



Special Olympics Orange County is one of nine regions that comprise Special Olympics Southern California, the umbrella agency for all Special Olympics programs from San Luis Obispo to San Diego. We have four professional staff who are responsible for managing Special Olympics programs within our boundaries. We are also required to secure our own financial support. Special Olympics Orange County currently serves more than 4,000 athletes ages 2-years to 70-years old.

**SCHOOLS PROGRAM** – Our fastest growing program, Special Olympics currently partners with 14 school districts throughout Orange County to provide sports and inclusion programs for K-12 students. Special Olympics Orange County works with each school’s administrative staff and teachers to plan out the year’s programming, schedule trainings for teachers, select location and timing for culminating events and agree to what additional activities, such as non-disabled student leadership opportunities, they wish to include. Special Olympics Orange County currently serves more than 3,000 students through our Schools Program.

### **Sports Components**

Young Athletes is an introductory motor skills training program for special education students ages 2- to 7-years old to prepare them for future involvement in sports training and competition. Young Athletes uses play, dance, songs and games to develop functional movement patterns and motor skills. The program is offered in eight-week blocks and is aligned with California’s Common Core Standards for Special Education. School Games trains adaptive physical education teachers to serve as SOSC coaches and conduct practices at elementary, middle and high schools. At the end of the season, schools compete against other schools in their district in a culminating competition.

Unified Sports connects students with and without intellectual disabilities to compete together on the same team. In some districts, schools form teams by combining their Adapted Physical Education/Special Education classes with general education Physical Education classes.

### **Inclusion Components**

Inclusive Youth Leadership allows students with and without disabilities to work together to lead and plan advocacy, awareness and other Special Olympics inclusive activities during the school year through Youth Activation Committees and Unified Leadership Clubs.

Whole School Engagement comprises awareness and education activities that promote inclusion and reach the majority of the school population including the R-Word Campaign, Fans in the Stands and student fundraising for Unified Clubs.

**COMMUNITY-BASED SPORTS PROGRAM** – SOSC’s longest-running program, we offer 12 sports year-round, divided into two sixth-month seasons. Volunteer coaches are required to undergo a background check and receive extensive training in sports instruction, health, nutrition and protective skills (such as how to identify signs of abuse) for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Coaches reinforce values such as teamwork, sportsmanship, health, nutrition, safety, self-discipline and self-reliance and provide ongoing education



about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Teams meet weekly and participate in local scrimmages and competitions, with each season culminating in a Championship event – Summer Games and Fall Games. Athletes range in age from 8- to 70-years-old with an average age of 29-years-old. Last year we reached more than 1,000 athletes through our traditional sports program.

### **TEAM WELLNESS**

Team Wellness is a new health and wellness program designed for individuals with intellectual disabilities to improve and enhance their overall health and well-being. With both fitness and nutrition components, Team Wellness is activity-rich, provides incentives to achieve goals, and includes the establishment of clear benchmarks and careful measurement of outcomes.

### **HEALTHY ATHLETES**

The Healthy Athletes program organizes free comprehensive health screenings for participants of the chapter-wide Summer & Fall Games. Healthcare students and professionals examine and educate our athletes in the following six disciplines: Fit Feet (podiatry), FUNFitness (physical therapy), Health Promotion (improved health and well-being), Healthy Hearing (auditory), Opening Eyes (optical) and Special Smiles (dental).

### **ATHLETE LEADERSHIP**

Special Olympics Orange County offers multiple opportunities for our athletes to become involved in leadership development outside of sports. Global Messengers are Special Olympics athletes trained in public speaking to help spread the message and vision of the Special Olympics movement by sharing their personal experiences.

For more information, please call our office or visit our website at [www.sosc.org/orangecounty](http://www.sosc.org/orangecounty).