

Special Olympics Arkansas Recognized as a World Leader in Health

Special Olympics International Awards Arkansas With Highest Health Distinction

Little Rock, AR – Special Olympics, the largest public health organization for people with intellectual disabilities, announced today that Special Olympics Arkansas is being recognized as a [Healthy Community](#). In 2018, Special Olympics Arkansas is one of 13 locations to receive the Healthy Community distinction that denotes a year-round focus on advancing the health of people with intellectual disabilities.

Now in its 6th year, the Special Olympics Healthy Communities initiative continues to improve health and wellness for people with intellectual disabilities around the world. Since 2012, Tom Golisano and the [Golisano Foundation](#), have committed \$37 million to Special Olympics global health programming. The goal is to increase access to health, fitness and wellness programs for people with intellectual disabilities -- no matter where they live. So far, the Healthy Communities initiative has been activated in 53 countries and 22 states in the United States, and has made significant advancements in increasing access to inclusive health, fitness and wellness programs for people with intellectual disabilities in the communities in which they live.

“Special Olympics is committed to the health of our athletes, and I am so honored to highlight the terrific work of Special Olympics Arkansas. It demonstrates the role Special Olympics can serve as the catalyst to inclusive health,” said Mary Davis, Special Olympics CEO. “It is important to recognize the growing number of health champions at the community, regional and global levels who are working so tirelessly to promote inclusive health for people with intellectual disabilities, and I look forward to more Programs achieving this as we reach 100 Healthy Communities by 2020. Our organizational focus on year-round health work is rooted in the evidence around its need.”

The vision of Special Olympics for its health program, made possible by the [Golisano Foundation](#), is to create a world where people with intellectual disabilities have the same opportunities and access to health care as people without intellectual disabilities. The experience of Special Olympics in identifying and addressing the unmet health needs of people with intellectual disabilities has revealed the myriad of complex barriers to health faced by this population. Barriers to this vision include lack of access to quality health care, education, and resources.

About Special Olympics Arkansas

Special Olympics Arkansas is an organization that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sport, everyday around the state. Through programming in sports, health, education and community building, Special Olympics Arkansas is changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, solving the global injustice, isolation, intolerance and inactivity they face. Special Olympics Arkansas is providing opportunities for more than 15,000 athletes and 5,000 volunteers in all counties across the State of Arkansas. Engage with us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), or www.specialolympicsarkansas.org

About Special Olympics

Special Olympics is a global movement that [unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports](#), every day around the world. We empower people with intellectual disabilities to become accepted and valued members of their communities, which leads to a more respectful and inclusive society for all. Using sports as the catalyst and [programming around health](#) and education, Special Olympics is fighting inactivity, injustice and intolerance. [Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver](#), the Special Olympics movement has grown to more than 5.3 million athletes and Unified partners in [172 countries](#). With the support of more than 1 million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers [32 Olympic-type sports](#) and over [108,000 games and competitions](#) throughout the year. Special Olympics is supported by individuals, foundations and partners. [Click here for a full list of partners](#). Engage with us on: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#) and [our blog on Medium](#).