete Joyce Haughian with TV personality and Special Olympics patron Gerry Kelly at Ladies' Day at Down Royal Racecourse.

CLUBS

Newtownabbey Racers Achieve Sport NI Clubmark



On 24th August 2011, Newtownabbey Racers Special Olympics Athletics Club was awarded Clubmark NI accreditation by Athletics Northern Ireland in conjunction with Sport NI and Newtownabbey Borough Council.

The Clubmark NI award aims to identify, develop, accredit and recognise high-quality sports clubs and the contribution that they make to the development of sport in Northern Ireland. In attaining the award, Newtownabbey Racers have been recognised for their high standards in the areas of Effective Management, Quality Coaching and Competition and Safety in Sport. Congratulations to Newtownabbey Racers and to everyone who helped make it happen, volunteers, athletes and coaches alike.

Omagh Special Olympics Club Getting in the swing



Omagh District Special Olympics Club is celebrating the addition of golf to its programme of training and competition. Weekly training takes place in Omagh Golf Club which is kindly providing equipment and facilities. Two of the club's athletes, Paul Gordon and Jason Bradley, have taken part in their first 9-hole annual Junior Open, with

the assistance of a qualified caddie to help them around the course. The club would like to thank the coaching team Susan, Ann and Eugene for their dedication and hard work, Omagh Golf Club for its generosity and sponsor, The Jamm Restaurant. For information on joining Omagh District Special Olympics Golf Club, contact Susan Anderson on 078 01738517

Cheetahs Special Olympics Club opens in Belfast



The Cheetahs Special Olympics Club is a new Special Olympics Football Club for athletes from the greater Belfast and County Down areas. The club will focus on skill development, fun and participation, therefore no prior knowledge of football is required.

The club commenced training in mid-September with training sessions every Monday evening at 6pm in the PlayBall facility at the Pavilion Stormont, entrance off Upper Newtownards Road.

For further information regarding joining, please contact:

Paul Shaw at PlayBall on 028 9052 2767.

ALPs in Ulster

The Ulster Athlete Leadership Programme (ALPs) has taken the first few exciting steps in the development of the programme in the region. Following the announcement of the Northern Bank partnership with ALPs this summer, we have recently appointed a new ALPs Officer for the region. After a break of a few years, Richard Edgar has once again taken up the role as Regional ALPs Officer which is a great boost for the programme. Down Special Olympics Club and Shimna Stars Special Olympics Club have recently joined the ALPs programme and we are looking forward to welcoming many new athletes from other clubs also. A very successful Mentor Training Day was held on Saturday September 10th, where 20 volunteers from the North West area participated in training to prepare them for becoming a mentor with ALPs.

ALPs Ulster will be running a number of information sessions and workshops throughout the region in the coming months. Anyone interested in getting involved should contact Victoria at the Ulster Regional Office on +44 28 9089 2995 or email victoria.kelly@specialolympics.ie.

The ALPs programme offers athletes the chance to take part in different opportunities such as workshops and training in public speaking, computers, coaching courses and volunteering. Athletes can also take part in the ALPs Award Scheme. For more information on the ALPs programme go to our website at www.specialolympics.ie/ulster

Volunteer Vacancies

Abbotts Cross Special Olympics Swimming Club is seeking new volunteers to assist at their training sessions. The swimming club session runs on Monday at 7pm-8pm in Ballysillian Leisure Centre. For further information, please contact Stella Wilson +44 28 908 33069.

Banbridge Special Olympics Club is seeking a Qualified Swimming Coach to assist at their weekly training sessions. The club is based in Banbridge Leisure Centre and trains on Friday evenings. For further information, please contact Carolyn Ross at carolynr100@hotmail.com.

FUNDRAISING

Join us on Friday 28th October for our Halloween Fancy Dress Spooktacular. Tickets are only £15 per person which includes a light supper.

Contact Ronan McKay on +44 28 9089 2996 or email ronan.mckay@specialolympics.ie for more information or to purchase tickets.

HALLOWEEN FANCY DRESS SPOOKTACULAR

FRIDAY 28TH OCTOBER

The Ivory, Victoria Square, Belfast

LIGHT SUPPER
BAND AND DJ

Best
Costume
Competition
& Prize
Draw

**Special Olympics
Ulster**

£15 per person
All proceeds in aid of
Special Olympics Ulster

For more details contact Ronan McKay on 028 9089 2996 or email ronan.mckay@specialolympics.ie
www.specialolympics.ie/ulster

Ulster Calendar of Events 2011 - 2012

| Date | Event | Venue | Date | Event | Venue |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 05/11/11 | Badminton/Table Tennis Development | Dromore Community Centre, Co. Down | 29/03/12 | Basketball - South Advancement | Castlepark, Lisnaskea |
| 11/11/11 | Aquatics - West Development | Omagh Leisure Centre | 30/03/12 | Basketball - West Advancement | Bready Cricket Club |
| 17/11/11 | Aquatics - South Advancement | Orchard Leisure Centre, Armagh | 19/04/12 20/04/12 | Bocce - East Advancement | Jim Baker Stadium, Templepatrick |
| 25/11/11 | Aquatics - East Advancement | Lisburn Leisureplex | TBC | Bocce - West & South Advancement | Lakeland Forum, Enniskillen |
| 03/12/11 | Aquatics - Regional Development | Muckamore Abbey, Antrim | 18/05/12 | Golf - Regional Development | Silverwood, Lurgan |
| 27/01/12 | Gymnastics - Regional Development | Belvoir Activity Centre, Belfast | 09/06/12 | Athletics - East Advancement | Antrim Forum |
| 09/02/12 10/02/12 | Bowling - South & East Advancement | Dundonald Icebowl | 16/06/12 | Athletics - West Advancement | Templemore, Derry |
| 23/02/12 24/02/12 | Bowling - West Advancement | Brunswick Superbowl, Derry | 30/06/12 | Athletics - South Advancement | Shercock AC, Co. Cavan |
| 28/03/12 | Basketball - East Advancement | Lough Moss Leisure Centre, Garryduff | If you are a volunteer interested in assisting at any of these events please contact the office on +44 28 9089 9089 | | |
| | | | | | |



COACHES' CORNER

Have you ever wondered who the Special Olympics Ireland coaches are? In this section, we will profile a coach in each edition of the Coach's Corner!

Our debut feature coach is Pearse O'Toole. Pearse is a Kayaking coach from the Corrib Canoe Club in Galway and was recently Head Coach for Team Ireland at the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens. Here are a few things we bet you didn't know about Pearse!

How long have you been involved in Special Olympics?
As a fan and spectator all my life, and as a coach, 8 years.

How long have you been coaching in your sport?
11 years

What coaching qualifications have you got?
I hold coaching qualifications in sailing, windsurfing, surfing, swimming, and, of course, kayaking.

What 3 famous people, living or dead, would you most like to have dinner with?
Posh Spice, Nicole Ritchie and Lindsey Lohan because there'll be loads of food left over. No, really I'd have George Bush, Billy Connolly and Carl Pilkington - a funny dinner.

What has been your highlight as a coach in Special Olympics?
Being part of Team Ireland led through Dublin Airport by a lone piper to an arrivals hall covered with welcoming banners and flags. Would make the hair stand on the back of your neck.

What are the most important things for a Special Olympics coach to remember?
It's not about you!

What are you doing when you are not coaching?
Working, paddling, surfing or sleeping, in no particular order.

What would you like to see more of in Special Olympics?
Special Olympics athletes getting involved in mainstream clubs. This not only raises awareness for Special Olympics but also shows how capable the athletes are.

Who inspired you to get involved in coaching?
The Irish coaching team for kayaking in 2003.

What song/album would be the soundtrack to your life?
Rory Gallagher, Crest of a Wave



What advice would you give to a new coach in Special Olympics?
You have to take the rough with the smooth but the smooth makes it so worthwhile.

How do you keep your athletes interested and motivated all the time?
I find your own enthusiasm and general positivity as a coach is going to rub off on any athlete, intellectual disability or not.

What is the most important lesson you have learned as a coach and who taught it to you?
Never assume your athletes aren't clued in or listening when 'criticising', it's an athlete who taught me that - the hard way.

How do you keep up with current trends in your sport?
Kayaking is a hobby for me so it's easy to keep in line with trends. And if your chosen sport is a hobby it's easier to be enthusiastic about it and this will be reflected in your athletes' enjoyment of that sport.

What is your comfort food?
More Dinner...

What is a good day at the track/pool/pitch/court for you?
...on the water. As a coach there is no better feeling than knowing that learning has taken place but there are still smiles at the end of a session.

What is your ultimate sports goal (as a player/athlete or a coach)?
As a player/athlete, it's definitely to win. As a coach it's simply to enable an athlete to perform to his/her best and come out smiling.

Who is your sporting hero?
Eadaoin N Challarain

What are your three desert island items?
A flint stick, a multi-tool and it's a throw up between a football and a girlfriend, story of our lives eh?

What is the last book you read?
Touching the Void by Joe Simpson, an excellent book.

COACH QUALIFICATIONS

Are you coaching in a Special Olympics Club? Are you a volunteer who is a qualified coach?

If you are, please contact the Volunteer Centre and let us know what your qualifications are so that we can ensure we have the most up to date information for you. Alternatively, remember you can log on to your own profile and update your qualifications yourself.

In Special Olympics Ireland, we know that you, the coaches, are an enthusiastic, pro-active group of individuals and we are aware that many of you are continually updating your coaching qualifications in your sport. It is crucial for us to have an accurate coaching record for you! This helps us support clubs and representative teams by identifying potential coaches and also helps to ensure we can run a targeted coach education programme addressing the areas of most need!

If you have updated your coaching qualifications since you registered as a volunteer, or if you think you may not have listed your qualifications when you registered, now is your chance to let us know!

Firstly, gather together the following information:

- Your full name
- Volunteer ID number
- Date of Birth
- Sport in which you have completed your qualification
- Qualifying Body (e.g. Football Association of Ireland, Swim Ireland)
- Level of Qualification (e.g. Kick Start I, Level I, Assistant Teacher)

There are three ways you can pass this information on.

1. Contact the Volunteer Information Centre on +353 818 300 053 and provide them with this information.
2. Email your details to fiona.murray@specialolympics.ie, including the words "Coaching Qualifications" in the subject line.
3. Log on to your own profile and update your qualifications yourself.

Goal Setting

One of the most useful tools in helping to keep you and your athletes motivated is to set goals! Goals help us to measure progress and see small improvements made on a regular basis. Without them, we can sometimes become bored and disillusioned. Goals don't need to be complicated or grand - we don't all have to aim for the dizzy heights of a Usain Bolt performance! That would be, for most of us, a bridge too far.

So here are some tips to help you with setting goals! All you need to do is to work SMARTER!!!

Specific
Goals you set with your athletes should be specific. For example, it is not enough to say "I will swim faster". To make it specific, you should know where you are now and where you are going. To make the previous goals specific, you might say, "I will improve my personal best in the 25m Freestyle by 2 seconds",

Measurable
Goals should be measurable, quantifiable, tangible targets. A goal like "I will be a better defender" is difficult to quantify. However, by changing it slightly, we can make it measurable and therefore, monitored. For example, "I will increase my percentage of successful tackles by 15% in matches".

Action
Goals should help to motivate coaches and athletes to achieve and improve. They should require us to actively pursue them to achieve success and prompt us to take action. A goal such as "I will reach the World Games" is not a goal we can ever control, random selection means an athlete may perform to the best of their ability, but still may not be lucky enough to be selected. A more appropriate goal would be "I will perform a personal best (PB) time at my advancement competition". This puts the focus on the athlete's individual performance. A medal would be a simple by product of that and advancement a bonus. It ensures that an athlete who may run a PB and still not medal or advance, feels a sense of accomplishment, achievement and success.

Realistic
We've all had those moments in sport when we feel disappointed because we feel we have failed. For many, this is a huge reason for reduced motivation. A gymnast may want to score better in their floor routine, but setting a goal of scoring a perfect 20.0 may not be realistic for an athlete currently scoring an average of 12.5. Goals should provide a realistic opportunity for success.

They need to be achievable, but not too easy! Even if a 20.0 score is a realistic long term goal, shorter-term goals must pave the way to this goal. Athletes should experience regular success in meeting and achieving their goals.

Timed
Setting a goal without a timeline is akin to starting out on a journey with a full tank of petrol but with no idea of where you are going or when you will get there. Setting timed goals can be helpful in breaking longer term goals down into smaller, more manageable and achievable goals. A great example is one from Sonia O'Sullivan. In 1986, Sonia's long term objective was "to run in the Olympics and maybe win a medal for Ireland". While this was her dream and perhaps a realistic one, it was long term and without any sort of time restriction. However, as we know, Sonia's dream came true! How? Well, in 1986, she set the following goal "My main aim for 1986 is to break 9.40 for 3km and get the qualifying time for the World Juniors. I also want to bring down my 1500m and 800m times". Her goal was specific, measurable, action driven, realistic - and in setting that goal for 1986 season - she had set a clear time line for achieving that goal! If it is good enough for Sonia O'Sullivan...

Exciting
Goals belong to the athletes - not to their coach! They should be goals that EXCITE the athlete, that make the athlete want to train and practice and improve! Involve the athlete in setting their goals and you will find that the more ownership they have over their goals, the more motivated they will be to achieve them!

Recorded
Remember to record your athletes' goals. In doing this, you can regularly return to them and chart the progress. When your athletes achieve their goals you can celebrate and reward their achievements. When they are struggling with a goal, you can commend their effort and revise the goals. Maybe it was too ambitious in the first instance!

Remember the goals should be performance goals that relate directly to performance elements that your athlete can control, rather than outcome goals which focus on a result/medals! Sometimes it can take time to develop goals with your athletes, but you can make it fun and involve everyone. The time you spend in working to set goals will be more than made up for, when you start to see your athletes achieving!



7up's Winter Wonderland is coming to the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, Dublin, this Christmas from 1st December 2011 to 8th January 2012 and Special Olympics Ireland is delighted to be part of the magic!

We are thrilled to have been chosen as one of five charities who will benefit financially from this fantastic event. With an Ice Rink, Christmas Circus, Continental Christmas Market, Santa's Christmas Village and Christmas themed funfair rides it promises Christmas sparkle for all members of the family!

Please keep an eye out on our website at www.specialolympics.ie and our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/specialolympicsireland for exciting news coming soon about our winter themed fundraising event happening at Winter Wonderland. To find out more about Winter Wonderland see www.7upwinterwonderland.ie

HEALTH IN FOCUS

Keeping active...

This time of year brings about many changes; the children have gone back to school, the evenings are getting shorter and trees are starting to lose their leaves. It may also be time to change your physical activity behaviours! We all know the benefits of participating in physical activity, including improved cardiovascular health, healthy weight and improved mental health.

It is recommended that adults should participate in 30 minutes of moderate intense physical activity on 5 days of the week and children should do 60 minutes every day. These can be broken up into 2 x 15 minute sessions or 3 x 10 minutes sessions. But, what exactly is moderate intensity? Moderate intensity exercise means you will feel some effort, your heart rate will increase and you will feel warmer all over, just like a brisk walk. You will be breathing faster but not out of breath. You should be able to talk but not sing!

There are lots of different types of activities you can participate in to improve your health and fitness. People are often put off by the thoughts of slogging away at the gym but really physical activity is any muscle movement which causes energy expenditure. So, don't forget the everyday activities that can be included too like the vacuuming and gardening! Here are some tips to increasing your physical activity levels:

- Get off the bus a few stops early and walk the rest of the way
- Pop out for a brisk walk during your lunch break
- Get a friend to join you in an activity you both like

Check out the www.getirelandactive.ie website which has recently been redeveloped to become a one stop shop for physical activity. The website is designed to encourage people to become more active by:

- creating awareness of the range of activities and opportunities for physical activity that exist locally, regionally and nationally; and
- providing advice on how to get started, tips on how to get more active and motivation to keep going

Now is the time to change – you can set small goals for yourself and gradually make your way to meeting the guidelines.

Intellectual Disability Modules Training

Intellectual Disability Modules are 6 individual education modules put together by Special Olympics Ireland and Trinity College Dublin to give all coaches and volunteers an insight into athletes and all individuals with an intellectual disability. It is available to any volunteer, particularly those working closely with athletes.

[Well done to Drogheda Special Olympics Club and the Eastern Region Athlete Leadership Programme Mentors who have received training in some of the Intellectual Disability Modules.](#)

Both groups are currently trying to determine when they might undertake the remaining modules. A number of clubs have been in touch to get on the waiting list and tutors are undertaking refresher training. So, get in touch, don't miss out on this great opportunity and learn more about how to support the work that you are doing with your athletes.

There is no cost to you in undertaking these modules. All we ask is that your club arranges the venue and has a minimum of 10 eager volunteers ready to attend – we'll supply the tutor. If there is just one individual interested, let us know so that we can invite them to join in with another group in your area.



A Training Course for Athletes

We have 15 tutors around the country ready to deliver a course in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Athletes. It is a specially-prepared 3-hour session that will give athletes the skills to know their roles and responsibilities and, most importantly, what they should do if they are worried about any issues.

For any further information on either the Intellectual Disability Modules or on Athlete Code of Ethics and Good Practice training, please contact:

Muireann Ni Riain, on +353 1 8691615
or email at muireann.niriain@specialolympics.ie

All Volunteers

Have you done your Basic Awareness – Code of Ethics and Good Practice workshop yet? It only takes 3 hours and can be done locally...

Where locally???

Through your Local Sports Partnership (Irish Sports Council) or Local Sports Development Officers (Sports NI) – these are great resources and essential in safeguarding athletes in all sports. Give your RDO Club Officer a call for more information.

Team Ireland athletes recognised at Euro 2012 qualifier match

The Team Ireland football teams were recently invited to the Aviva Stadium for one of the Republic of Ireland soccer team's Euro 2012 qualifier matches. Terence Flynn, a coach with the 5-a-side football team tells us here about the experience. Photographs all courtesy of Team Ireland athlete Oliver Boyle.

The FAI recently invited all three Special Olympics Ireland football teams to attend the Ireland V Slovakia Euro 2012 qualifier at the Aviva Stadium on Friday 2nd of September, in recognition of their wonderful achievements in Athens.

Members of the Special Olympics Ireland soccer teams successfully achieved gold in the men's five-a-side, silver in the eleven-a-side and bronze in the women's five-a-side. It's a fantastic achievement to participate at World Games at any level, let alone bring home medals. We wanted this celebration to be as special as possible so that the athletes got the recognition they deserved.

The night started off at 6.45pm at the former Jury's Hotel (now D4 hotels) at the corner of Pembroke Road and Lansdowne Road, where we were given our tickets for the lower west stand right beside the players and the action.

The match kicked off at 7.45pm. Watching from the lower west stand on the night, you could see that both teams were well prepared for the Euro 2012 qualifier. Games like these give the perfect opportunity to display players' talents in front of cameras.

You can see why our athletes love the game, anything can happen. Sport teaches us some valuable lessons that can be applied to life. It can help build character, but more often than not it reveals it. Special Olympics training and hard work at the start of the World Games influenced the outcome of the Games, with all of our soccer teams playing in finals for medals.

At half time we got the word to make our way to the centre of the pitch, where we lined up and were presented to the Irish and Slovakian fans. All I could think of was that all of these athletes have devoted a lot of time and effort into reaching the pinnacle of their sport, through training and hard work and now it was payback. The fans were great, they made you feel that it was worth it; the cheers were deafening, the experience was unforgettable.

Family members and friends of Special Olympic athletes should encourage all athletes to stay active. Sport helps develop the traits of discipline and determination as it requires the individuals to work as a team towards a common goal. It also helps improve social interaction and develop personal skills.

To the FAI staff and management, I would like to say thank you, for being perfect hosts and making everyone feel like sporting heroes and for an exceptional opportunity to come out at half-time to the fans of soccer. To sum up the night, a picture can tell a thousand words.





Special Olympics
Ireland



ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE OF A LIFETIME?

Swim a nautical mile in San Francisco Bay in the most prestigious international open water swim event in the world and raise much needed funds for Special Olympics

THE RCP TIBURON MILE OPEN SEA SWIM

9th September 2012, San Francisco Bay

This unique race takes place in the beautiful surrounds of San Francisco Bay – starting from Ayala Cove on Angel Island and finishing at the beach in downtown Tiburon.

There are a number of divisions so that regardless of ability, hobby swimmers can participate alongside Olympic Gold Medalists, World Champions and triathletes!

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Brenda Mahon at Special Olympics
Telephone: +353 1 8912000
Email: tiburonmile@specialolympics.ie

Entries taken until 30th June 2012
Minimum sponsorship required €3,000

Sign up online at
www.specialolympics.ie/tiburon



Special Olympics athlete Aisling Beacom from Wicklow who won a bronze medal in the 800m freestyle and a silver medal in the 1,500m open water swim at the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games held in Athens, Greece. Aisling has twice swam the Tiburon Mile and was instrumental in developing this unique fundraising event for Special Olympics.

