

JANUARY 2011

# CONNECT



Special Olympics  
Ireland

Your Special  
Olympics  
2011 Pull-Out  
Calendar Inside!



**TAKE A BOW  
VOLUNTEERS!**



The European Year of Volunteering 2011



# WELCOME!

Hello Everyone,

I wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year and thank you so sincerely for all your hard work, support and dedication in 2010. Last year was a tremendous year for Special Olympics Ireland. We saw Team Ireland represent their country, families and communities with great honour and true spirit at the European Summer Games in Poland last September. Many of our athletes succeeded in achieving personal best scores and times at the Games and they returned home with a sizeable medal haul as well - 10 gold, 8 silver and 11 bronze medals.

The 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games was another great highlight for me in 2010. As a nation we are famous for our spirit of giving and the people of Limerick and Clare were the epitome of that spirit as hosts during our Games last June. 1,900 athletes and 3,500 volunteers took part with thousands of spectators and supporters from the four corners of Ireland cheering on our athletes. Through this support and the financial generosity of many local companies, the athletes were able to experience the passion of competition on the sports field and joy of friendship off it.

2011 promises to be an even more exciting year for Special Olympics as the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Greece approaches. Athletes, coaches, families, volunteers and staff from Team Ireland will once again represent their country with honour and pride next June in Athens.

2011 has been designated by the European Union as the European Year of Volunteering to recognise the greatness of volunteers and to encourage more people in our communities to get involved in volunteering.

There are almost one million volunteers supporting Special Olympics across the world and more than 24,000 extraordinary volunteers in Ireland. Your worth is priceless and your giving enriches our athletes in so many ways and encourages others to do likewise.



Your work and dedication enables our athletes to participate more regularly in their chosen activities and enhances the quality of the programmes we offer. Through your support and work you are also ensuring those who would not otherwise have the opportunity to take part, and experience the joy of Special Olympics, are getting the chance to be involved. You as volunteers are the lifeblood of the Special Olympics movement and each one of you are an inspiration and provide a shining example of all that is best about the human spirit. You all should be proud of your own individual contribution and the difference you are making to so many people.

I know this is a very busy time for all involved in Special Olympics Ireland with the regular activities in centres, schools and clubs, combined with local and regional competitions, fundraising activities and the huge preparations and training currently taking place for the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens.

As volunteers and supporters, your incredible work ensures Special Olympics is a strong force for good in our world today. Thank you.

Best wishes,

Mary Davis,  
Chairperson,  
Special Olympics Ireland

*Mary is pictured above with Special Olympics athletes Anne Hickey and Annita O'Connor from Carlow*

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

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## On the cover



2011 has been designated as the European Year of Volunteering. This presents a wonderful opportunity to celebrate YOU, the volunteer, who makes such a valuable contribution to society and to encourage those who are not currently involved in volunteering, to do so.

There will be a number of exciting events taking place throughout 2011 to mark this special year. Some of these are highlighted in the pull out calendar in the middle of CONNECT. For more information please go to [www.eyv2011.ie](http://www.eyv2011.ie)

Special Olympics Ireland plans to launch a new recognition plan this year to coincide with EYV2011. The topic of recognition was discussed at the Annual Volunteer Forum last September and based on feedback received at this, and consultation with all the Regions, we are confident and hopeful that the Recognition Plan will be embraced by all stakeholders in the organisation as a means of recognising, motivating and retaining volunteers.

A guide to recognising volunteers will be issued to all clubs over the coming months.

**Ready to Volunteer?**  
Here's what you need to remember:

Every new volunteer applicant will receive notification from Special Olympics Ireland, i.e. when they have successfully passed our registration process, including the background check. It is not possible to volunteer in ANY capacity for Special Olympics Ireland without becoming fully registered. This process is in place to protect all our stakeholders, including you.

In addition a membership card will be enclosed if the new volunteer has informed us of their assignment with Special Olympics Ireland (i.e. club/event/committee role) and has provided us with a photograph.

## Special Olympics Ireland 2012 – 2015 Strategy

Help shape our next 4-Year Strategic Plan

2011 marks the final year in the organisation's current strategy and therefore it is very timely for us to reflect on our progress over the last 4 year strategy period but, more importantly, to look towards the future to identify how and where we need to channel our energy and effort in the four years to follow.

We would like to extend an invitation to all members of the organisation to participate and contribute to the development of our next 4-year strategy, which will guide management and development of the Special Olympics Ireland programme from 2012 – 2015. Your input, feedback and contributions will be vital in helping to shape our direction and focus.

There are a number of ways in which you may contribute:

- (a) Go along to a Strategy Consultation session!  
A session is scheduled to take place in each region and is open to all members to attend (see centre Calendar for exact dates)
- (b) Submit written input/feedback via the:
  - (i) Website - [www.specialolympics.ie/Strategy](http://www.specialolympics.ie/Strategy)
  - (ii) Dedicated Strategy Email: [strategy@specialolympics.ie](mailto:strategy@specialolympics.ie)
  - (iii) Post - Send to: Strategy Team, Special Olympics Ireland, 4th Floor, Park House, Dublin.

Following the initial consultation phase during January through to early March, a Draft Strategic Plan will be developed and made available for further feedback and comments. The Plan will be posted on the website by March 31st 2011. Phase two of the consultation process will run through April and mid-May, with a final draft submitted to the Board of Directors for approval and sign off at the Annual General Meeting on 11th June 2011.

## Announcement of 2011 Annual General Meeting of Special Olympics Ireland



The 2011 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Special Olympics Ireland will be held at 1pm on Saturday, 11th June, 2010 in the Red Cow Moran Hotel, Naas Road, Dublin 22 (venue may be subject to change but adequate notice will be given).

All registered members of Special Olympics Ireland, which includes all registered athletes, family members and volunteers, are invited to submit motions for consideration at the AGM, and to submit nominations for the Board of Directors (two individuals will be elected to the Board at the AGM).

All Regional Councils and Clubs are entitled to send delegates to the AGM, twenty from each Regional Council and two from each Club. Special Olympics Ireland athlete leadership and families committees are also entitled to send delegates.

Each delegate has one vote and must be a registered member of Special Olympics Ireland. Only duly appointed Delegates or existing members of the Board shall be entitled to attend and vote at general meetings of Special Olympics Ireland. Any member of Special Olympics Ireland who is not a delegate may attend the AGM should they so wish.

If you wish to submit a nomination or a motion, you can download the relevant forms from [www.specialolympics.ie](http://www.specialolympics.ie), contact your Club or contact Special Olympics Ireland on +353 1-882 3972.



## Special Olympics mourns the passing of Robert "Sarge" Shriver

Husband of Special Olympics founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver, and President of the Special Olympics Movement from 1984 to 1996, Sarge passed away peacefully on 19th January 2011.

"R. Sargent Shriver was a pioneer for our movement. We will continue his legacy by providing opportunities for people and communities to unite in harmony through sport," said Brady Lum, President and COO, Special Olympics International.

Sarge is pictured on the left at the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Dublin with his wife Eunice Kennedy Shriver, and sister-in-law Jean Kennedy Smith

# MEET OUR EXTRAORDINARY TEAM

This section of CONNECT is dedicated, in every edition, to sharing some of the extraordinary stories our volunteers and athletes have about their involvement with Special Olympics and the joy and value they derive from it. If YOU have a story you wish to share we'd love to hear from you. If your story is featured you will be in with a chance to win a weekend away for two, thanks to the Carlton Hotel Group, one of Ireland's leading hotel chains.



In this edition we are focusing primarily on 'favourite memories of 2010'. Thank you to everyone who shared their story. An article submitted by Allan and Joyce Pickwick, who shared a lovely story about their involvement with Tipperary Special Olympics Club and the memories they hold from the Special Olympics Ireland Games 2010 has been selected. Allan and Joyce are pictured above with members of the Tipperary Special Olympics Club and their story is featured below.

**Congratulations Allan and Joyce, you have won a weekend away for two in a Carlton Hotel!**

## An Unbelievable Experience - Allan & Joyce Pickwick, Tipperary Special Olympics Club

About 4 years ago, following a conversation with Phyllis Naughton, that tireless patron of the Tipperary club, Joyce and I decided to spend some of our time doing something for the local community. "It seems a very reasonable and helpful pastime", we said at the time. On our maiden voyage to the Limerick bowling venue we met with the lads of the bowling section. By the time we arrived back to Tipperary we both KNEW that our future in Ireland was going to be connected with Special Olympics.

Having brought four boys into the world, we were committed to the world of sport very early on in our married life. I was a Physical Training Instructor in the Marines and later in the police, and Joyce was nursing at the local hospital. For many years we all took part in walking, climbing and caving as well as the more conventional sports of rugby, soccer and judo. Two of our sons became black belts and two, brown belts. My good fortune allowed me to teach judo around the world. Joyce bandaged us up when necessary!!!

With our new involvement firmly in place, we made sure our working week included 'Special Thursday', the day we most looked forward to.....bowling day. After a very short time with the bowlers we became like one big happy family, with a lot of laughter and occasionally a few tears.



We soon learnt that the Special Olympics organisation and administration is, in itself, very special. It was a wonderful moment when we learned that we had been included in the volunteer/coach team for Munster for the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games. Joyce, as head coach for bowling soon found out just how hard the back-room boys and girls work on such occasions and was appreciative of how helpful and supportive everyone was to her in her new role.

From the moment we met with the athletes in Tipperary on the morning of the Opening Ceremony, there was that feeling of excitement and expectation which continued throughout the whole event. At the stadium the comradeship and happiness was overpowering, but it didn't finish there, it was with us throughout the entire Games. At times we felt very humble and quite emotional. The memory of that week is something that will surely remain with us for many, many years to come. The whole Special Olympics experience has changed OUR lives.

.....Oh and by-the-way, a big thanks to all the athletes who looked after us at the Games.....

Allan and Joyce Pickwick





# Moving on to our amazing athletes...

**Sarah Shaw** and **Robbie McNamara**

were members of Team Ireland at the European Games last year. They appeared on Four Live on RTE 1 following the Games. Presenter Maura Derrane asked them what was their highlight of the European Games and they said the cheers they received from all the supporters at the Opening Ceremony made them feel like super stars. You are super stars Sarah and Robbie.

**James Crowe** from Limerick travelled to Poland as part of Team Ireland to participate at the Special Olympics European Games in September. He also participated in the Special Olympics Ireland Games. Among his highlights from 2010 is his memory of the moment when all 1,900 athletes travelled in a convoy of buses to the Opening Ceremony in Thomond Park - this was really exciting as the people in the cars waved

and cheered on the athletes. James is a keen sportsman and says that Special Olympics has given him the chance to visit different places, both in Ireland and abroad. He also enjoys the social aspect of Special Olympics and has made many friends. Continued success to James with his sporting endeavours. Our Special Olympics athletes have been praised far and wide and in the words of Minister Mary Hanafin

*"Special Olympics Ireland embodies everything that is great about our country. The athletes who train so hard and families who provide support, the communities who follow the athletes' successes, at home and abroad, all combine to ensure that having an intellectual disability does not preclude anyone from going for gold and being the best they can be."*



## Special Olympics World Summer Games Athens 2011

Preparations are well underway for World Summer Games. There are 126 athletes and 49 coaches travelling, giving us a Team Ireland delegation of 175 people. Training has commenced and we all wish Team Ireland the very best of luck in this preparation phase.

In addition to Team Ireland, there are approximately 220 volunteers travelling to volunteer at the Games. Each volunteer travelling has to raise €3,250 for the trip. The funds raised by these volunteers (The Athens Volunteer Team) will help offset the cost associated with sending Team Ireland to Greece and cover their own travel costs. Fundraising is off to a flying start in all corners of Ireland for this and activities range from 'Coast to Coast' walks of Ireland, Santa's Grottoes to Fashion Shows and Golf Tournaments. We commend the creative and fun ways being employed to raise funds and look forward to sharing stories from this team as they prepare for "The Road to Athens".

## Giveandbuy.ie

An innovative way to show your support for Special Olympics Ireland

Special Olympics Ireland is delighted to be one of the beneficiaries of Ireland's most innovative online charity, [www.giveandbuy.ie](http://www.giveandbuy.ie)

The website helps charities like Special Olympics Ireland raise money by providing people with an online platform to buy and sell goods and services.

It operates just like any other classified advertisement service. All you have to do is place an advertisement on [www.giveandbuy.ie](http://www.giveandbuy.ie) and choose the charity you would like to see benefit from the funds raised. The buyer buys in the knowledge that their money is going 100% to charity.

In addition to unwanted goods, you can sell your time and experience via [www.giveandbuy.ie](http://www.giveandbuy.ie). By volunteering say 2 hours of accountancy or beautician services, Special Olympics will receive payment from the buyer for that expertise. For further information please visit [www.giveandbuy.ie](http://www.giveandbuy.ie)



Special Olympics athlete Jerome Moran with Miriam O'Callaghan showing their support for Giveandbuy.ie

# CONNAUGHT

## European Basketball Week

Six clubs took part in the November 20th Basketball Blitz to celebrate European Basketball Week. Generously hosted by Sligo Grammar School, the clubs that took part in the men and women's competitions included: Galway Globetrotters SOC, Tribes SOC Basketball Club, Athlone SOC, Sligo All Stars SOC, Ballina Basketball SOC and Shoot 'n' Stars SOC

The standard of competition was very high and the enthusiasm of the athletes was palpable in the exciting atmosphere.

We would like to express our gratitude to all the volunteers, including student volunteers, who assisted in the successful event. Many thanks to Antoinette Campbell, National Basketball Co-ordinator, for her contribution. Thank you also to the parents of the Sligo All Stars for their help with refreshments.

## Galway Special Olympics Equestrian Club



Officially launched in October 2010, the Galway Special Olympics Equestrian Club was formed as a result of athletes living in nearby communities expressing a desire to take part in horse riding. We are very fortunate to have Caroline Brennan on board as co-ordinator for the club and the Galway Equestrian Centre, run by the O'Brien Family, is very enthusiastic and passionate to help our club succeed. The owners, Frances and Thomas, along with their sons, Joe and Thomas, have signed up as volunteers along with Mary Mitchell and Pauline Kavanagh. We appreciate all the time, energy and professionalism the coaches bring to our club.

The club runs Mondays from 5.45pm – 7.30pm and we now have over 20 members.

We would like to thank all the wonderful athletes and families, the generous volunteers and coaches, and also our hardworking committee. In addition, we received much-needed funds and support from Special Olympics Connaught, Galway Sports Partnership and Enterprise, Monivea Charity Ride and Orla O'Brien, who ran the Dublin Mini Marathon for our club. Thank you all so much.

The Galway Equestrian Special Olympics club is looking forward to another very busy year in 2011.



## Dates for your Diary

### Consultation Meeting on new Strategic Plan 2012-2015

There will be three Council Meetings in 2011. The first one will be focussed on the Special Olympics Ireland Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015. This is an open consultation where we want input from all our stakeholders. If you are an athlete, volunteer, coach, mentor, family or club member we would encourage you to attend this meeting and help us shape the new Strategy for the organisation. This meeting will take place at the McWilliam Park Hotel on Thursday, 10th February at 7:30pm.

### Regional Council Meetings 2011

Thursday, 10th February 2011

Thursday, 12th May 2011

Thursday, 3rd November 2011

All meetings will be held at the McWilliam Park Hotel at 7:30pm

## Golf Leader Training Course

If you are interested in assisting with athletes in our Golf programme then this course is a must. While the date and venue have still to be confirmed, names are now being taken to fill the course. Note a minimum of 12 is required to run the course. Special Olympics Connaught is covering the cost of this course for anyone who would like to attend. For booking a place on this course please contact Nancy Holland on +353 87 8297624 or email [connaughtvol@specialolympics.ie](mailto:connaughtvol@specialolympics.ie).



## Calendar of Sports Events January – June 2011

To see a full list of forthcoming Connaught Sports Events please refer to [www.specialolympics.ie/connaught](http://www.specialolympics.ie/connaught)

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED URGENTLY

### Golfing Volunteers Wanted!

Are you a golfer and would you like to get involved with a Special Olympics Club? Athenry Fairways SOC is looking for golfers to play 9 holes Alternate Shot on the course with an athlete. The club meet every Monday from 10am-12.30pm in Athenry Golf Club. If you think you would be interested or for further information please contact Nancy Holland on +353 87 8297624.



# LEINSTER

## 2010 Events Round Up

It's been a busy few months with the completion of seven events in aquatics, badminton, golf, and pitch and putt. Thanks a million to all the event teams, volunteers, venue owners, athletes and coaches that made these events possible.

## Camcor Warriors - In at the deep end

It's hard to put into words the whole experience of Camcor Warriors' first Regional event held in Courtown. It was an emotional rollercoaster for athletes, coaches, families and volunteers alike. The whole event was professionally organised and we were made to feel so welcome that we were all still on a high on Tuesday night in the Community School for our usual weekly gymnastics training session with the athletes. The participation of our club has given us a great sense of purpose, accomplishment and pride. It was enlightening to meet with athletes, coaches, families and volunteers from the other participating clubs, exchange coaching tips and gain a wealth of knowledge which is what a new club like ours needs. The whole experience has given us all a huge spur to achieve even greater things in the future. We look forward to attending more Regional events again soon.

- Joan Grimes, Club Secretary



Pictured above are members of the Camcor Warriors from Co. Offaly

## Upcoming Events

### Coaches' Forum

A Coaches' Forum for all our club coaches will be held on Saturday the 5th of March 2011, venue to be confirmed. It will be a great opportunity for coaches to meet, share their knowledge and experience, as well as receiving information on our Special Olympics programme and about plans for the start of the new four year cycle. Notification and reminders will be sent to all clubs during February, but if you're a club coach, please save this date in the meantime.

### Other Events

Please check our website for full details of forthcoming events in the Region:

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



## Basketball Developmental Day to be Rescheduled.

Due to the recent arctic spell, the Special Olympics Leinster basketball Development Day was cancelled in December. However, we will be rescheduling this event for late January so if you were planning to come along please keep an eye on our website for regional updates.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED URGENTLY

### Motor Activities Training Programme (MATP)

MATP is a combination of activities designed to help athletes who do not have the cognitive ability and/or physical skills necessary to participate in traditional sports to develop their gross and fine motor skills. We are seeking to recruit a group of volunteers to help with the development of this programme in Leinster and to support an event to be held in February.

### Medical Volunteers

MEDICAL volunteers are needed URGENTLY. Special Olympics Leinster requires medical volunteers to assist at area events throughout the year.

### Games Management System Volunteers Needed.

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 technically support our events during 2011. Training will be provided in using our specifically designed Games Management System (GMS) to facilitate competition set up and the recording of results. GMS is a user-friendly software package – so, no computer programming/coding required.

### Sport Specific Volunteers - Basketball

Have you, or someone you may know, an interest in basketball? If so why not get involved in our area events. The events are being held in April 2011 in Gormanston College, Co Meath. We are looking for: Basketball Officials/ Referees, Competition Manager, Event Manager (training will be provided).

If you would like to help with any of the above contact us on +353 1 6296999 or email [leinster@specialolympics.ie](mailto:leinster@specialolympics.ie)

# EASTERN

## Annual Polar Plunge

The Annual Polar Plunge fundraiser took place at The Forty Foot, Sandycove on Saturday 11th December. Santa and his reindeer even appeared and took the plunge to add to the festive atmosphere.

Among those taking part were: Assistant Garda Commissioner Mick Feehan, William Ryan of Templemore Garda College along with his daughter Rachel, Gerry Murphy and the lads from Ratoath GAA Club. Mary Hanafin, Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport came along to support all the brave participants as they took to the icy cold water.

A huge thank you from Special Olympics to everyone who took part and all who supported them.

## Aquatics Development League - Ballymun Deep Blues & NAC Sharks

A League Gala between Ballymun Deep Blues and NAC Sharks took place in late November with great success.

Once the event started, everyone there cheered for everyone! It really didn't matter which race it was, once the athletes from the 'opposing' teams got to know each others' names they were cheering them on with such gusto, and in such a sportsmanlike way it made for very exciting races right up until the last swimmer reached the finish line.

After the event, the Deep Blues invited everyone for tea, cakes and biscuits. We chatted for ages with both clubs mingling and recounting a very well run gala. I spoke with almost all the parents and guardians and all said how happy they were with the event and how proud they were of our athletes.

We are very proud of our club and will continue to do the very best we can to improve it in all ways we can.

- Gerard Sheehan, Club Coach, NAC Sharks



*Pictured above and left are some of the brave volunteers who took part in the Polar Plunge at the Forty Foot in December. Also pictured is Mary Hanafin, Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport with Assistant Garda Commissioner Mick Feehan.*

## Welcome to our new Clubs

### Elm Eagles Special Olympics Club

This new golf club is based in Castleknock and runs a weekly golf training session. Please contact Luke (Club Secretary) on +353 86 8305901 if you are interested in volunteering or joining the club as an athlete.

### Malahide United Special Olympics Club

Located in Malahide, this club meets weekly to train in 5-a-side football. If you are interested in becoming an athlete or volunteer with this club, please contact Nick (Club Secretary) on +353 86 1734294 or ndavies1954@hotmail.com to find out more!

### United Warriors Special Olympics Club

A new club offering training in 5-a-side football based in Rathcoole. Contact Martha (Club Secretary) on +353 87 7439143 or baby\_gannon@msn.com to find out more about volunteering or getting involved as an athlete.

## Events & Training

### Sports Officials' training courses

In the coming months, the Region hopes to run courses to train volunteers to be sports officials. The following courses are planned:

1. Aquatics Timekeeper & Stroke Judge
2. Football Referee
3. Bowling Officials

Courses are run in conjunction with the relevant National Governing Body for the sport. If you would like to find out more or register your interest please contact Elaine or Karen on +353 1 8691626 or email [eastern.region@specialolympics.ie](mailto:eastern.region@specialolympics.ie)

### Athlete and Coach Development Events

Throughout the season we are running Coach Workshops and Athlete Development Events to help prepare our athletes for the next advancement cycle. Coaches should ensure that they read the information on these events carefully and contact us with any questions. These development events are invaluable to help encourage athletes to move up events where appropriate and to improve on existing skills in preparation for the next advancement cycle.



## Fundraising Comedy Night

Tickets are now available for the Laughter Lounge on Friday 4th February 2011. The main act is Jack Whitehall of 'Never Mind the Buzzcocks', 'Mock the Week' and '8 out of 10 Cats' fame.

Tickets cost €25 each and all monies raised go to Special Olympics Ireland. If you would like to buy tickets please contact Paul Ahearne on +353 1 8691660 or email [paul.ahearne@specialolympics.ie](mailto:paul.ahearne@specialolympics.ie)



## HALLOWEEN FAMILY FUN

A huge thank you to all 350 family members who attended the Region's Family Halloween Fun Day in the RDS. Everyone had a brilliant day, with lots of traditional style games and fun such as apple bobbing, spaghetti dunking, coconut shy and scary pintail on cat. Other entertainment on the day included Hip Hop dance lessons, Face painting, DJ, Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Programme Stand, Sports Stand, Healthy Athlete Stand and Train for Thought challenge. Most importantly the event was FANCY DRESS!!!

The Regional Family Team - Denis O'Reilly, Shelagh Leech, Liam O'Brien, Jenny West, Colm Leech and Brendan Whelan - put in a huge amount of work over several months to ensure the success of the event. They received great support from several companies and people and want to acknowledge and thank Begleys Fruits for the donation of fruit and over 300 pumpkins, Tony Purcell design, Lanz Print, Spar Sandycove, RDS, National Performing Arts School, Marvellous Faces Face Painters, Irish Heart Foundation, Order of Malta, DJ Johnny Coakley, Lisa Montgomery & family, and of course the 33 volunteers who were brilliant and helped out for the entire day!

See you all next year and remember, we need families to get involved in Special Olympics so spread the word and hopefully we'll see even more families next year!



## Cabra Lions' Special Visitor

Pictured is Mark Kennedy Shriver who recent visited the Cabra Lions Special Olympics Club. The Club made Mark Honorary Club President for the day and he is pictured here with athletes Deborah O'Brien and Jenny Clarke.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED URGENTLY

### Calling All Volunteers!!

#### *Proposed New Blackrock Aquatics Club*

Special Olympics Eastern Region is hoping to set up a new aquatics club in Blackrock. We need to recruit a team of volunteers to help run the club.

#### *Sports Events*

Our events run from October to June each year. If you are interested in becoming part of a team to help plan, manage and run events please contact us. A commitment of about 1 hour per week during the sports calendar year is required.

#### *Athlete Leadership Programme (ALPs) Mentors*

Mentors are needed to support athletes taking part in the ALPs programme. We currently are looking for 2 male and 2 female mentors in the following geographical areas:

- Ballymun (male mentor)
- Dublin 15 (male mentor)
- Artane (female mentor)
- Mount Merrion (male mentor)

#### *Committees/Teams*

If you have experience of being on a committee or leading a team and would be interested in leading a group of volunteers we would be delighted to hear from you.

#### *Medical / First Aid*

We urgently require qualified medical & first aid volunteers for all our sports events held during the year.

**Please contact [easternvolunteers@specialolympics.ie](mailto:easternvolunteers@specialolympics.ie) or telephone +353 1 8691635 for more information on all the above vacancies.**

# Special Olympics Ireland

## SAVE YOUR 2011 SPECIAL OLYMPICS DATES



January						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 Bank holiday	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

March						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 National Basketball Cup
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 St Patrick's Day	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

May						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 (Ro) Bank holiday	3	4	5	6	7 National Football Cup
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 European Football Week
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

February						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

April						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Collection Day	16
17	18	19	20	21	22 Good Friday	23
24 Easter Sunday	25	26	27	28	29	30

June						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6 (Ro) Bank holiday	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 Special Olympics

## Annual Regional Meetings (ARM's)

24th March, 7.30pm	Connaught McWilliam Park Hotel, Claremorris
4th April, 7pm	Munster Hibernian Hotel, Mallow
9th April, 2pm	Leinster KARE, McMahon Centre
13th April, 7pm	Eastern Region National College of Ireland, IFSC
13th April, 7pm	Ulster Strule Arts Centre, Omagh

15 April



All-Ireland Collection Day  
if you'd like to help on the day in your local area please visit

[www.specialolympics.ie/collectionday](http://www.specialolympics.ie/collectionday)  
or contact your Regional Special Olympics office

11 June  
Special Olympics Ireland AGM

25 June to 4 July

Special Olympics



26	27	28	29	30		

August						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 (Rel) Bank holiday	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 (N) Bank holiday	30	31			

29	30 (N) Bank holiday	31				

July						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 (N) Bank holiday	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

October						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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September						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

December						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 Int. Volunteer Day	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Christmas Day	26 St Stephens Day	27 Public holiday	28	29	30	31

November						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 European Basketball Week
27	28	29	30			

## Contacts

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**Special Olympics**  
Ireland

[www.specialolympics.ie](http://www.specialolympics.ie)  
[www.facebook.com/specialolympics](https://www.facebook.com/specialolympics)  
[www.twitter.com/soireland](https://www.twitter.com/soireland)

# MUNSTER

Ireland Games were never an end in themselves for us here in Special Olympics Munster. In the lead-up to the Games we had worked on developing plans for maximising the Games Legacy for the benefit of local clubs in the mid-west area and the broader Munster programme. Over the last few months we have gradually seen this legacy roll out and we would particularly like to welcome on board the many new volunteers who have joined the programme resulting from these Games.

## Munster Sports Programme.

The Munster Sports programme has been very active recently with many events taking place. On November 6th the first Ireland Games Legacy event took place with approximately 180 athletes taking part in Level 1 Aquatics. The following day, the regional Badminton event took place in Nagle College Mahon, Cork. There was an increase in participants from the previous year with over 30 athletes taking part.

65 athletes enjoyed a fun day at the Indoor Games Event in Cappawhite, Co. Tipperary. Geraldine Ryan Meagher and her team from Scoil Aonghusa are the driving forces behind Indoor Games and they were supported by Event Manager Martin Tierney and a group of enthusiastic volunteers.

November 20th saw a return to Limerick and Munster's second legacy event. The Basketball skills competition was held in the University Arena received a lot of support from the local community in Limerick.

A Rhythmic Gymnastics Competition took place in Coláiste Choilm in Ballincollig on November 21st. This event involved athletes from our gymnastics clubs who performed in the ribbon, rope, clubs and hoop. The event was supported by a team of volunteers from one of our supporting companies EMC from Ballincollig, Cork.

The Aquatics competition took place in Mallow on November 27th. Despite poor weather conditions many Munster clubs managed to travel to this Level 2 competition. The event was sponsored by J&J Janssen and Centocor Cork

Unfortunately, due to the poor weather conditions, the Waterford Bowling event, and the Regional Table Tennis event had to be postponed. It is hoped to reschedule these in 2011.

We are delighted that a lot of new volunteers who worked at the Special Olympics Ireland Games during the summer have continued to assist at Munster events during the year.



## Munster's newest Club

Pictured above are members of the new Special Olympics Gymnastics club from St. Anne's School in Ennis Co. Clare. They are absolutely delighted that they have officially joined Special Olympics Ireland. The pupils have been working very hard on their routines and hope to do well in the 2011 Rhythmic and Artistic Competition Events.

So far the school has an enthusiastic female team and they are working towards setting up a male team, with both teams ready for the 2011 competitions. They are looking forward to meeting the other athletes in the region and hope to make lots of new friends and have plenty of fun.

Congratulations to the coaches and supporters of St. Anne's School who have put so much work into getting the club started. We wish you the best of luck!

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED URGENTLY

**Mallow Marlins Special Olympics Swimming Club:** the club are looking for qualified swim teachers for their club on Monday evenings in Mallow Pool. Contact Eileen Carroll on +353 86 4083935

**Cork Special Olympics Swimming Club:** looking for volunteers with or without swim qualifications for their club on a Monday evening in Lota Pool Cork. If you can help out please contact Pat O'Neill +353 87 2907963



## Munster in pictures

Munster Calendar 2011 has been published as a fundraiser for Special Olympics Munster and each month one of our sports is represented. The two books produced in 2010 'Changing Lives Together' and 'Team Munster 2010' and the calendar can be viewed and are available to purchase through our website at [www.specialolympics.ie/munster](http://www.specialolympics.ie/munster)

To see a large selection of Special Olympics Munster photographs visit our Flickr photo group at

[www.flickr.com/groups/somunster](http://www.flickr.com/groups/somunster)



## FOOTBALL IN CORK - Up and Running again

Following a long break, Cork City is now represented again in the National II-a-side League. In the last 12 months, the club has grown to having 25 players registered, with 7 willing volunteers helping out.

Initial meetings to form the club took place in November 2009. Early progress was hampered by inclement weather, but a move to the excellent SPRAOI training pitch at COPE, Montenotte, with a regular time slot on Wednesday at 7.00pm, means the club is now firmly in everyone's diary. With player numbers growing and more importantly, consistency in attendance, the club is progressing well. An application to join the II-a-side National League was accepted and the new team joined the league in September 2010.

Since then, we have played 4 matches, winning one, drawing one and losing two. We have been honoured and delighted to secure Turners Cross for our home matches to date. The Munster Football Association, like the other football organisations in Cork, have been extremely supportive and made the 'Cross' available.

In November 2010 we held a very successful Table Quiz to raise some funds for the club. It was really well supported and we were delighted with the response from family members and friends.

During our development so far we have had a number of visits from well known sports people. Claire Shine, a member of the Ireland Under 17 ladies team that was so successful in European and World Cups last year, members of the Cork All-Ireland winning team, Eoin Cadogan, Brian O'Regan, Nicholas Murphy, Patrick Kelly and Noel O'Leary have all called to training sessions and were very willing participants in kick-arounds at training. The presence of recognisable sports personalities has been a significant encouragement to all our players and volunteers and such visits as these show the support from the wider Cork sporting community for our efforts.

So far, so good, but we are (probably like every other club) constantly on the look-out for more volunteers. Anyone who wishes to get involved with the club can contact us at [corkcitysofc@gmail.com](mailto:corkcitysofc@gmail.com) and we would be delighted to welcome new volunteers.



## Support your local hero & support an athlete

The 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens will see 7,000 athletes representing 180 countries, competing in over 24 Olympics sports. Among those will be 126 Irish athletes representing our country on the international sporting stage.

The cost incurred by Special Olympics Ireland to prepare and send the athletes to Athens will be in the region of €3,500 per athlete. We are now launching our 'Support an Athlete' programme which will see businesses, communities and friends getting behind their local athlete by donating or fundraising €3,500 for Special Olympics Ireland.

Once an athlete has been sponsored, we will personalise the relationship by supplying the supporter with a supporters certificate and frequent updates on the athlete's progress both during training and while in Athens.

There will be huge excitement and celebrations after the Games once the athletes return home to their communities to celebrate their achievements. This will be opportunity for the athlete to acknowledge the generous contributions, support and goodwill made by their supporters. This is a fantastic opportunity for you or your workplace to support your local hero.

If you would like more information about how to support your local hero please contact Mark Hughes at +353 1 8691634 or email [mark.hughes@specialolympics.ie](mailto:mark.hughes@specialolympics.ie)



# ULSTER

## Foyle Special Olympics Club

Foyle Special Olympics Club athletes have been very busy recently with two exciting events.

Seventeen athletes took to the water on Enagh Lough in Derry to sample kayaking with local instructors providing the day's activities. Club volunteers Paddy Curtis and Aiden McKinney provided a dual role on the day as they are both qualified Canoeing Instructors and swimming coaches. After a fun-filled and exhausting day's activity, athletes completed their evening with light refreshments at the City of Derry Rugby Club. The event was such a success that the club hopes it will become a regular fixture in their calendar and plans are underway to add Special Olympics kayaking to their programme.



The second of the club's adventures was to visit Splashin' Penguins Special Olympics Swimming Club in Sligo. Athletes competed in an inter-club swimming gala in Sligo Sports complex which was also attended by Omagh Special Olympics Club. This is the third occasion that the clubs have facilitated a very successful inter-club event. Competing athletes and volunteers were treated to a visit at the 'Birds of Prey', a sanctuary for Birds of Prey and Owls, followed by a disco in the evening.

Foyle Special Olympics Swimming Club would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in both event but particular Pat O'Malley, Paddy Curtis and Rosemary McAleer.

## Annual Regional Meeting

Special Olympics Ulster would like to invite all volunteers, athletes and family members to attend their Annual Regional Meeting which will take place;

Wednesday 13th April 2011  
7pm, Strule Arts Centre  
Townhall Square, Omagh, County Tyrone BT78 1BL

## Annual Area Meetings

In preparation for the Annual Regional meeting each Area will host an Annual Area Meeting. The purpose of these meetings is to forward nominations or motions to the Annual Regional Meeting. All volunteers, athletes and family members are welcome to attend the relevant meeting for their area.

### Ulster East (Antrim & Down)

Monday 7th February 2011, 7pm – 9pm  
Ormeau Business Park, 8 Cromac Avenue, Belfast, BT7 2JA

### Ulster West (Derry, Donegal & Tyrone)

Monday 14th February 2011, 7pm – 9pm  
Strabane Library, 1 Railway Road, Strabane, BT82 8AN

### Ulster South (Armagh, Cavan, Fermanagh & Monaghan)

Monday 21st February 2011, 7.30pm – 9.30pm  
YWCA, Unit 1, North Road, Monaghan Town

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED URGENTLY

**Roe Valley Special Olympics Club** is a newly established athletics club based in Limavady. The club are seeking volunteers to assist at weekly training session. While previous experience in athletics would be beneficial it is not necessary. If you are interested in getting more information please contact Christine at the Regional Office on +44 28 90 239023

**Boots 'n Paddles** is a kayaking club based in the Craigavon area. The club are seeking volunteers to assist on the dry side specifically during monthly training sessions. If you are interested in more information please contact Victoria at the Regional Office on (+44) 28 90 239023.

## Athletics Event

In June 2011 Special Olympics Ulster will host its first ever Athletics Development Day in Shercock Athletics Club County Cavan. This will be an exciting new event for the Ulster Region, its clubs, athletes and volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering at this event please contact Emma McMenamin at +44 28 9089 2993 or email [emma.mcmenamin@specialolympics.ie](mailto:emma.mcmenamin@specialolympics.ie)







## EUROPEAN FLOORBALL CUP

Bludenz, Voralberg, Austria  
November 11th - 14th 2010

A great crowd turned up at Cork Airport on Monday, 15th Nov, to welcome home Team Ireland, the 8 athletes all from the Munster Region, who won bronze medals in the European Floorball Cup in Austria. Floorball is similar to indoor hockey, and is growing in popularity throughout Europe. Having trained hard over the preceding months, the athletes were looking forward to the competition in Austria, and they weren't disappointed!

They played 9 matches, winning 4, drawing 1, and losing 4, resulting in them receiving bronze medals in division 2. The team displayed great spirit throughout, and played with skill and passion, scoring some great goals and defending brilliantly. Well done to volunteers Pdraig Aherne (Head of Delegation), Paul O'Callaghan (Head Coach), and Julie Dwyer (Medical), who prepared the squad and ensured everyone enjoyed the experience.



The athletes who proudly represented their country were  
George Fitzgerald & Willie McGrath from Waterford Special Olympics Club;  
Mike Minogue & David Donegan, Tipperary Special Olympics Club,  
James Murphy Lisnagry Special Olympics Club,  
John Paul O'Donovan, Thomas O'Herlihy & Sean Murphy, COPE Foundation

## HEALTH IN FOCUS

### Dem bones dem bones...

We all know that our bones are so important for giving our body shape, helping us to move, protecting our delicate organs and for producing white blood cells to fight infection. Osteoporosis is a disease which causes our bones to become thin and brittle. But, did you know that osteoporosis has been shown to occur with high prevalence among people with intellectual disability? Some key factors associated with osteoporosis include small body size, hypogonadism and Down syndrome. Here are some things that you can do to keep your bones healthy and strong:

1. Eat and drink lots of foods with calcium. Adults should have 800mg of calcium every day. Foods rich in calcium:



Cheddar Cheese  
202mg, Matchbox  
Size Portion



Low Fat Yoghurt  
225mg  
1 Pot



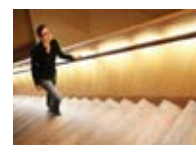
Skimmed Milk  
235mg  
190ml Glass



2. Take weight bearing exercise such as:



Bowling



Taking the stairs



Walking

3. Get plenty of vitamin D from:



Sunshine



Oily Fish



Eggs

For information on bone health visit the Irish Osteoporosis Society website on: [www.irishosteoporosis.ie](http://www.irishosteoporosis.ie).

For accessible information on bone health contact Carol Farrell, Health Promotion Project Officer on +353 1 8691669 or email [carol.farrell@specialolympics.ie](mailto:carol.farrell@specialolympics.ie)



# COACHES' CORNER

## In the spotlight - Swimming Coaches

As a multi-sport National Governing Body of sport (NGB), Special Olympics Ireland has always encouraged its coaches to attain their sports specific coaching qualifications from the relevant NGB. Each NGB, being the experts in their particular sport, puts in place its own guidelines and requirements which must be met by coaches in order for their qualifications to remain valid.

Swim Ireland, in line with its strategic plan 2007-2012 has introduced licensing for teachers and coaches. This licensing scheme is based across all aquatic disciplines within the Swim Ireland remit and is being rolled out across all 32 counties. The purpose of licensing is to help raise, maintain and regulate standards of practice. It also helps Swim Ireland reward and recognise both volunteers and paid professionals for their achievement of swimming qualifications. (Please note this also applies to the old ASA/SI qualifications - see below).

Licenses will be offered in the disciplines of Teaching Aquatics, Coaching Swimming, Coaching Diving, Coaching Water Polo, Coaching Synchronised Swimming and Teaching Disabilities. There are two levels of licence for teachers and three levels of licence for coaches.

Based on the level of licence obtained, teachers and coaches could work within the following stages of the Swim Ireland Aquatics Pathway (Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Framework) i.e. if you have a Level 1 Teaching Aquatics Licence then you could work as a support (Assistant) Teacher within the Aqua babies or Fundamentals stage of the pathway (Adult and Child, Pre-school and Learn To Swim environments).

**Level 1** – This refers to all teachers and coaches who have an ASA/SI Assistant Teachers Qualification (old system) or SI Level 1 Teaching Aquatics, Coaching Swimming, Coaching Diving, Coaching Water Polo or Coaching Synchronised Swimming Qualification (new system).

**Level 2** – Refers to all teachers and coaches who have an ASA/SI Full Teachers Qualification (old system) or SI Level 2 Teaching Aquatics, Coaching Swimming, Coaching Diving, Coaching Water Polo or Coaching Synchronised Swimming Qualification (new system).

**Level 3** – This refers to all coaches who have an ASA/SI Club Coach or Coach Qualification (old system) or SI Level 3 Coaching Swimming Qualification (new system).

	Level 1 (support teacher or coach)	Level 2	Level 3
Teaching Aquatics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aqua Babies</li> <li>• Fundamentals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aqua Babies</li> <li>• Fundamentals</li> <li>• Swim Skills</li> </ul>	
Teaching Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aqua Babies</li> <li>• Fundamentals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aqua Babies</li> <li>• Fundamentals</li> <li>• Swim Skills</li> </ul>	
Coaching Swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swim Skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swim Skills</li> <li>• Train to Train</li> <li>• Train to Compete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train to Train</li> <li>• Train to Compete</li> <li>• Train to Win</li> </ul>
Coaching Synchro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synchro Skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synchro Skills</li> <li>• Train to Train</li> <li>• Train to Compete</li> </ul>	
Coaching Water Polo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polo Skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polo Skills</li> <li>• Train to Train</li> <li>• Train to Compete</li> </ul>	
Coaching Diving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dive Skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dive Skills</li> <li>• Train to Train</li> <li>• Train to Compete</li> </ul>	

Table: Qualification and the environment that qualification could be used within.

Teachers and coaches must have achieved all appropriate Swim Ireland qualifications before they can apply for a license at a particular level. If teachers and coaches apply for a license based on international or other qualifications they must first have received recognition of equivalency from Swim Ireland. Information on how this can be achieved can be found on the Swim Ireland website at [www.swimireland.ie](http://www.swimireland.ie) under 'Education' and 'Awarding Body' or by contacting the Swim Ireland Education Team on +353 1 625 1158.

Please be aware that the levels for the Teacher and Coach License Scheme are based on the current qualification structure and new levels of license may be introduced at a later stage, e.g. a level 3 Teaching Aquatics License, on the introduction into the system of that qualification.

For further information on Swim Ireland's licensing system, and requirements for each level of license, please visit the Swim Ireland website [www.swimireland.ie](http://www.swimireland.ie) or contact the Swim Ireland Education team at +353 1 625 1158 or at [edadmin@swimireland.ie](mailto:edadmin@swimireland.ie)

Please note: this is a Swim Ireland licensing system, administered and developed by Swim Ireland. Special Olympics Ireland is outlining the above to coaches and volunteers for their information.



# SPORTS ROUND-UP

The FAI International Caps presentation took place in Dublin City Hall on Thursday 16th December 2010. All FAI "Football for All" international players involved in official competition in the year 2009 were presented with their caps. Special Olympics Ireland was delighted to have a team presented with caps on the night.

In May 2009, a team from Tullamore Special Olympics Club represented Special Olympics Ireland at the Special Olympics European Football Cup in Lisbon, Portugal. The team performed brilliantly throughout the competition and were rewarded for their efforts with silver medals.

The following athletes were presented with their caps by former Irish International player Ray Houghton and FAI President Paddy McQuaid; Jonathan Fitzpatrick, Paul Byrne, Alan Lonergan, Desmond Gonoude, Thomas Garry, Keith Murray, Nicholas Minnock, David Matthews, Peter McCormack and Patrick Moore. The team were supported in Portugal by Camillus Perry, Joseph Connolly and Regina Healion. Also present at the ceremony were Former International Goalkeeper Packie Bonner and Lord Mayor of Dublin, Gerry Breen

These newly capped athletes now brings the total of Special Olympics Ireland athletes who have received international caps to 81 which is a fantastic tribute to them and the many coaches who put in hours of work week in week.

Congratulations to all the players on their fantastic achievement and to the FAI for their continued commitment to all players, including those with disabilities.



*Pictured above are the Special Olympics athletes who received International Caps on 16th December (Jonathan Fitzpatrick, Paul Byrne, Alan Lonergan, Desmond Gonoude, Thomas Garry, Keith Murray, Nicholas Minnock, David Matthews, Peter McCormack and Patrick Moore) The team are pictured along with coaches Leslie Francis and Joe Connolly and former International Player Ray Houghton*

## New Date for National Basketball Cup

Due to the snow in December, the 2010 Special Olympics National Basketball Cup was deferred and has now been re-scheduled for Saturday March 5th in Loughlinstown Leisure Centre, Co. Dublin. All 5 regions will be represented on the day with 7 teams taking part in the men's competition and 6 teams will compete for the women's cup.

## Programme-wide Sports Teams

We are currently looking for volunteers to become involved in our Programme wide Sports Teams. These teams will be supported by the Programme Coordinator for that sport as well as Special Olympics Ireland staff.

Volunteers are being sought to build teams in athletics, aquatics, badminton, bowling, bocce, basketball, equestrian, football, golf, gymnastics, pitch & putt, kayaking.

The role of the sports teams is to assist in the delivery and development of the sports programmes. Volunteers contribute their experience and expertise in order to enhance the development of the sport and the overall organisation.

If you are interested in getting involved in any of our teams please contact the Sport Department on +353 1 8691641 or email [gillian.mckenna@specialolympics.ie](mailto:gillian.mckenna@specialolympics.ie)

## Sports Rules Change Process Now Every Two Years

After a recent meeting of the Sports Rules Advisory Committee (SRAC) it was agreed to change the annual sports rules change process to a two year cycle. The rationale for this was that, in the last five years, all sports have undertaken a fairly extensive review of their rules and it was felt that the time was now right to go out to a two year process.

In order for a rule to be changed it must be something that has a wide impact and not just a solution to something that happens at local, area or regional level. In addition, where a new rule or indeed an event is being sought, a process of field testing must be undertaken. Therefore, it is really important that any change being proposed has a good basis and has been tried at a range of levels before it is submitted.

Anyone wishing to submit a Rules Change Request can do so by downloading the necessary form on [www.specialolympics.ie](http://www.specialolympics.ie), completing and e-mailing it to [elaine.twomey@specialolympics.ie](mailto:elaine.twomey@specialolympics.ie). Forms submitted now will not be due for consideration until June 2012, with any changes posted in January 2013.

The only exception to these timelines is where a rule change is necessary for health and safety reasons, which can happen at anytime. Should this happen in any sport/s it will be communicated immediately.

In January 2011, rules changes submitted during 2010 will be posted following which the two year process will be implemented.



## Athlete Leadership Programme (ALPs)

### Eastern Region ALPs Conference

Pictured above are some of the athletes and mentors who braved the bad weather to attend the 3rd Annual ALPs Conference for the Eastern Region. Almost 60 athletes and mentors attended the two-day event at the Law Library on Church Street, Dublin 1.

The workshops on the first day included an update from Susan Murray on the Eastern Region ALPs Athlete Sub-Committee. She explained how the sub committee were finding it hard to organise visits with clubs in their area in order to talk about ALPs. They have asked for the support of all clubs in the region for this project.

Rebecca McAdam and Robbie Daly from the SO Unlimited radio programme delivered a workshop on how to do a good interview and how to project your points and opinions clearly. This was followed by an energetic workshop by Alec Ward from the National Performing Arts School who gave the group a two-hour dance lesson including routines to music from Glee, Black Eyed Peas and Shakira.

In keeping with the Special Olympics ethos of promoting a healthy lifestyle, all of the athletes were presented with a new pedometer and learned how to use them. Each athlete was given a logbook with targets to reach during throughout the year (Mount Everest being one of them!). We had great fun using them and we'll be checking up on everyone's totals in 2011 so keep walking!

On Day 2 we had our Eastern Region Fun Quiz which was won by the Spidermen! In the afternoon we had our annual ALPs Awards Ceremony. Liz Callery, Regional Director thanked all the athletes and mentors for their hard work. 14 athletes received bronze and silver awards. Well done to everyone involved again and hopefully we'll see you all next year for the Athlete Forum where we hope to invite all athletes to get involved in ALPs!

#### Bronze Awards

Geoffrey Curley, Jack Conneely and William Holmes from Sports Club 15 Special Olympics Club (Hot Fuzz ALPs Group). Charles Spencer from Stillorgan/Mt Merrion Special Olympics Club, Stephen Fagan from United Warriors Special Olympics Club and Philomena O'Dowd – Dundrum Special Olympics Club (Dundrum ARCH Club).

#### Silver Awards

Jerome Moran, Neil McCrone, Paul Mullen, Aisling O'Mahony, Paul Mullen, Laura Byrne, John Feighery, Chloe McMullan and Liam O'Malley all from Sports Club 15 Special Olympics Club (Hot Fuzz ALPs Group).



### ALPs Cookery Workshop

28 ALPs athletes from the Eastern Region took part in a cookery workshop in October which was facilitated by Carol Farrell – Health Promotion Project Officer for Special Olympics Ireland. Pictured on the left is Carol explaining a recipe to the athletes.

### North Cork ALPs sending some Christmas cheer across the miles!



The long established North Cork ALPs group, pictured above, decided to get together to do something for those less fortunate coming up to Christmas by wrapping empty shoeboxes and filling them with lots of lovely surprises for children in need in third world countries.

The shoeboxes contained practical items such as toothbrushes, socks and personal hygiene items as well as lots of fun toys and art materials such as crayons, colouring books, pens and pencils. The group had lots of fun with the wrapping and packing of the boxes which were distributed by 'Team Hope'.

Our ALPs group gets together every 6 weeks for a two hour session and many members are working towards gaining their ALPs awards, as well as developing other social and communication skills. We also organise social outings where we can get together and have some fun. New members, mentors and volunteers are always welcome so if you are interested in taking part in 2011 please get in touch with Joanne on joannehurley@eircom.net or contact the Cork office for further details.



# CLUB CORNER

## Best of 2010

It's amazing how quickly a year goes by and so hard to believe that we're into 2011 already. So much was achieved over the course of the last 12 months, and much credit has to be given to all the clubs who have put enormous effort into, not only surviving, but thriving in such a difficult environment.

The most public highlight of the year was the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games. With an unprecedented number of clubs sending athletes to the Games, it was fantastic to see so many of the newer clubs competing for their region for the first time. In seeing this, it is great to know that some of the 17 new clubs developed in 2010 can look forward to participation in the 2014 Ireland Games! Over the course of the year, we also saw the recruitment of 772 new athletes, which is a fantastic achievement, and as always, exceeded targets.

While there have been incredible local and regional achievements, there have also been great developments in the club programme. For the first time, all club volunteers have a photographic membership card, with athlete cards to follow early in the new year. A huge effort has been undertaken to ensure that all clubs have a constitution in place. Work is still ongoing to ensure completion, but massive effort has been made all round. As always, the task of Annual Affiliation has come and gone at the start of the sporting calendar. This is one of the largest administrative tasks that a club has to undertake, but one that assists the smooth running of the organisation.

By early 2010, the 2 year Club Visit Programme was complete. The key learning from this programme was that face-to-face contact between clubs and staff members was vital, and a programme has been put in place to ensure that all clubs are visited on an ongoing basis. The latest round of visits commenced in September with a renewed focus outlined for 2011.

**The Enniscorthy Special Olympics club recently welcomed Mark Kennedy Shriver to the Club. Mark and Mary Davis are pictured here with some of the club members.**



## 2011 – What's to come

For a small number of clubs, 2011 will bring all the excitement of the World Summer Games, in Athens in June. However, for many more clubs the developments will be closer to home.

As stated earlier, the programme of club visits is to continue throughout the year. Clubs to be visited will be prioritised based on needs identified within the region or on request from the club. The key focus of these visits will be to focus on assisting clubs with any challenges that they face, but also to ensure that clubs are operating to minimum safe operating standards.

As a follow on from the review of the organisation's structures, the club management structure has been reviewed and amendments made. These new changes will be communicated and rolled-out during 2011.

Key resources for clubs will be either reviewed or developed, including a review of the club handbook and the development of a membership starter pack for athletes and the redevelopment of the club page on the website.

Finally, wishing all clubs every success in 2011 and if you have any questions or queries, please ensure to contact your regional office.

## Save the date - Friday 15th April!

Special Olympics Ireland's All Ireland Collection Day will take place on Friday, 15th April. This is the biggest annual fundraising day in the Special Olympics calendar and we need to recruit 3,500 collectors to shake a bucket for us and help us raise as much money as possible on the day.

You may have already seen our latest outdoor advertising campaign which features Special Olympics Athletes Stephen Deignan, Amy Quinn and Michael Hardiman. They are three of the 11,000 Special Olympics athletes who participate in Special Olympics activities every week. Our athletes are true sporting heroes and we want Friday 15th April to be a day to celebrate their many achievements as well as a day to raise essential funding for Special Olympics.

For the first time ever we have the capability on our website for you to select the town & time you would like to collect at, this is a fantastic tool for us to utilise so if you are in a position to collect please do log onto our website at

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

Please help us to make this the most successful collection day ever by helping us to collect on the day. For further information please visit [www.specialolympics.ie](http://www.specialolympics.ie) or email [collectionday@specialolympics.ie](mailto:collectionday@specialolympics.ie)



# SUPPORT OUR SPORTING HEROES



Special Olympics Ireland Collection Day  
**FRIDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2011**



[WWW.SPECIALOLYMPICS.IE/COLLECTIONDAY](http://WWW.SPECIALOLYMPICS.IE/COLLECTIONDAY)