

Special Olympics Ireland recognised as a Healthy Community

Special Olympics Ireland receives Healthy Communities Award



Today it has been announced that Special Olympics Ireland has been recognised as a Healthy Community. The Healthy Communities Recognition Award is the highest health distinction awarded by Special Olympics International, which acknowledges the continuous work Special Olympics Ireland has carried out towards improving accessibility of health information and services for people with intellectual disability.

Special Olympics Ireland supports the global vision to create a world where people with intellectual disabilities have the same opportunities and access to health care as people without intellectual disabilities.

“People with intellectual disabilities often experience poorer quality and reduced access to health services. From the Healthy Athlete programme research we know that on a team of 10 Special Olympics athletes, 4 will need glasses and 2 will have some sort of eye disease, 6 will be overweight or obese, 3 will fail a hearing test and 2 will have low bone density. Special Olympics Ireland has been working hard to improve accessibility of health information and services through our different health & wellbeing

programmes, and we are delighted to receive this award in recognition of this work so far.” says Cáit Donnelly, Health & Wellbeing Coordinator, Special Olympics Ireland.

In 2018, 655 athletes were screened through the Healthy Athlete Programme at the Special Olympics Ireland Games in Dublin, where a total 1,375 screenings were conducted. Over 50% of athletes screened did not pass a hearing test, 20% had untreated tooth decay and 86% had flexibility concerns. Based on these results, Special Olympics Ireland continues its mission to improve the lives of people with an intellectual disability living in Ireland on and off the sports field.

“To be a great athlete you need to be a healthy athlete and so we at Special Olympics Ireland are committed to the health of our athletes, and we are honoured to receive the recognition for our work in this area.” said Matt English, Special Olympics CEO.

Special Olympics Healthy Communities initiative is made possible by the Golisano Foundation. Since 2012, Tom Golisano and the Golisano Foundation, have committed \$37 million to the Special Olympics global health programme. The goal is to increase access to health, fitness and wellness programmes for people with intellectual disabilities. So far, the Healthy Communities initiative has been activated in 64 countries and has made significant advancements in increasing access to health, fitness and wellness programs for people with intellectual disabilities in the communities in which they live. Special Olympics Ireland is proud to be part of this movement.

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