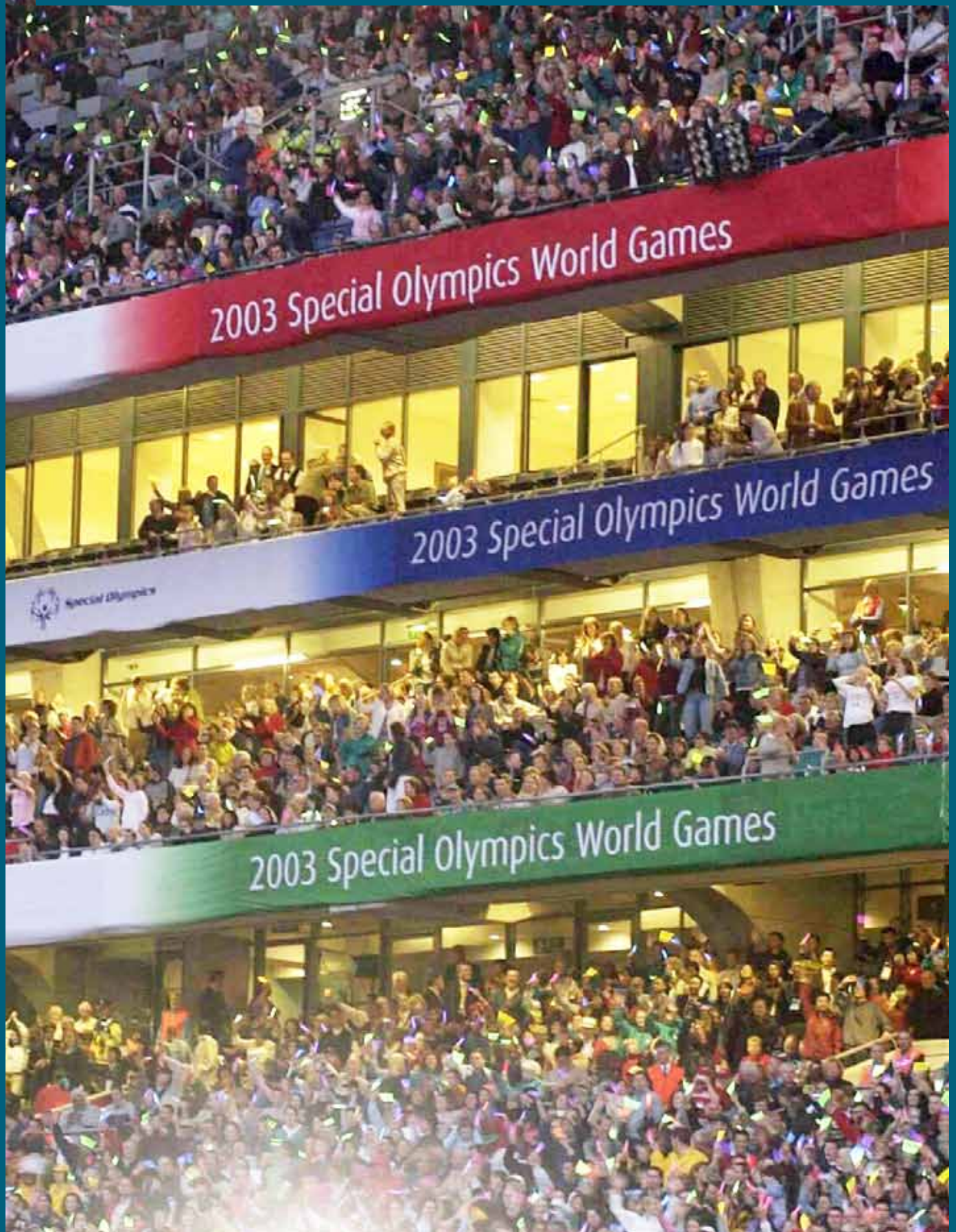


JUNE 2013

**Special
Olympics**
Ireland



CONNECT



Northern Ireland
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THE
IRISH SPORTS
COUNCIL
AN ENDORSEABLE SPORT



WELCOME!

10 Days that inspired the Island



"You never felt alone, that's what the last ten days has meant to me. It's a wonderful feeling and I hope it lasts".

These were the words from a Dublin taxi driver as I travelled to Croke Park a few hours before the Closing Ceremony of the 2003 World Summer Games. I had asked him what the Games had meant to him. Ten years on his words fill my mind and those too of former President Mary McAleese when she said "we have wrung the word 'proud' dry over the past ten days".

During the years of planning that went behind the 2003 Games the vision always remained the same - to stage an event the athletes would be proud to participate in and the country would be proud to host. I always believed if we stayed true to the vision then the Games would be successful.

Now ten years on it is so enriching to look back and remember how our nation united in support of the 7,000 athletes that came to our shores from 160 countries to compete and take part. The hearts and homes of this great island were unlocked. Never before, nor since, has our country witnessed such unity of spirit. The people of Ireland were asked to take part and they did...in their thousands! A staggering 31,000 volunteers of all ages and backgrounds willingly gave of their time and talents to make the Games a success. Thousands more were on a waiting list eager to be called up. Residents of 177 host towns opened their homes to athletes the length and breadth of Ireland in a show of unparalleled love and hospitality, the memory and effect of which is still very much alive in several of those towns today. The presence of the athletes and the positivity they brought impacted on the people of Ireland in a significant and lasting way.

At a time in Ireland when the roar of the Celtic Tiger was deafening the 2003 Games enriched us all with a reminder of the importance of simplicity and sincerity; of goodwill and generosity.

The spirit of the Special Olympics Movement has a power that can never be imagined until you have come directly into contact with it. For all of us working on the Games it was such a privilege that Nelson Mandela travelled to Ireland to attend the Opening Ceremony. We know afterwards it was he that felt privileged.

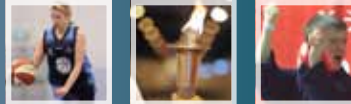
He said "fewer things in life could have given me greater pleasure or brought me more honour". Such powerful words from such an inspirational human being. People from all walks of life, young and old, were emotionally touched by the 2003 Games and the ultimate legacy is that children and adults with intellectual disabilities in Ireland now have a better life as a result of the Games. That legacy is immeasurable.

Therefore I want to take this opportunity 10 years on to thank the athletes that took part and their coaches and families, the wonderful volunteers and staff of Special Olympics and the people of Ireland who embraced our athletes so lovingly and took them into their hearts and homes for those ten days in June 2003. Ten days that united the nation and changed the lives of thousands of people with intellectual disabilities and those without. With each athlete's experience there comes a lasting legacy of attitudes changed and an ability to welcome and accept that which is different.

I think it is fitting to finish with the message from our inspirational founder Mrs. Eunice Kennedy Shriver that she delivered during the Opening Ceremony in 2003. "If we follow the power of love that the Special Olympians show we will change the world".

Mary Davis
Chairperson Special Olympics Ireland
and CEO of 2003 World Summer Games.





Memories of 2003 from our special commemorative events page on Facebook

Emily Walsh says: The only reason I signed up to be a volunteer in 2003 was the simple fact that I was bored. All my friends were gone away for the summer and I figured why not. Little did I know how much it would change my life. Ten years on I still volunteer as often as I can and have been lucky enough to travel as a volunteer to China in 2007, Boise in 2009 and Athens 2011. Now I live for my Sundays with my club, the Maynooth Stingrays. I have made so many friends worldwide through Special Olympics and cannot wait to see where the next ten years working with you will bring me."

Paul Sweeney (AKA radio DJ Stevie King) says: The 2003 World Summer Games inspired me to become involved in Special Olympics properly. My daughter was the first Irish medal winner in athletics at Morton Stadium and I was sooooo proud. Since that day Special Olympics plays a major role in our family life. I coach two clubs now and had the honour of being part of Pauline Nugent's athletics squad for the World Summer Games in Greece in 2011. There's nothing more rewarding in the world than Special Olympics.

Bernie Oster says: Chris was there with Team USA for Athletics. We spent many hours at Morton Stadium, met many wonderful people. We had the most wonderful host family...Mr and Mrs Bing Bonham...so many wonderful moments. The best Opening Ceremonies ever! We've been to awesome Games in China and Greece and still none compare to the World Summer Games in Dublin. We love you Dublin and treasure every memory.

www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsIreland/events
www.specialolympics.ie/2003

10th Anniversary Celebrations

The 10th Anniversary of the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games will be celebrated in communities, towns and cities across the island of Ireland. The focus of the celebrations on Saturday June 22nd will be in Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Galway (see details below). Local authorities have joined with Special Olympics clubs to celebrate the occasion in Newtownards, Mayo, Armagh and Kilkenny and events are also planned with Councils in Roscommon, Carlow and Kildare. Sports celebrities will be involved in demonstration skills with Special Olympics athletes from 2pm to 3pm on Saturday June 22nd at the following venues:

City	Location	Details
Belfast	Belfast City Hall	MC will be Gerry Kelly, TV presenter, UTV
Cork	Grand Parade	Conor Counihan, Cork Senior Football Team Manager will captain the sports celebrity team
Dublin	South King Street, Dublin 2	Jason Sherlock, former Dublin GAA player will captain the sports celebrity team. MC will be Ian Dempsey from TodayFM
Galway	Galway Bay Hotel	Anthony Cunningham, manager of the Galway Senior and U21 hurling teams will captain the sports celebrity team

Des Cahill, RTE Sports Presenter, invites your club to celebrate!



I would like to invite your club to play a part in the celebrations, to rekindle that spirit and to showcase the skill and abilities of our athletes by organising your own event. The event should ideally be held during the period 21st June to 29th June when public attention around the anniversary will be at its highest. This period provides us all with an opportunity to heighten the awareness once again of what people with intellectual disabilities can achieve. I would encourage you to run an event locally, e.g. stage a sports demonstration in a highly-visible public place or host an 'open day', whereby members of the public might have an opportunity to be reminded that Special Olympics lives on, week on week, year on year. Perhaps some people could be invited to join in on the activity, if feasible, and maybe you might invite a local celebrity along.

CONNAUGHT

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Olympians and Special Olympics athlete share thoughts on Women's Participation in Sport

On May 3rd Olympians Sonia O'Sullivan, Olive Loughnane and Special Olympics athlete Bridget Walsh led a strong team of sports women at a special seminar to explore women's participation and equality in sport/physical activity.

The seminar, called "Women in Sport – Are we gaining ground?" took place in GMIT Castlebar and was also supported by current Mayo Ladies GAA player, Cora Staunton and Irish Women's Rugby International, Carol Staunton. The open debate explored all aspects of women's involvement in sport including issues such as:

- Women's participation and equality in sport
- The issues and barriers with teenage girls involvement in sport/physical activity
- The demands and pressures on female high performance athletes
- Strategies to promote involvement in sport/physical activity by girls/women

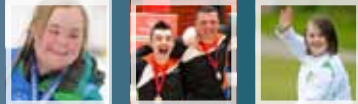
Athlete Bridget Walsh was a fantastic representative for Special Olympics at the event. Bridget competes in tenpin bowling with Castlebar Strikers, kayaking with Castlebar Special Olympics Club and table tennis with Castlebar Table Tennis Club, and was the first athlete from the Connaught Region to receive a Gold Athlete Leadership Program (ALPs) Award.

Special Olympics Athletics Event at IT Sligo

Special Olympics Connaught Regional Athletics event took place at IT Sligo Track and Field on May 15th. Over 200 athletes from counties Mayo, Sligo, Galway, Longford, Roscommon and Westmeath competed on the day. Paul Keyes Sligo Chamber CEO; Sean Henry and Lydia Rogers, Connaught Gold; Conor Murphy, Abbott Diagnostics Sligo Site Director; Pat Glynn and Peter Gatchell, Elanco; Leo Logan, Elanco; Shane Hayes, Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership; Maura Allen, Chairperson Special Olympics Connaught and Myra Merrick, Regional Director Special Olympics Connaught were on hand to cheer on the athletes and presented medals and ribbons throughout the day. This event was one of 18 regional competition events taking place in Connaught this year and was run by a team of over 100 volunteers.

Michael Gilroy, Regional Development Officer with Special Olympics Connaught said "The Special Olympics Connaught Regional Athletics Event was a fantastic success, with over 200 athletes competing in various running, walking, jumping and throwing events on the day. I would like to thank the Event Manager Gillian Ballantyne and her team for all the planning that went into this event, the management and staff of IT Sligo Knocknarea Arena, Abbott Diagnostics in Sligo and Longford, Elanco, Irish Defence Forces, Sligo Civil Defence, Tommy Cradock, Sligo Grammar School students and all the local Special Olympics volunteers for the smooth running of this event".





Fantastic FUNdraising!

We have lots of fun challenges coming up in the Connaught region over the next few months. For more information or to sign up for any of them please contact Michael Carty, Regional Fundraising Coordinator in the Connaught office.



Lough Allen Cycle Challenge - 1st September

The inaugural Special Olympics Lough Allen Cycle Challenge will take place on Sunday September 1st. This new partnership between Leitrim County Council and Special Olympics will see participants cycle 60km around Lough Allen, Co. Leitrim while helping to raise funds for Special Olympics Connaught.

The 60km cycle will commence at 9:00 am, while the 100km cycle will commence at 10:00 am on the morning of the 1st September from the Lough Allen Hotel, Drumshanbo carpark. The route will take in the Lough Allen catchment area, which is one of the initiatives of Leitrim County Council, where there are fantastic tourist amenities. The registration fee is €25, refreshments and showers will be provided and there will be the option of having a sports massage for all competitors after the race. An online registration page will be available on the Special Olympics website and www.leitrimcoco.ie



The Bridal Race at the Galway Races - 29th July

Ever wanted to wear your wedding dress again?

Now you can at The Galway Races !

Galway's summer racing festival is renowned for its electric atmosphere and unique experience. Adrenalin-pumping action, a heart-stopping finish and breath-taking fashion are guaranteed at the inaugural Bridal Party on the first day of the summer racing festival on Monday, July 29th.

Brides of all ages are wanted to strut along one furlong (it's just 200 metres and very manageable in that special dress!)

Marriage certificates not necessary! So, even if you haven't been up the aisle, you can join in the fun. Bridal-type gown required. Bring the whole Bridal Party.

There's plenty of time to make alterations, add panels of material, arrange dry cleaning or even beg, borrow or steal that special dress. An exclusive prize will be awarded for the most stylish bride on the big day. Additionally, a prize will be presented to the best fundraiser.

Just imagine the fun and excitement!

All participating ladies receive

- Admission to the races
- Champagne reception
- Four course meal
- Racecard
- Racing Tipster
- Reserved table in the Killanin stand
- Complimentary parking
- Tan Organic goody bag

To participate in this fun event, you are required to raise €175 in sponsorship for Special Olympics Connaught.

SAVE THE DATE! Thursday 4th July 2013: Connaught Team Selection Night

All athletes, coaches, volunteers and family members are invited to attend the selection of athletes to represent Connaught at the 2014 Special Olympics Ireland Games in Limerick. The selection night will take place in the McWilliam Park Hotel, Claremorris, Co Mayo on Thursday, July 4th starting at 7.00pm. Please confirm your attendance in advance by calling +353 71 911 8320 or email connaughtvol@specialolympics.ie.

EASTERN REGION

CONTACT US:

Special Olympics Eastern Region

Tel: +353 (0)1 8912000

 Email: eastern.region@specialolympics.ie

7th Annual Coaches Forum - 9th July

The 7th Annual Coach Forum will take place on the 9th of July in the RDS from 6.30pm – 9.30pm. The 2013-2014 Sports Calendar will be driven from the outcomes of this meeting. Attendance and input during the meeting will help us in making the best decisions to develop the sports programme for our athletes.

Topics for the forum will include:

- Training & Events Planning session (per sport) 2013-2014
- 2014 Ireland Games
- Floorball Development Plan

Any Special Olympics Eastern Region volunteer who hopes to attend is asked to contact Nuala O'Donovan on nuala.odonovan@specialolympics.ie or call +353 (0)1 891 2022.

MEET *our athletes*

John Feighery, Sports Club 15 and Hot Fuzz ALPs Group | Dublin



Why I do not like Fridays!

My favourite days are Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Why? Because I am so busy on these days with my Special Olympics club and my ALPs group. I have been in my ALPs group "Hot Fuzz" for 6 years. I have just completed two years as secretary and I am now in charge of the phone. I have started my gold award which will take me a long time to complete. One of my challenges was to give a PowerPoint presentation, which I gave to students in my old school, Castleknock Community College. My Mum is my mentor at the moment but I am getting a new mentor called Mary.

On Sundays and Thursdays I have swimming. Some Sundays I have soccer League. On Mondays I have basketball. On Tuesdays I practice soccer. On Saturdays I go to Sports Club 15 to do fitness training. I also coach some of the younger athletes.

Actually I do like Fridays as it is my day off sport and I can relax. Taking part in Special Olympics Sports Club 15 keeps me busy and I enjoy being with my friends.

Albert Ladies Hockey Club "Pay and Play" event for Special Olympics



Stephanie Batt, proudly wearing her 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games tee shirt, and her teammates from the Albert Ladies Hockey Club who hosted a 'pay and play' fundraiser at Castlepark School in Sandycove Co Dublin to support the 'Special Olympics Ireland Collection Day'

2013 Regional Events Round-Up

Motor Activities: 30 athletes from 5 Eastern Region clubs took part in our motor activities event on 19th February in Clondalkin Sports and Leisure Centre.

Rhythmic Gymnastics: The rhythmic gymnastics event was held in conjunction with Special Olympics Leinster in Carlow IT on February 23rd. 16 athletes from 3 Eastern Region clubs made the trip to Carlow to take part.

Artistic Gymnastics: On March 3rd our regional event was held in Janz Gymnastics. Two Eastern clubs with 23 athletes were joined by 1 Leinster club with 9 athletes. There was a great level of support from family members.

Bocce: The National Show Centre, Swords was the host venue for Bocce on March 8th & 9th. 115 athletes from 14 Clubs competed over the two days. A huge volunteer team was involved in setting up and running the event with additional support coming from the Irish Defence Forces and Dollymount Sea Scouts - Valkyrie Troop. Huge thanks to all involved.

Equestrian: Our equestrian event was held in Cherry Orchard Equine Centre on March 20th with 17 athletes competing in English equitation, dressage and working trials. Guests on the day included Fionn Carr and Isaac Boss from Leinster Rugby and RTE Sports commentator Tracy Piggott & members of the Garda Mounted Unit.

Table Tennis: The Table Tennis Regional Advancement Event took place on April 13th 2013 in SportsCo Leisure Centre with 64 athletes from 7 Clubs competing in singles, doubles and individual skills events. Awards guests included Fair City actor Geoff Minogue, Matt English, CEO Special Olympics Ireland, Sarah McIntyre, local Gardaí, and local Fine Gael Cllr. Kieran Binchy.

Basketball: Our basketball event took place in DCU on April 20/21 with 265 athletes taking part making this event the biggest of the regional events! Day 1 saw the skills event and the preliminary rounds of the team competition taking place with the remaining matches in the team event taking place on day 2. Awards were presented by Men & Women's Super league Players, local Gardaí and the Eastern Regional Chairman, Maurice Redmond.

Football: The Football Regional Advancement Event took place on April 20th & 21st in the AUL, Clonsaugh. 160 athletes competed from 16 Eastern Region Clubs over the two day event. The event ran very well and was a great success. Awards were presented by Bohemian FC players and by John Hennessey-Niland.

Golf: Our Golf event took place in Charlesland Golf Club, Greystones on Tuesday May 14th. Athletes competed in the 9-hole, 18-hole and skills events and the weather stayed fine to help ensure the day ran smoothly and was enjoyable for all involved.

Badminton: Our Badminton Event took place on Sunday May 19th in Baldoyle Badminton Centre. 8 Eastern Region Clubs and 56 athletes took part in singles, doubles and individual skills. The day ran very well with a great standard of play across the different events.

Coming up:

28th/29th June Bowling, Leisureplex Blanchardstown

28th/29th June Athletics, Morton Stadium, Santry

28th/29th June Aquatics, National Aquatic Centre

6th July Kayaking, Avon Rí, Blessington

On 13th July there will also be a non-advancement Open Water Swimming event at Wicklow Harbour.

Fundraising Golf Classic



Monday 9th September 2013 The K Club

Registration 1:15pm | Shotgun Start 2:15pm

4 person team event, €350 per team
2 scores to count at each hole

Prize giving at 7pm followed by raffle

For more information or to reserve your tee time please
contact Paul Ahearne
Tel: +353 (0)1 891 2005
Email: paul.ahearne@specialolympics.ie

SAVE THE DATE! Tuesday 16th July: Eastern Region Team Selection

All athletes, coaches, volunteers and family members are invited to attend the selection of athletes to represent the Eastern Region at the 2014 Special Olympics Ireland Games in Limerick. The selection night will take place in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 commencing at 2.00pm

LEINSTER

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2013 Regional Events Round-Up



Staff from Arthur Cox Solicitors along with Special Olympics volunteers who assisted at the Leinster aquatics event held at The Curragh P.E. facility in Kildare in April.

It has been a very busy six months for the athletes competing in the 2013 Leinster Regional events. Bocce was the first event and was held in Co. Laois where 146 Athletes participated over two days. We then moved to Carlow where for the first time a number of sports events were hosted together. 261 athletes competed in tenpin bowling, badminton, the motor activities training programme, table tennis and gymnastics in two venues. This was truly a weekend of unforgettable events.

Shortly afterwards the next series of regional events took place in Kildare. 233 athletes competed in aquatics, golf and equestrian, over two days in three venues. North Leinster hosted "the clash of the teams" at Gormanston College, County Meath on Saturday May 25th. 27 teams took part in 5-a-side football and basketball. A further 48 athletes took part in basketball skills. To bring Leinster regional events to a close it was the turn of Kilkenny City where 145 athletes competed in athletics and 26 in pitch and putt.

Special Olympics Leinster would like to congratulate all the athletes who took part in the 2013 Leinster regional events, for their magnificent exhibition of sporting prowess and display of sportsmanship; each of the 10 days of competition over the past six months has been thrilling viewing and we are proud to have witnessed the achievements of our athletes.

Last but most certainly not least, we would like to thank our dedicated, hardworking team of volunteers. Without you none of this would be possible. We have asked so much and you have been relentless throughout the year, so on behalf of the athletes and Special Olympics Leinster THANK YOU, we appreciate your time and

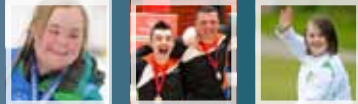
efforts and hope you have enjoyed it as much as we have.

Corporate support for Regional Events

Staff from **Dell** joined Special Olympics Leinster as a new corporate partner for both the preparation and delivery of our 2013 Regional Events, hosted in Co. Kildare on April 19th and 20th. A team of 14 volunteers from the Dell Finance Community donated their time and offices to provide administrative assistance in preparation for regional events hosted in both Kildare and Kilkenny. The team displayed a competitive nature in making their way through a long list of tasks and completed them in record time as part of their community support programme.

A further 34 enthusiastic volunteers completed full training for this year's Leinster Regional Golf event held on April 19th. They embraced a variety of roles on the Event Management Team and in the field of play, awards and ceremonies functional areas. Dell volunteers were joined and supported by our team of long standing experienced and dedicated golf volunteers who imparted their knowledge in training prior to the event and on the day by successfully delivering a packed schedule. The competition hosted a total of 77 athletes; 2 competed in 18 hole and 24 competed in 9 hole competition, while 51 athletes competed in the skills section.

We would like to thank Dell for their time and support at our 2013 regional events and look forward to working together in preparation for the 2014 Special Olympics Ireland Games.



Arthur Cox Solicitors have been supporting Leinster aquatics and athletics events since 2009. This year they took on the roles of the Event Management Team to both plan and deliver the 2013 Leinster Regional Aquatics Event in The Curragh P.E. Facility on April 19th & 20th. The team facilitated competition for 146 athletes while coordinating a large team of volunteers including a fantastic group of Transition Year students from Kildare Town Community College. A big thank-you must go to Arthur Cox and every single volunteer who made it a very special few days.



If you are currently working in an organisation that has an active Corporate Social Responsibility programme and/or are interested in opportunities for team building through community based activities, or you simply have a group of colleagues who

would like to get together to do an activity outside the office, why not consider getting involved in the Special Olympics Leinster Events Programme? For more information please contact the Leinster Regional Development Officer Liz Martin in the office.



Staff from Dell pictured with athlete Joe Fulton at the regional golf event on April 19th.

Interagency Sports Day - All Welcome

Over the years CWCW Enniscorthy has developed excellent indoor and outdoor sporting facilities at their Astro Active Centre. Special Olympics Coordinator for CWCW Enniscorthy, Paul Cosgrove, has plans to put these facilities to good use over the coming months. The Wexford based service hopes to host an Interagency Sports Day once a month and is calling on all the other services in the region to support this initiative.



The first of these days took place on Wednesday June 19th at the Astro Active Centre, Enniscorthy. Each Interagency Sports Day will focus on one or two sports per month (bocce and athletics in June), for all ability levels with the emphasis placed on taking part as opposed to winning. A nominal fee of €2 per athlete participating applies and the event runs from 10:00am – 3:30pm approx. Changing and catering facilities are available onsite. For more information or to confirm your attendance please contact Paul Cosgrove on +353 53 923 6678.

Annual Regional Meeting The Leinster Annual Regional Meeting was held on April 13th in the Osprey Hotel, Naas Co Kildare with fifty eight people attending. Guest Speaker was Senator Mary Moran. Gold and Silver Athlete Leadership Programme awards were presented to eight members of the Athlete Leadership Programme. Congratulations also to our seven clubs that were awarded funding from the Paris2Nice Charity Challenge.

SAVE THE DATES!

Team Leinster Ireland Games Selections will take place on Wednesday 26th June from 6.30pm to 9.30pm at the Red Cow Moran Hotel, Dublin.

Information meetings for family members who have an athlete selected for the 2014 Ireland Games will take place at two venues on Saturday 20th July from 12 noon to 2pm. Family members can attend these sessions at either Simmonstown GAA Club Navan or at DELTA Centre, Carlow, whichever is most convenient.

MUNSTER

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Coaches gather for conference



The inaugural Special Olympics Munster coaching conference was held in the University of Limerick on March 23rd. The theme of the day was "Promoting a Season Long Approach to Coaching within Special Olympics". Current Cork senior football manager and CEO of St. Josephs Foundation, Conor Counihan, opened proceedings with an interactive session on identifying the qualities of a good coach. Other areas covered on the day included identifying and selecting appropriate events for individual athletes, knowing when an athlete is ready for competition, nutrition and hydration for the 'everyday athlete', and an introduction to the components of fitness, in particular flexibility. Susan McGill from Waterford Special Olympics Clubs delivered a highly energetic and interactive practical session, giving great tips and ideas on how to integrate all the day's content into club training. We were then joined by Dave Mahedy from University of Limerick for a panel discussion. Overall, this proved to be a very interesting and informative day, and feedback from the 35 coaches in attendance has all been very positive.

Coaches Census

We are currently undertaking a census of all the coaches within Special Olympics Munster. If you are an active coach, or have a coaching qualification that you would like to put to use, please contact either conor.geary@specialolympics.ie or shaun.hennessy@specialolympics.ie and we will send you a copy of the short questionnaire. Alternatively phone the office on the number at the top of the page.

Baking up a storm!



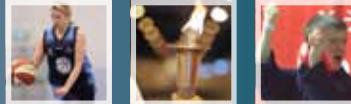
Thank you to the staff of GlaxoSmithKline Cork (GSK), who organised a bake sale on April 26th. The cake sale was in aid of Special Olympics as part of the annual Collection Day. Over 500 buns and cakes were sold on the day, resulting in a phenomenal €2,500 being raised. The event was organised by Aoife Walsh and a social committee group. Special Olympics Munster is continually inspired by the dedication and generosity of companies such as GSK who answer the call to support us on numerous occasions.



J&J Special Achievers Club Programme Launches

The Johnson and Johnson Special Achievers Club programme of events for 2013 was officially launched at an event in the DePuy (Ireland) facility in Ringaskiddy, Cork on March 22nd. This is the ninth year of the association between the Johnson and Johnson group of companies and Special Olympics Munster.

Volunteers from Vistakon in Limerick have already run a very successful regional aquatics event in the University of Limerick on April 13th, while volunteers from the Janssen group of companies organised the regional 5-a-side Football Cup event at the Cork Institute of Technology on April 20th. Volunteers from DePuy organised the regional artistic gymnastics event in Cork on the 21st of April. Many thanks to all the Special Achievers Club volunteers for their fantastic support!



Assurant Volunteers Run Table Tennis Event

The staff from Assurant Services (Cork) played a key role in organising and running the regional table tennis event on Saturday 9th March in the Little Island Sports Complex in Cork. This is the company's third year being involved with this event. The volunteers got into action on the Friday evening, moving all the table tennis equipment across Cork; and very early on Saturday morning came along to set up the venue. The day went very smoothly and everyone enjoyed a successful event. Well done to the event team from Assurant under the management of Karina Devine, Competition Manager, Eoin Kelly, and all the volunteers and officials who helped on the day.

Are you interested in Table Tennis? Would you like to learn more, and become an umpire at one of our events? Special Olympics Munster plans to run a Special Olympics Table Tennis Umpires course next September. If you are interested, please contact Shaun at +353 (0)21 497 7192 or email shaun.hennessy@specialolympics.ie.

CLUB News



Redhill School Launch Special Olympics Programme

On Friday May 24th, Redhill School held their official launch day. The newly established club in Patrickswell, Co. Limerick, is delivering an athletics program to 15 athletes. 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 displaying their hard work and effort.

A number of distinguished guests were invited to the event including Ministers Ruairi Quinn and Jan O'Sullivan. The local Mayor Gerry McLoughlin was also present as were sporting stars Andy Bryce (Munster rugby) and Gavin O'Mahony (Limerick hurling).

Speaking on the day Special Olympics Munster Regional Director Ger Deegan commended all involved for their effort in establishing the club, adding that the club demonstrated all that Special Olympics in Munster was about.

The athletes from the school had put together an impressive poster display to highlight their Special Olympics experience. The display featured pictures from their training sessions as well as stories compiled by the athletes.



Holy Family School Tee Off!

Special Olympics Munster is delighted to welcome Holy Family School to the Munster programme. The school is based in Charleville, Co.Cork and will participate in the Special Olympics Munster golf programme. The club trains in Charleville Golf Club and is going from strength to strength. They participated in the non-advancement regional golf event in Ennis on June 10th.

Holy Family School have a very dedicated group of enthusiastic volunteers and we would like to acknowledge all their hard work in setting up the club as well as their ongoing support of the Golf programme. Special Olympics Munster would like to wish our newest club every success for the future.

Charleville Golf Club hosts the Regional Golf Event

The members of Charleville Golf Club have been associated with Special Olympics Munster for the past 6 years and have regularly delivered quality events. This year's event, held on the 20th May, was no exception and was planned and executed to perfection. The experience gained by these volunteers over the past few years makes for a very smoothly run event. Members of the Charleville Golf Club are not only involved in running this event but also help with the coaching of the athletes from St. Joseph's Foundation and The Holy Family School, Charleville. Well done volunteers!

SAVE THE DATE! The Special Olympics Munster selections for the athletes to go forward to the 2014 Special Olympics Ireland Games in Limerick will take place in the Hibernian Hotel, Mallow on 4th July at 6pm everyone welcome to attend.

ULSTER

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 Email: ulster@specialolympics.ie

Omagh Spires Re-launched



Volunteer officer Laura Mitchell who accompanied athletes Emma Armstrong, Charlene Patrick and Lee Mitchell to the regional event pictured along with Natasha Casement from the Celebrating Shaz group



Rosemary McAleer (Chairperson) Pearse Kerrigan (web designer), Emma McAleer & Grainne O'Kane (athletes), Andrej Beldiss (web designer) & Ursula Devlin (ICT teacher).

Omagh Spires Special Olympics Club was officially renamed at a re-launching ceremony by the Chairperson of Omagh District Council, Errol Thompson, on April 11th in South West College. It was the first time our athletes and volunteers wore their new tracksuits donated by SHAZ and designed especially for our club by a local design company Cappa Sports Apparel. Embedded in our tracksuit design is the image of three spires, a famous landmark in Omagh, from which we derived our new name. These images reflect our clubs ethos, inter-denomination, integration and shared space.

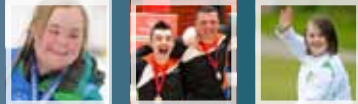
During the evening we introduced our new website www.omaghspires.com. Two A-level students from Sacred Heart College, Andrej Beldiss and Pearse Kerrigan took time out from their studies to create the site and we are very grateful to them and their ICT teacher Miss Devlin.

Before the evening came to a close we were delighted to welcome back three Omagh Spires athletes from the regional equestrian competition, each bearing their medals and ribbons: Charlene Patrick who was placed fourth in her two very tightly judged events, Emma Armstrong who won two silver medals, and Lee Mitchell who won a gold and silver medal. It was a very proud moment for the athletes, their coaches and their families. It was a fitting way to end the evening. Congratulations to all.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WITH OMAGH SPIRES SPECIAL OLYMPICS CLUB

Golf	If anyone is interested in getting involved we are in need of volunteers to assist with golf, particularly during the summer months.
Football	We have a small group of athletes who are keen to play football but are in need of a volunteer football coach (Level 1 qualification preferred but not necessary) for September. We require someone who has a good knowledge of soccer and has the time to share his/her love for the sport with our members. Enthusiasm, patience and a good sense of fun are musts.

Please check out the club website at www.omaghspires.com for contact information or ring our office number +44 (0)28 82240991 and leave your contact details. We will get back to you as soon as possible.



ULSTER REGION HALLOWEEN FAMILIES DAY, 20TH OCTOBER

La Mon Hotel, Belfast

Special Olympics Ulster is hosting a Spooktacular Families day with lots of fun packed activities, stalls and plenty of beneficial information for athletes and their registered family members. The day will carry a Halloween theme so we encourage you to wear your best fancy dress for your chance to win a prize.

This event is open to families that are registered to the Special Olympics Ulster Family programme. If you are not yet registered but would like to become a registered family member please contact Cathy Hunter on: +44 28 90262773 or email cathy.hunter@specialolympics.ie

Booking is essential as places are limited. To book your place please contact Cathy before Wednesday 18th September 2013.

Neptunes Special Olympics Club - celebrating a year of sport and fun



Neptunes Special Olympics Swimming Club, Belfast's newest Special Olympics Club, is nearing the end of its very successful first year. The club is based at Whiterock Leisure Centre where it held the official club launch in March. The launch night was enjoyed by athletes, coaches, family members, volunteers and supporters of the club. Also in attendance were Belfast City Councillor Steven Corr and John McKernan, Chairman of Special Olympics Ulster.

Guests of honour on the night were athletes Fergal Gregory who won a gold medal for Ireland in the 25m butterfly at the Special Olympics World Games in Athens in 2011 and Bethany Firth who took gold for Ireland in the 100m backstroke at the London 2012 Paralympics Games.

Speaking at the launch, which took place in Whiterock Community Centre, club chairman Brendan McNeice said "We are delighted that Neptunes Special Olympics Club is now up and running. The club has got off to a great start. The fact that almost 20 athletes are registered just shows the great need for such facilities within the community. We are all very excited about the future of Neptunes Special Olympics Club and hope to grow and expand in the coming years. We look forward to seeing our athletes grow, develop and succeed in their sporting endeavours." He thanked Fergal and Bethany for their support in launching the club saying "it is a fantastic boost to have swimmers of such a high international standard to provide inspiration to all involved at Neptunes. It shows what can be achieved through hard work and dedication and the tremendous opportunities that are available to our athletes through the Special Olympics Programme".

As with all clubs, Neptune very much relies on volunteers to run our weekly training so if there are any volunteers out there who want to get involved in a club please get in touch.

SAVE THE DATE! On Saturday 6th July at Southwest Regional College, Dungannon, the selections will take place for the Ulster Team to go forward to the 2014 Special Olympics Ireland Games in Limerick. Selections will commence at 11am. There are different time slots for each of the sports so please check our website at www.specialolympics.ie/ulster to see the times for each sport, for directions to the venue and further details.

Health Promotion in Ulster

Well done to the clubs who have recently got involved in the Special Olympics Ireland Health Promotion Programme:

- Ards Special Olympics Club
- Banbridge Special Olympics Club
- Down Special Olympics Club
- Errigal Truagh Special Needs and Friends Ltd.

The Health Promotion Programme aims to increase knowledge and support health behaviour change for all of those involved. It covers lots of different health topics such as Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, Heart Health and Dental Health to name but a few. In Ulster we now have 19 Special Olympics Clubs involved in the Health Promotion Programme.

Take care of your Smile!



Athlete Leadership Programme athletes recently got involved in this year's National Smile Month oral health campaign through healthy living workshops in Ulster. This year National Smile Month took place from 20th May to 20th June and aimed to promote the importance of taking care of our oral health. Did you know that poor oral health has been linked to heart disease and stroke? That gives us even more reasons to get involved in the campaign and learn about what steps we can take towards good oral health. The key messages are:

- Brush your teeth for two minutes twice a day using fluoride toothpaste
- Cut down on how often you have sugary foods and drinks
- Visit the dentist regularly, as often as they recommend

Healthy Athlete Programme volunteer opportunities

The Healthy Athlete Programme is designed to help Special Olympics athletes improve their health and fitness by providing different health screenings and advice at events. Special Olympics Ulster is currently recruiting health professionals and student health professionals for the Fit Feet, Special Smiles and Health Promotion elements of the programme.

For more information about getting your club involved with the Health Promotion Programme in Ulster, or to express interest in volunteering with the Healthy Athlete Programme, please contact Emma Douglas on (+44) 028 9026 2774, or email emma.douglas@specialolympics.ie.

Team Ireland at Áras an Uachtaráin



Team Ireland who competed at the 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games was celebrated at a special reception hosted by President Michael D. Higgins and Mrs Sabina Higgins on Thursday 18th April.

The athletes, their coaches, family members and some other special guests enjoyed the afternoon at the Áras. President Higgins personally congratulated the athletes on their wonderful achievements at the Games in South Korea and for representing us all so well on the international sporting stage.

The six and nine o'clock news covered the visit which included Team Ireland singing Happy Birthday to the President.



2013 AGM



The 2013 AGM was held in the Red Cow Moran Hotel on Saturday 18th May and was very well attended. The feedback has been very positive. Thank you so much for the on-going commitment of all our excellent volunteers. Special Olympics Ireland Board member Nicole Redmond opened the AGM and we were delighted to have former Olympic athlete Maeve Kyle as guest speaker on the day.

Distinguished Service Awards were presented during the AGM to Padraig Corkery, formerly of *eircom*, and Fergus Finlay, CEO of Barnardos and former Chairperson of Special Olympics Ireland. Both Padraig and Fergus were delighted to receive their awards and spoke about their extensive involvement with Special Olympics over the years.

Dervila O'Mahony and Fiona Donaghy were re-elected to the Board (pictured above) under article 4 (i) a) at the meeting.



Pictured L-R: Fergus Finlay, Maeve Kyle and Padraig Corkery with Mary Davis, Chairperson of Special Olympics Ireland.

IRUPA and Boardmatch Ireland team up to support Special Olympics Ireland.

A new not-for-profit governance initiative between the Irish Rugby Union Players Association (IRUPA) and Boardmatch Ireland aimed at placing many of Ireland's leading rugby professionals with charities' boards has benefitted Special Olympics Ireland. Former Munster, Ireland and Lions player David Wallace has joined the Board of Special Olympics Ireland. In addition many players from the increasingly popular sport of rugby have attended events and award ceremonies to acknowledge our athletes. Lions players Sean O'Brien and Rory Best are big fans of Special Olympics and have supported a number of events recently along with stalwart supporters like Lion's squad member and former captain Paul O'Connell. IRUPA is the official Players' Union for professional rugby players irrespective of nationality in Ireland.

SPORTS NEWS

National Football Cup Final 2013

Special Olympics Ireland's National Football Cup took place on Saturday 11th May 2013 in Malahide United Football Club, Dublin.

Dundrum FC and Sporting Fingal contested the 11-a-side football Cup Final. After a very close contest played in very challenging weather conditions, Dundrum eventually pulled away to beat Sporting Fingal on a score line of 4-2. Dundrum Captain Shaun Kavanagh received the Cup from Malahide United Chairperson Don Butler. The Player of the Match award was presented to Barry Banahan from Dundrum FC.



Dundrum Captain Shaun Kavanagh introducing his team to John Delaney, Chief Executive, FAI

Having recently won the 11-a-side Division One Football League, victory in the cup made it a double for Dundrum FC. The National Cup Competition is run on a knock out basis. 8 teams from throughout the country participated in the competition, and for both Dundrum and Sporting Fingal it was a first final appearance. Thanks to FAI CEO John Delaney who came along to greet the teams before the match and Malahide United for the use of their facilities for the event.

National Football Plate 2013



Bray Lakers captain Noel Delaney lifts the plaque after defeating Limerick FC



Bray Lakers player of the match, Robert Byrne, is presented with the trophy by Matt English, CEO Special Olympics Ireland

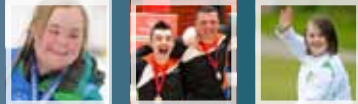
Special Olympics Ireland's National Football Plate took place on Saturday 25th May 2013 at the AUL complex in Clonsaugh, Dublin. Bray Lakers and Limerick FC contested the 11-a-side football Plate Final. Played in fantastic conditions, it was an extremely closely fought contest which required extra time to separate the teams. Bray Lakers scored from a corner kick in the second half of extra time, and held on valiantly to win on a score line of 2-1. Robert Byrne from Bray Lakers was awarded the Player of the Match. The Plate and medals were presented to both teams by Special Olympics Ireland CEO Matt English after the game.

The Special Olympics Ireland football programme is proudly supported by FAI



Special Olympics European Football Week is supported by UEFA Respect.





COACHING

Special Olympics Ireland assists the development of Coach Education for Special Olympics Europe Eurasia Programmes

Two European seminars were held recently in Dublin by Special Olympics Ireland in conjunction with Special Olympics Europe Eurasia and the Michael Phelps Foundation.

In May a Golf Leader Course was run for 13 participants from across Europe to assist with the development of golf in their home programmes. The course tutor was PGA Professional Gillian Burrell who has been assisting with coach education for Special Olympics Ireland over the last 8 years. The seminar was hosted in the Kinsealy Grange Golf facility and was extremely well received by all participants. The programmes they represented were Portugal, Sweden, Gibraltar, Isle of Man, Poland, Denmark, Russia and Iceland as well as two participants from the Special Olympics Ireland Golf Development Team. We wish all participants well in the development of the sport in their own programmes.

In June a swimming seminar, bringing the iM method of swim teaching to Ireland was hosted by the Michael Phelps Foundation in conjunction with Special Olympics Europe Eurasia and Special Olympics International. Four tutors from the foundation worked with 16 coaches over 3 days to bring their iM method to Europe Eurasia. Programmes represented in this seminar were Slovenia, Finland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Germany, The Netherlands, Greece, Italy, Denmark, Iceland, Scotland and Norway as well as two participants from Special Olympics Ireland. This was an extremely successful event with great learning outcomes and Special Olympics is looking forward to the future using this method of teaching to "new to the water" athletes.

Volunteers

Launch of Special Olympics Ireland Commemorative Recognition Pins



We are delighted to announce the establishment of a commemorative Volunteer pin award. Volunteers with five or more years' continuous service to a club are being issued with a club volunteer recognition pin (green pin). Event volunteers who have been registered with Special Olympics for five years and have actively participated in the last two years will receive a volunteer recognition pin (red pin). The pins have been commissioned to thank our amazing volunteers for the incredible contribution made towards improving the lives of over 11,000+ athletes. We hope they will be worn with pride by all worthy recipients.

All those eligible to be awarded a pin in 2013 should receive their pin by the end of July at the latest. If you have not received a pin but feel you are eligible please email us at volunteers@specialolympics.ie to let us know. Please note our cut off point to be eligible to receive a pin this year was January 2013 – i.e. you must be a registered volunteer since January 2008 or before. This is an annual award and from now on, pins will be distributed every January to volunteers who are eligible to receive them at that date.

Collection Day 2013



Special Olympics Ireland's annual collection day took place on Friday April 26th. This is the biggest annual fundraising event in aid of Special Olympics Ireland and is of significant importance to us as an organisation.

The awareness level on the day was fantastic. So many people commented on the fact they heard about the day on the radio, read about it in the paper or via facebook. Our patron Ian Dempsey from Today FM rang some of our hard working volunteers live on radio to wish them luck and to encourage the general public to give generously.

To date €475,000 had been lodged which is a fantastic achievement in the current climate.

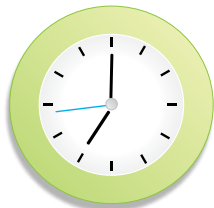
Thank you to everyone who assisted us by collecting on the day, driving around collecting the money, counting it, arranging entertainment or indeed performing on the day and also thank you to every single person who donated to us on the day. Your contribution is valued immensely.

HEALTH in Focus

Special Olympics Health Promotion



'Fat O'Clock' - The most tempting time of the week revealed...



A new study has found that there is a specific time of the week when the majority of people binge on junk food. Between 7.00pm and 10.00pm on a Sunday night is apparently the most tempting time of the week. The survey, which was conducted by diet supplementary company Forza, discovered that half of those asked said it was the time they were most likely to open the crisps and chocolate biscuits. It also found that over two thirds of people are more likely to comfort eat after a stressful day at the office with less than 30 per cent being tempted between 3.00pm and 5.00pm.

Six year study reveals the truth: - Which is better for your health, walking or running?

A new study has found that brisk walking is actually a better form of exercise for your health than running. Researchers discovered that walking reduces the risk of heart disease more effectively than running when the energy expenditure of both activities is balanced out.

When the same amount of energy was spent, it seemed walkers experienced greater health benefits than runners. The study was held for a period of six years and carried out on more than 48,000 runners and walkers aged between 18 and 80.



Running reduced the risk of heart disease by 4.5 per cent while walking reduced it by 9.3 per cent.

The more the runners ran, and the walkers walked, the better off they were in health benefits. If the amount of energy expended was the same between the two groups, then the health benefits were comparable. (The research is reported in the American Heart Association journal Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology.)

Think before you drink!

Some of our favourite soft drinks are extremely high in sugar. Below are some examples of the sugar content of some popular drinks. Remember water is the best choice for keeping us hydrated! To find out more about the Health Promotion Programme please contact Carol on +353 (0)1 869 1669 or at carol.farrell@specialolympics.ie.



Red Bull
250ml Can
9.5 sugar cubes



Powerade
500ml Bottle
6 sugar cubes



Coca Cola
500ml Bottle
16 sugar cubes



Club Orange
500ml Bottle
17 sugar cubes



7up
500ml Bottle
15 sugar cubes



Capri Sun
200ml Pouch
8 sugar cubes



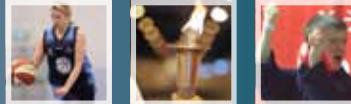
Lucozade Original
500ml Bottle
11 sugar cubes



Ribena
288ml Carton
10 sugar cubes



Water
0 sugar cubes



Club Code of Ethics and Good Practice

Club Athlete Protection and Medical Officer Tips

While the season is ending we should be looking at what we will need to have ready for September:

- Remind everyone of the Code of Conduct and get it signed by each person in the club
- Discuss with athletes, coaches, volunteers and families the ground rules that are important to your club and get agreement on the important rules for everyone
- Set up some training goals

Have you had your Children's Officer training yet?

- Link in with your local Sports Development Office or Local Sports Partnership office to see what dates are set for September
- Get some volunteers into the Basic Awareness Code of Ethics and Good Practice session locally
- Ask your regional office to organise Intellectual Disability Education Modules in your area
- Contact Muireann (+353 1 869 1615) to get information about athlete training in Code of Ethics and Good Practice to give them the information on their roles and responsibilities
- Remind everyone in your club that you are the Athlete Protection and Medical Officer and tell them how to contact you
- Ask your regional office about the Athlete Protection and Medical Officer support sessions that are being run in your area

Intellectual Disability Education Modules

The tutors have been busy with sessions run in Leinster, Eastern, Connaught and Ulster over the last few months. Thank you to all our volunteer tutors and those who attended the sessions.

Rotary International in Ireland supports Special Olympics Coin Collection



Special Olympics Ireland teamed up with Rotary International in Ireland last October for a novel fundraising drive which resulted in over €45,000 (£38,250) being raised.

Rotary Clubs across the island of Ireland called on members of the public to donate any old currency Irish, British or foreign (coin and notes) they may have had during the month of October last year.

Pictured above are Matt English, CEO, Special Olympics Ireland with athlete Brian Keogh, from Leisureplex Bowling Club, accepting a cheque from Mark Mackey, left, Branch manager Ulster Bank, Swords, Co. Dublin, Jack Cunningham, District Governor Rotary International Ireland and Rotarian Declan Tyner, right.

WHAT HANDICAP DO YOU SEE?



Oliver Doherty

7 Handicap Golfer, Captain of Buncrana Golf Club 2008
and Special Olympics Gold Medalist

www.specialolympics.ie

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