



Pledge to End the "R-Word"



By: Chelsey Kimmel-Kendrick

Join us on our quest as we continue to educate people around the world about the [Spread the Word to End the Word® Campaign](#) on March 1. The "r-word" is a commonly used word in our society today. By using that word, you are affecting the attitudes and feelings of the millions of people who have, or know someone, with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

This grassroots campaign continues to strive for a community that is offensive-free and acceptable of every person by spreading the word through school events, rallies and social networking. Every year, Iowa's Special Olympic athletes and supporters gather at the Iowa State Capitol in Des Moines in an effort to continue to raise awareness and share their stories. They encourage others to pledge to put an end to using the "r-word" by signing petitions, banners or by taking an oath. [Continue Reading](#)



Special Olympics Iowa's 31st annual Winter Games happened in Dubuque on January 9th and 10th. Athletes from across the state competed in winter sports like figure skating, speed skating, Alpine skiing, cross country skiing and snowshoeing.

Along with the two days of competition, athletes also enjoyed an Opening Ceremony, banquet, dance, scarf exchange, and pool party at the Grand Harbor Resort & Waterpark.

SOIA would like to thank all of this year's Winter Games sponsors, volunteers, chaperones and families whose support and dedication help make events possible for our athletes in Iowa.

Congratulations to all of our athletes!

[View More Photos](#)

FREE Tickets to Iowa Energy Game February 13 Available



SOIA has 50 FREE Iowa Energy tickets for the game on **Monday, February 13 at 7 p.m. vs. the Reno Bighorns.**

The state office has 50 Iowa Energy tickets available for athletes and their families provided through the

Veridian Cares program.

In addition to attending the February 13 game, athletes will also receive inflatable Thunderstix to root on the team and the opportunity to participate in the on court fan tunnel during the starting lineup. This is the tunnel that the players run through right before the game starts. To participate in this, your group will need to check in at Fan Services the night of the game at 6:30 p.m. Fan Services is located on the south side of the concourse at the top of Section 124 at Wells Fargo Arena.

Tickets are available at the state office. If interested, please call the state office at 515-986-5520, or email Stephanie Kocer at skocer@soiowa.org to claim tickets.

SOIA Welcomes New Unified Sports and Volunteers Director

SOIA would like to welcome the newest member of the state office team, Bryan Coffey! Bryan has taken on the role of Director of Unified Sports and Volunteers. He'll be working with schools across the state to implement Unified Sports Days and Youth Leadership Programs as well as organizing volunteers for SOIA programs and events.

Bryan graduated in 2012 from the University of Northern Iowa with a degree in social work. He's had a long history with SOIA, as a volunteer first and then as an intern at the state office during the spring semester of his senior year. Bryan's work with SOIA has included everything from event planning and organization to fundraising and media relations. He's played a key role in past events like Young Athletes Play Days, Challenge Days and Polar Plunges.

During school Bryan also worked for eight summers with the Boy Scouts of America as a Summer Camp Program Director. Prior to joining the Special Olympics state office team, he worked for three and a half years as the Training and Events Manager at The Outreach Program in Des Moines. There, he organized large-scale volunteer events all around the nation where volunteers packaged meals for U.S. food banks and international locations.

Bryan is excited to get started in his new role. "I am very excited to interact with the amazing athletes who compete and participate in Special Olympics Iowa events," he says. "The pure joy of the athletes is very heartwarming and encouraging to me."

Welcome, Bryan!

[More](#)



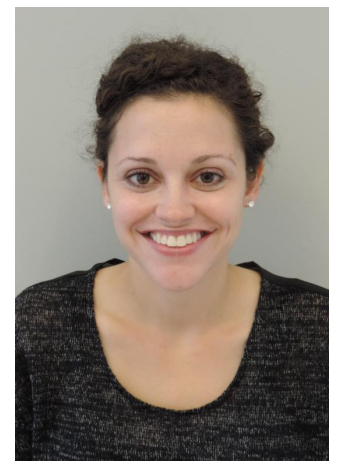
Staff Column: New Cheerleading and Dance Rules for Mid-Winter Tournament

As we get ready for another Mid-Winter Tournament, I would like to touch base with you on the Cheerleading and Dance Competition. My name is Katie Rasmussen and I am one of the venue directors for the Cheerleading and Dance competition that takes place at the Mid-Winter Tournament in March. We have completely revised our Cheerleading and Dance manual that you can locate on our website [here](#).

All Special Olympics Iowa Cheerleading and Dance competitions will be ran according to the rules and regulations in this manual.

Here are some helpful reminders to keep in mind for cheerleading:

- No music is allowed
- Time limit: 3 minutes
 - This includes changes in props, signs, etc.
- A squad or individual must perform two different cheers



- No more than 16 athletes are allowed on a squad
- Two coaches will be allowed to coach in the coaches box
- Divisioning will be based on ability, squad size and age (please see below for clarification) [Continue Reading](#)

Upcoming Polar Plunge Dates!

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.

Check out these upcoming Plunge Dates:

Warren County

Date: February 25

Location: Lake Ahquabi

Cedar Rapids/ Iowa City

Date: March 25

Location: Coralville Lake

Council Bluffs

Date: March 25

Location: Lake Manawa

Ames Greek Plunge

Date: March 31

Location: TBA

Cedar Falls/Waterloo

Date: April 8

Location: George Wyth State Park

Ottumwa

Date: April 29

Location: Jimmy Jones Shelter



Head to www.soiova.org/plunge to get registered to plunge today!

Third Annual Night to Shine Prom Coming to Iowa

By: Chelsey Kimmel-Kendrick

For one night, it's YOUR time to shine! Night to Shine is an event sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation that slowly began in 2015 as a way to connect thousands of guests with mental and intellectual disabilities simultaneously for a special prom celebration. Now, there are 11 countries and over 350 churches joining in.

On February 3 you can join in on the dance at one of five churches in Iowa to host the event. This worldwide event is for people with disabilities who are ages 16 to 99. The night is filled with fun from dancing, paparazzi and even a red carpet. Students from the Iowa School of Beauty help out to make everyone look spectacular for the special night. They help the ladies with their hair and makeup, and help shine the gentlemen's shoes.

The churches also have limousines and decorated Link buses to help transport people to and from the locations. [Continue Reading](#)

SOIA Night With the Bulldogs



On Tuesday, February 7 SOIA athletes, family and friends are invited to attend the Drake University Men's Basketball game against Illinois State. The game begins at 7 p.m. at the Knapp Center on Drake's campus.

To purchase tickets to the game, go to www.draketix.com/promo and enter the promo code "Olympics." Tickets are \$5 each. There is a processing fee of \$1 per ticket order.

Tickets will also be sold at the February 4 West Central Conference Basketball Tournament being held at the Knapp Center. No processing fee is charged when tickets are purchased that day.

For questions, please call 515-271-4949. [More](#)

Mid-Winter Tournament



The Mid-Winter Tournament is Special Olympics Iowa's own version of March Madness. Held annually in Iowa City, more than 1,000 athletes and Unified Sports partners can be seen competing at the University of Iowa Field House and Iowa City West High School.

Healthy Athletes screenings will also be provided to athletes by healthcare professionals for eyesight, dental, hearing, overall health and fitness and more.

Event Details

Date: March 10-11, 2017

Registration Deadline: February 13, 2017

Location: Iowa City

Competitions: Basketball, cheerleading, gymnastics (artistic & rhythmic) and powerlifting

[More Info](#)

2017 Summer Games Team Bocce Quota Request Form

The State Office is in the process of organizing the 2017 Summer Games Bocce Tournament. To fairly allocate the 110 team slots available for bocce please let us know the maximum number of teams your delegation would like to have in the tournament. Competition will be held outside, east of the Maple-Willow-Larch Dorms to provide more space for competition. The team tournament will be held on May 25 while the singles tournament will be held on May 26.

We will determine the final allocations of bocce teams based on the completed quota request forms received from each delegation. Once the allocations are determined, it will be up to the individual delegations to determine how they will choose the teams advancing to Summer Games. Each delegation will receive at least one bocce team for Summer Games. Delegations will be notified of the competition allocations by February 22. Bocce entries (team and singles) along with all other Summer Games registration material is due to registrations@soiowa.org by April 1.

Thank you for your assistance. Please contact Rhonda Schwarzkopf at rschwarzkopf@soiowa.org or Sally Briggs at sbriggs@soiowa.org if you have any questions. You may also contact our office at 515-986-5520

[Bocce Quota Request Form](#)

2017 Iowa Miss Amazing Pageant February 17-18



The 5th annual Iowa Miss Amazing Pageant will take place February 17-18, 2017 at Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs. This year's pageant will feature a two-day show with full areas of competition both days.

Rising Stars, Preteens, Jr. Teens and Teens will participate on Friday, February 17 while Jr. Miss, Miss, Sr. Miss and Shooting Stars will participate on Saturday, February 18. Girls ages 5 and older can participate.

Girls will learn valuable skills such as public speaking, poise and sportsmanship through aspects of pageantry. Each girl will be paired with a volunteer buddy who will be a mentor and a friend to them throughout the day and help prepare them for the pageant. [Continue Reading](#)

Staying Energized from Dawn until Dusk

- Do 10 minutes of exercise when you first wake up
- Opt for protein instead of carbs when having breakfast
- Drink ice cold water to help you perk up throughout the day
- Choose leafy greens for lunch
- Get outside – a quick walk in the afternoon can boost energy
- Stretch throughout the day

2018 Special Olympics USA Games Info

The 2018 Special Olympics USA Games will be held in Seattle, WA July 1-6. Special Olympics Iowa is now accepting general applications for both athletes and coaches.

Athletes and coaches interested in applying for the USA Games are to submit completed applications to registrations@soiowa.org by 06/01/2017.

Please direct any questions regarding the USA Games to Rhonda Schwarzkopf at rschwarzkopf@soiowa.org.

[2018 Special Olympics USA Games Application](#)

Coaches Corner

Coaches' Guide Available Online!

It can be found under the "Competitions" tab on the homepage or at this [link](#).

Basketball Skills Competition Change

In the 10 Meter Speed Dribble Event the width of the lane has been changed from 1.5 meters to 2 meters.

Harlan Coaches Sports Training Certification Clinic

The Harlan Coaches Sports Training Certification Clinic scheduled for January, 16th at Harlan High School was **CANCELLED** due to weather. The clinic has been rescheduled for March 27th.

Updated info for the clinic:

Harlan High School
2102 Durant, Harlan, IA 51537
March 27, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Sport certifications offered: bocce, bowling, basketball, athletics, cheer/dance, softball, cycling

Basketball Skills Venue Change for Mid-Winter Tournament

There has been a venue change for the Special Olympics Iowa Mid-Winter Tournament, March 10-11 in Iowa City.

Basketball skills will now be conducted in the Main Gym of Iowa City High School located at 1900 Morningside Drive.

Please make sure your athletes are in the staging area, in the auxiliary gym at Iowa City High School, at the appropriate time for their competition with their name tags on the front of their shirts.

Calendar Highlights

For a full listing of events, visit [our online calendar!](#)



February

- 4- West Conference Basketball Tournament
- 4- West Central Conference Basketball Tournament
- 4- Northeast Basketball Skills
- 9- Oskaloosa Play Day
- 9- Central Area Basketball Skills
- 9- North Central Area Basketball
- 9- Southwest Area Open Bocce Tournament
- 11- Wartburg Unified Day
- 11- Southeast Area Basketball
- 16- Des Moines Area Play Day
- 18- Upper Iowa Unified Day
- 25- East Central Conference Basketball
- 25- East Area Aquatics
- 25- Warren County Plunge

March

- 1- Spread the Word to End the Word Day
- 4- Des Moines Challenge Day
- 5- Northeast Spring Games: Track & Field and Aquatics
- 10-11- Mid-Winter Tournament
- 11- Southeast Area Aquatics
- 12- Special Olympics Day at Iowa Energy Game
- 16- North Area Aquatics
- 25- East Central Area Aquatics
- 25- Cedar Rapids/ Iowa City Plunge
- 25- Council Bluffs Plunge
- 27- Harlan Coaches Sports Training Certification Clinic
- 31- Ames Greek Plunge

April

- 1- Cedar Falls Challenge Day
- 1- East Central Area Spring Games
- 6- North Area Spring Games
- 8- Southeast Area Spring Games
- 8- East Area Spring Games
- 8- Central Area Spring Games
- 8- South Central Area Spring Games
- 8- Cedar Falls/ Waterloo Plunge
- 11- Southwest Area Spring Games
- 12- Cedar Rapids Play Day

- 18- West Central Area Spring Games
- 18- West Central Area Aquatics
- 20- North Central Area Spring Games
- 20- Ankeny Play Day
- 22- Youth Games
- 22- Cornell University Unified Day
- 22- Northwest Area Spring Games
- 27- River Hills Play Day
- 29- Ottumwa Plunge

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