



Special Olympics
Iowa



Special Olympics Iowa VP of Development Becomes President & CEO



John Kliegl, a longtime Des Moines-area special needs advocate, who has been on the Special Olympics Iowa (SOIA) staff since February 2016, has been named President and Chief Executive Officer of the organization.

“We are excited about John Kliegl being named President and CEO of Special Olympics Iowa,” said Jill Southworth, SOIA board member and chair of the search committee. “He is the right person to lead the organization.”

SOIA conducted an extensive national search for a President and CEO to ensure over 14,000 Iowa athletes and Unified Sports Partners would have a strong leader to advocate for them. “We’ve seen the leadership and passion that John brings to SOIA,” said Southworth. “He knows where SOIA has been, and where we’re headed, and he has the ability to speak on behalf of our athlete population and their families.”

Kliegl was the Vice President of Development with SOIA, a position he held for the past year and a half. He began his new role at SOIA November 6, 2017. His association with SOIA began when his daughter first started participating in Special Olympics events. Since then, he has served as a coach and volunteer at state events and has helped raise funds and awareness for SOIA at numerous fundraisers. As the Vice President of Development, Kliegl managed corporate fundraising with SOIA’s Statewide Partners as well as individual gifts and donations. He also helped ensure the success of all SOIA signature fundraising events, like Polar Plunges, Tailgate for Teammates, Plane Pull and Over the Edge.

“I have been very fortunate to be involved with Special Olympics Iowa for all of these years. I have learned so much from the wonderful athletes I’ve met along the way and I am excited to continue to serve them to fight inactivity, injustice and intolerance,” said Kliegl. “People with intellectual disabilities are no different from you and me and I am proud to lead an organization that strives to build inclusive communities every day.”

Kliegl will still play a key role in maintaining partnerships with SOIA Statewide Partners and

individual donors, while he will also help the SOIA Programs staff continue to offer sports and special programs to Iowa athletes. "As the parent of an athlete, I've seen first-hand how important our sports are to athletes and their families. I'm looking forward to working with the overall structure of our programs, and helping our athletes live active lives," said Kliegl.

Kliegl is a native of Emmetsburg and earned his bachelor's degree from Iowa State University. He and his wife, Kasey, a realtor, have three children. [More](#)

Special Olympics Iowa Receives \$25,000 Grant from Variety- the Children's Charity

Special Olympics Iowa (SOIA) has received a \$25,000 grant from [Variety- the Children's Charity](#) to fund its Young Athlete Play Days and Unified Champion Schools special programs.



Young Athlete Play Days are designed to provide play activities and socialization opportunities for children with intellectual disabilities between the ages of two and seven. Play Days were created to serve children too young to participate in formal Special Olympics events (athletes can begin competing at age eight).

The Unified Champion Schools program partners SOIA with pre-schools, elementary schools, middle schools, high schools and colleges to implement three main components of inclusion: Unified Sports, youth leadership & advocacy and whole-school engagement.

SOIA is a nonprofit organization serving children and adults with intellectual disabilities by providing them with sport programs. Since 1968, Special Olympics Iowa has been a statewide movement that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports. Using sports as the catalyst, and including programming on health and education, Special Olympics is fighting inactivity, injustice and intolerance. As a result, people with intellectual disabilities become accepted and valued members of their communities, which leads to a more respectful and inclusive society for all.

The Variety grant will be used to help continue SOIA special programs and to improve their already existing activities to ensure full physical exercise and overall healthy lifestyle for the over 14,000 athletes in the state of Iowa. [Continue Reading](#)

Meet Team Iowa: Mary-Kate Dorrlacombe

When it comes to competition, Mary-Kate Dorrlacombe knows how to keep her cool. She's been participating in Special Olympics Iowa (SOIA) activities since 2011 and in that time she's learned about sports, as well as friendship and socialization. Now, at 32 years old, she's ready to take on her second trip to the [Special Olympics USA Games in Seattle](#) to compete in

swimming.

From July 1-6, 2018 – more than 4,000 Special Olympics athletes and coaches from all 50 states and the District of Columbia will gather in Seattle to compete before tens of thousands of spectators and volunteers. The 2018 USA Games will showcase the limitless talents of people with intellectual disabilities while promoting the barrier-breaking power of sport to promote inclusion and acceptance. Among those 4,000 athletes and coaches will be 34 Iowa athletes, who will compete in athletics, flag football, powerlifting, swimming, tennis, Unified bocce and Unified bowling.



In 2014, Dorrlacombe attended the Special Olympics USA Games in New Jersey, where she swam the 50 meters freestyle and 50 meters breaststroke. She says she had fun and learned a lot. But Seattle will be a little different. For starters, she'll be swimming the 100 meters freestyle and 100 meters breaststroke. Her coach, Mark Robinson, wanted Dorrlacombe to be challenged this time around. And she feels ready for the change. "Those are the ones I do at state and I can do it," she says. "I just need to practice more." [Continue Reading](#)

University of Northern Iowa & Lincoln Savings Bank Partner for UNI Men's Basketball Games



Special Olympics Iowa Statewide Partner [Lincoln Savings Bank](#), along with Learfield Sports and the University of Northern Iowa, have partnered together this winter to present an Athlete of the Game at each of UNI's home Men's Basketball games.

Athletes will be selected prior to the games and will be given the opportunity to be announced during the second half of the games. Athletes will also receive

four complimentary tickets to the game and a shirt.

Lincoln Savings Bank was looking for a way to help showcase SOIA athletes. "Lincoln Savings Bank is a proud supporter of Special Olympics as well as Panther Sports Properties," says Lincoln Savings Bank Regional Marketing Coordinator Ashley Ungs. "The opportunity came to fruition for recognition at men's home basketball games. LSB preferred to highlight the men and women of Special Olympics and their accomplishments versus our own employees."

As a Statewide Partner, Lincoln Savings Bank works with SOIA athletes year-round and volunteer for events like the West Des Moines and Cedar Falls/Waterloo Polar Plunges. They also volunteer at SOIA's Summer Games every May. "Our corporate sponsorship with Special Olympics is near and dear to the hearts of LSB employees," says Ungs. "As a community bank, it is our passion to give back to our communities." [Continue Reading](#)

UnitedHealthcare Celebrates Another Year as Premier Statewide Partner



Special Olympics Iowa is happy to announce that **UnitedHealthcare** will be a SOIA Premier Statewide Partner and a sponsor of [Challenge Days](#) and the [Healthy Athletes](#) program in 2018.

UnitedHealthcare fits right in with the SOIA mission, as the company works every day "to help people live healthier lives." The company has a strong history with SOIA, serving as a Gold Level Sponsor in past years before becoming a Statewide Partner in 2017.

UnitedHealthcare volunteers will continue to help with SOIA Healthy Athletes events throughout the year by providing athletes with screenings like Healthy Hearing and teaching athletes about nutrition, safety, and fitness through Health Promotions.

"The hard work, dedication and passion of the Special Olympics athletes is an inspiration, and UnitedHealthcare is proud to support their ongoing efforts across Iowa," said Megan Bernholtz, Community Outreach Specialist at UnitedHealthcare. "As a Special Olympics volunteer, I am thrilled to interact directly with the athletes and see up close their joy in competition and team activities. I look forward to the next chance I get to work with Special Olympics!"

SOIA is excited to work with UnitedHealthcare in 2018 and see how the growing partnership will help the more than 14,000 athletes that participate in Special Olympics in Iowa. [More](#)

Give Back to Special Olympics During the Holidays!

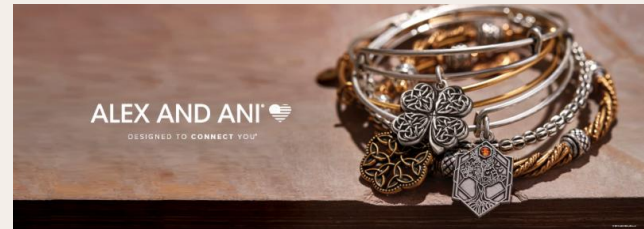
There are plenty of ways you can give back to Special Olympics Iowa throughout the holiday season!



- **AmazonSmile:** Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service. Support Special Olympics Iowa by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com.

- **Finish Line:** For the sixth year in a row, Finish Line will be holding its annual holiday fundraising campaign benefiting Special Olympics from November 15 – December 31, 2017 at over 560 Finish Line stores across the United States. Finish Line is national partner of Special Olympics who provides robust volunteer support across the country and generates funds annually through its holiday fundraising campaign. As in previous years, customers will be asked to make donations at check-out to benefit Special Olympics. In addition to in-store donations, customers will also be able to make online donations as well as round up their online purchases.
- **Alex and Ani:** Alex and Ani will donate to Special Olympics 20% of the purchase price from each Power of Unity charm sold by Alex and Ani at alexandani.com.

FINISH LINE



SOIA Now Accepting Applications for First Unified Champion Schools Scholarship



Special Olympics Iowa is offering an opportunity to graduating high school seniors who are involved in any Iowa Unified Champion Schools (UCS) program.

Teacher liaisons from Unified Champion Schools in Iowa may nominate a graduating senior to win one of two

\$250 **scholarships**. If your school is not currently a Unified Champion School, please contact Bryan Coffey bcoffey@soiowa.org to learn more.

Nomination Process:

School Liaison:

- Select one graduating senior to nominate for the scholarship
- Write a 200 word (1/2 page) nomination letter explaining why you think this student would be a good candidate for this award

Student:

- Must be pursuing a higher level of education during the 2018-2019 school year.
- Write a 300-400 word (1½ pages MAX) letter detailing the following:
 - Name
 - Number of years involved with Special Olympics programs
 - Special Olympics programs and activities the student has participated in
 - Any leadership roles the student has held within the UCS club
 - Most gratifying moment of being involved

About Unified Champion Schools:

Schools across Iowa are embracing the UNIFIED concept by becoming a Special Olympics **Unified Champion School**. This program is available to all school levels ranging from elementary to college. Each school level has unique program opportunities offered that are age appropriate and conducive to the student's learning and the overall environment of the school. Elementary schools are able to host **Young Athletes** programs while middle schools, Jr. high schools and high schools focus on **Youth Leadership** and **Unified Sports**. At the college level,

student clubs are encouraged to host events that community based Special Olympics athletes can participate in! If your school is not yet taking advantage of being a Unified Champion School please contact our Director of Unified Programs, Bryan Coffey; bcoffey@soiowa.org

SOIA Looks to Xpand Challenge Day and Young Athletes Play Day Programs



Challenge Days: Special Olympics Iowa is looking to expand the [Challenge Day](#) program. We are looking at the Cedar Rapids, Coralville, Emmetsburg and Sioux City areas. Challenge

Days are a one-day event for athletes with significant disabilities and our aging population. Ten adaptive sports are offered during this day and lunch is provided for everyone. If you are interested in joining a Challenge Day, please contact Wendy Olinger, Director of Athlete Initiatives, at 515-986-5520 or wolinger@soiowa.org to find out more information or to get connected with a location near you.



Young Athletes Play Days: Special Olympics Iowa is looking to

expand the [Young Athletes Play Day program](#). We are looking at the Dubuque, Coralville, Marshalltown and Waterloo areas. Young Athletes Play Days are a one-day Unified event for children ages 2-7. Children with and without disabilities will come together for sports training in 10 different sport areas. Everyone will receive a free lunch and all children will receive a gold medal for participating. If you are interested in joining a Young Athletes Play Day, please contact Wendy Olinger, Director of Athlete Initiatives, at 515-986-5520 or wolinger@soiowa.org to find out more information or to get connected with a location near you.

Night to Shine

Founded by the Tim Tebow Foundation, Night to Shine is an unforgettable prom night experience for people with special needs ages 14 and older. **On one night, February 9, 2018**, more than

500 churches from around the world will come together to host Night to Shine for approximately 90,000 honored guests through the support of 175,000 volunteers.



Several churches throughout Iowa will be hosting a Night to Shine prom. Contact a church below if interested in signing-up to be a part of a Night to Shine prom.

CrossPointe Church, Sioux City

First Church of Christ, Atlantic

Hope Evangelical Free Church, Dubuque

Our Lady of the River Catholic Church, Le Claire

Prairie Ridge Church, Ankeny

Risen Christ Lutheran Church, Davenport

Rising Sun Church of Christ, Pleasant Hill

[More Info](#)

Upcoming Events at SOIA

Winter Games



Cold weather, snow, ice, mountains...nothing can stop our athletes from speeding down the slope, running through the snowshoe course or skating around the rink. Dubuque plays host to more than 350 athletes and 150 volunteers for the two-day Winter Games. With accommodations at the Grand Harbor Resort and Waterpark, athletes, coaches and families have plenty of choices for winding down after competitions.

EVENT DETAILS

Date: January 8-9, 2018

Registration Deadline: December 1, 2017

Location: Dubuque (Sundown Mountain, Albrecht Acres, Mystique Community Ice Center)

Sports: Alpine skiing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, speed skating, figure skating

Event Links

[Participation Forms](#)

[More Info](#)



SOIA Tennis Coaches Re-Certification Clinic

Join us for a coaching re-certification clinic co-hosted by Iowa USTA and Special Olympics Iowa on Sunday, January 14. Participants will receive two adult-sized tennis racquets (donated demo racquets), lunch and a T-shirt. Please wear tennis shoes as we will be active on the courts.

For Questions: contact Erin Birkenholtz at (515) 986-5520 or ebirkenholtz@soiowa.org

Click the link to register: <https://goo.gl/forms/OVNnDwOWdWmBGxk02>

EVENT DETAILS:

SOIA Tennis Coaches Re-Certification Clinic

When : Sunday, January 14, 2018

Time: 10:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.

Where: Bettendorf Life Center, 2222 Middle Rd, Bettendorf, IA 52722



Join us for a Pistol Shoot Tournament Benefiting Special Olympics Iowa

Special Olympics Iowa will host a Pistol Shoot Tournament fundraiser, "Shoot for the Stars" on Saturday, December 9 at CrossRoads Shooting Sports in Johnston. This is the second year of the tournament.

**SHOOT
FOR THE STARS**



Event Details

WHAT: 2nd Annual Pistol Shoot Tournament, "Shoot for the Stars"

WHEN: Saturday, December 9 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

WHERE: CrossRoads Shooting Sports
(5550 Johnston Dr, Johnston, IA 50131)

This event includes:

1. **"LIVE" shoot - bullseye contest**
2. Compete against and outscore a police officer
3. Simulator bottle shoot
4. Fastest timed event to outscore a police officer

Pricing:

OPTION 1 = \$40

OPTION 2 = \$20

\$50 for both

Dodgeball Tournament

You may have hated it in fourth grade, but you'll love playing dodgeball now at the LETR Dodgeball Tournament! Get on the court and put yourself on the line for the Law Enforcement Torch Run® and Special Olympics Iowa.

Dodge for Donations

- Max of 7 players per team to start the game. Teams can have up to 10 players on the roster
- All players must be 12 years of age or older
- Teams will have a six match guarantee
 - Each match consists of best 2 out of 3
- Get the full set of rules [here](#)



Event Details:

Norwalk Dodgeball Tournament

Date: Saturday, January 27, 2018

Location: Lakewood Elementary, Norwalk

Cost: \$200 per team

Registration: Register online [here](#). Check back for the flier!

For more information, contact:

Rachel Bosworth, LETR Marketing/Event Coordinator

515-986-5520 x108

Polar Plunges

Brrrrrring on the cold! Whether you plunge solo or with coworkers, friends or family – for the ultimate bonding

experience – we'll help you take “cool” up a degree or two.

Being a Plunger means cooling your body while warming hearts. The Polar Plunge® is a signature fundraiser for Special Olympics and offers a unique opportunity for individuals and organizations to raise money and support Special Olympics Iowa athletes by jumping into frigid waters.

Upcoming Plunges:

Warren County, Indianola

Date: Saturday, February 24, 2018

Location: Lake Ahquabi

Cost: \$75 fundraising minimum



Coaches Corner

Coaches' Guide Available Online!

The 2017-2018 SOIA Coaches' Guide is now available on our [website!](#)

Trainings

Getting involved as a coach and re-certification is now easier than ever!

Check out our new "Become a Coach" page:

<http://www.soioa.org/get-involved/become-a-coach/>

You can now become certified/re-certified [ONLINE!](#)

Registration Forms Available Online

Registration forms for Challenge Days and Young Athlete Play Days are now available online! Go to the [Participation Forms](#) page on our website to view registration forms for all SOIA events.

Summer Games Team Bocce Quota Request Form

The State Office is in the process of organizing the Summer Games Bocce Tournament. SOIA wants to offer competition opportunities for athletes of all abilities. Therefore new in 2018 will be the addition of bocce skills. The skills competition is open to athletes just learning the sport of bocce or who are not quite ready for singles or team competition. There are two levels of skills for athletes to choose from. Athletes competing in bocce skills are not eligible to compete in singles or team competition. Please go to pages 67 – 68 in the SOIA Coaches Guide for a full description of Bocce Skills Level I and II. The request form can be found [here](#).

Special Olympics Iowa Release and Medical Forms

Starting in October, Special Olympics began to require all athletes joining Special Olympics Iowa to complete newly updated [SOIA Release and Medical Forms](#).

These new forms will take the place of the Physical and Consent Forms that SOIA required athletes to fill out in the past. Any athlete with a current Physical and Consent Form on file will NOT need to renew with the new forms until their current physical expires.

Before athletes can begin competition in SOIA, they must submit the following forms:

- [Athlete Information Form](#) (renewed every 3 years)
- [Participant Release Form](#)
- [Medical Forms](#)
 - Health History
 - Physical Exam (renewed every 3 years)
 - Referral Form (if required)

[Continue Reading](#)

Event Calendar

Visit our [online calendar](#) for event updates!

December

- 1- 2017 Global Messenger Workshop
- 2- 2017 Global Messenger Workshop
- 2- University of Iowa Unified Sports Day
- 6- Rock Bottom Brewery Wicked Elf tapping for SOIA
- 9- Pistol Shoot Fundraiser
- 10- Iowa City Dodgeball Fundraiser
- 16- Cornell College Unified Sports Day
- 16- 12 Bars of Charity Fundraiser

January

- 8- Winter Games
- 9- Winter Games
- 9- Southwest Area Basketball Skills
- 20- East Area Basketball Skills and Team Basketball
- 20- Northwest Area Basketball Skills
- 20- South Central Basketball Skills
- 21- Special Olympics Night with the Iowa Wolves
- 23- West Central Area Basketball Skills (Ages 8-21)
- 25- North Area Basketball Skills
- 27- West Central Area Basketball Skills (Ages 22+)
- 27- Norwalk Dodgeball Fundraiser

February

- 3- West Conference Basketball Tournament
- 3- Northeast Area Basketball Skills
- 3- East Central Area Basketball Skills
- 3- Southeast Area Basketball Skills
- 6- Southwest Area Bocce Tournament
- 8- Oskaloosa Young Athletes Play Day
- 8- North Central Area Basketball
- 8- Central Area Basketball Skills
- 10- East Central Conference Basketball Tournament
- 10- Wartburg Unified Sports Day
- 15- Spread the Word to End the Word
- 17- West Central Conference Basketball Tournament
- 20- West Des Moines Young Athlete Play Day

Thank You to Our Partners!

Champion Statewide Partners



Premier Statewide Partners



Special Olympics Iowa



www.soiowa.org

