



Spread the Word to End the Word February 15



By Emma Finn

In today's society the R-word is used by many. The R-word, "retard," is slang for mental retardation. It is the word that doctors first used to describe individuals with an intellectual impairment. This word is becoming a problem in today's world by the way it is being used. It has become a trend to be used in place of stupid or idiot. Instead of being used as a

medical term it is used to put down another person. The R-word is turning into something that is offensive and derogatory to a group of individuals. The R-word has become a non-inclusive word that affects so many people all over the world.

It's just the way I talk, I did not mean it like that, or it is just an expression are not excuses that justify the use of this word. "Individual with an intellectual disability" is the correct way to describe a person with a medical impairment. Spread the Word to End the Word is a campaign to help raise awareness about the hurtfulness of the R-word. It is a way for individuals to do their part in creating an inclusive society.

Special Olympics and the Best Buddies partner with the **Spread the Word to End the Word** campaign in efforts of ending prejudice towards those with intellectual disabilities. Anyone and everyone is able to take this pledge by going to www.r-word.org. Here people can take the pledge, read stories about how words affect our society, and help spread awareness. To date, more than 700,000 people have taken the online pledge while millions have signed petitions, banners and taken oaths around the world to stop hurtful language and banish prejudices.

On Thursday, February 15, Special Olympics Iowa and **Best Buddies of Iowa** will gather at the Iowa State Capitol to encourage lawmakers to participate in the campaign and sign the pledge. Athletes and Best Buddies members will also be meeting with Governor Reynolds that day to sign a proclamation in support of the group's efforts. [Continue Reading](#)

SPREAD THE WORD TO END THE WORD.

SOIA Charity of Choice at Des Moines Home and Garden Show February 8-11

Special Olympics Iowa is the charity of choice at this year's [Des Moines Home and Garden Show](#) February 8-11 at the Iowa Events Center in Downtown Des Moines. There are several ways the show plans to give back to SOIA.



SOIA athletes will be on hand to help throughout the event. An athlete will also get to decorate one of the mailboxes in the show's annual "You Got Mail" display. Local celebrities and tastemakers will also take a plain old mailbox and turn it into a masterpiece. There will be a silent auction, so attendees could walk away with a one-of-a-kind mailbox. All proceeds will go towards SOIA.

On Media will be doing a promotion at the show on Friday for "Hero Day." They plan to bring in The Justice Corps of Iowa (Super Heroes). Attendees can purchase a photo opp with them, with all proceeds from the photos going to Special Olympics.

If you buy tickets for the Home and Garden show and use the promo code **OLYMPICS**, \$1 of your ticket price will be donated to SOIA.

[Click here](#) for more information, or to purchase tickets.

2018 Winter Games Recap



A big thank you to everyone who came out to the 2018 Winter Games in Dubuque! Our athletes had so much fun. We couldn't have done it without all of the help and support from volunteers, coaches, sponsors and, of course, friends and family.

Check out more Winter Games photos on our [Facebook Page](#).

Betsworth Father/Son Duo Takes on the 2018 Special Olympics USA Games



By Emma Finn

The fourth annual Special Olympics USA Games will be held this summer in Seattle, Washington. The USA Games take place every four years with previous locations being: Ames, Iowa; Lincoln, Nebraska and Lawrenceville, New Jersey. The event will offer 14 different sports with the help of 10,000

volunteers recruited. It is expected that over 70,000 spectators will attend. The USA games give athletes from all over the country the opportunity to participate, meet other athletes, and showcase their talents

Twenty-two year old Mitchell Betsworth of Sioux City will be helping represent Iowa in the 2018 Special Olympic USA Games. He is one of 4,000 athletes participating in July. Mitchell's event is the powerlifting competition. The lifts that he performs are the bench press, deadlift and he also squats. Mitchell trains 4 days a week, usually 45 minutes to an hour per session with his

coach and father, Troy Betsworth. Mitchell's favorite lift to preform is the deadlift.

Mitchell got his start with powerlifting back in high school when a teacher aide recommended he try powerlifting. He originally began his Special Olympics career as a basketball skills competitor back when he was in junior high.

Mitchell is no stranger to USA Games. He competed back in the 2014 USA Olympic Games held in New Jersey. Other Special Olympic sports he participates in are: swimming, softball, soccer, golf and bowling.

"For Seattle, Mitch has three goals; first to be safe, second to have fun, and third to do the best that he can," commented father and coach Troy Betsworth. [Continue Reading](#)

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 9-10, 2018

Registration Deadline: February 12, 2018

Location: Iowa City (University of Iowa, Iowa City West High School, Iowa City High)

[More Info](#)

Basketball Skills Competitions

By Bree Jacoba

SOIA's Basketball Skills competitions help teach athletes basic skills of the game, while preparing them to compete at the state level. For basketball skills, individuals compete in three events: Target Pass, 10 Meter Dribble and Spot Shot.

In the target pass event, a square is marked both on the wall and on the



floor. The athlete must stand within the square marked on the floor and try to get the ball to hit inside the ball on the wall. In the 10-meter event, the athlete begins from behind the start line and between the cones and starts moving and dribbling when the official signals. They must cross the finish line between the cones and must pick up the basketball to stop the clock. If the athlete loses control of the ball, the clock will continue to run until the ball is recovered. In the spot shot event, there are six spots that are marked on the floor around a basketball hoop and the athlete has two attempts from each of the six spots to make a basket.

After the three events, the athletes final score is determined by adding together the scores achieved in each of the three events. The athlete that places first place at the end of the three events will then advance onto state. The state competition is our Mid-Winter Tournament held on March 10th at Iowa City High School.

For more information on basketball skills or Mid-Winter Tournament go to soiowa.org/mid-winter-tournament.

[More Info](#)

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 higher 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

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](#)

50 For 50 Years

\$50 FOR 50 YEARS



GIVE \$50 TO
CELEBRATE
50 YEARS OF
SPECIAL OLYMPICS
& GET YOUR
CHOICE OF GOLD
PIN OR COIN!



2018 marks 50 years for the Special Olympics. That means 50 years of our volunteers, staff, and supporters working tirelessly to achieve our mission – a world without discrimination. A world where individuals with intellectual disabilities can tap their untold potential and live their lives to the fullest.

Special Olympics Iowa asks you to join us in celebrating 50 years of bliss, bravery and empowerment by donating in our **\$50 for 50 campaign** in honor of the 50th Anniversary of Special Olympics. With each \$50 donation, donors will get their choice of a limited-edition commemorative 50th Anniversary Gold Pin or Gold Coin.

Special Olympics Iowa is so proud of what has been accomplished over the past 50 years. With 5 million served in over 172 countries, we have changed many lives all over the world. Help us continue to make a difference in athlete's lives.

DONATE NOW

Law Enforcement Torch Run Shirts



[The Law Enforcement Torch Run](#) (LETR) both raises funds and awareness for athletes who participate in Special Olympics. LETR gives law enforcement officers around the state an opportunity to collect donations for Special Olympics Iowa. The officers then help pass the Flame of Hope in the final leg from Des Moines to Ames during Summer Games. The

torch is then passed to an athlete to light the Olympic flame at the Opening Ceremonies.

The Flame Symbolizes courage and celebration of diversity uniting communities around the globe. LETR is the biggest fundraising vehicle for Special Olympics Iowa every year. Each year more than 1,000 law enforcement officers participate. It is a great way for law enforcement officers to show their support and connect with athletes around the state of Iowa. Officers are

now selling T-shirts within their departments to raise money and show support. If you are interested in buying one click on this [link](#) for more info. Sales will begin in February and continue throughout the remainder of the year.

Upcoming Events at SOIA

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

Council Bluffs

Date: Saturday, March 24

Location: Lake Manawa (Council Bluffs Country Club)

Cost: \$75 fundraising minimum

Iowa City

Date: Saturday, April 14

Location: Coralville Lake, West Outlook Beach

Cost: \$75 fundraising minimum

Cedar Rapids

TBA

Cedar Falls/Waterloo

TBA



LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN EXTRAVAGANZA

DANCE-OFF Competition

World Food Prize 100 Locust Street Des Moines, Ia

February 3, 2018

6-10 pm

\$20 per person

Join us for the new and improved Law Enforcement Torch Run Extravaganza Dance-Off Competition to benefit Special Olympics Iowa on February 3, 2018 from 6-10 pm at the World Food Prize Building. All funds raised will benefit charity. \$20 entry will include delicious food catered by Hy-Vee, live & silent auctions, nightly dance-off entertainment, DJ, dancing, celebrity judges & MORE!
This is a family-friendly event open to all-ages!

For more information & tickets, contact Sgt Phipps 515-283-4806, SPO Isaac 515-237-1591, SPO Danti 515-971-0730 or SPO Weltz 515-237-1391. Space is Limited!





PROUDLY PRESENTS
YOUTH GAMES

The mission of Youth Games is to offer positive sports experiences and grow youth sports participation within Special Olympics.

Friday, April 20th 2018

10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

9:30 A.M. - Participant Registration

Hawkeye Recreation Fields

The University of Iowa – Iowa City, Iowa

The event is **free of cost** and each athlete will receive lunch. Athletes will also receive a **free t-shirt!** Sports instruction and competition is limited to youth ages 6 to 21 years of age with intellectual disabilities.

Participants will choose between track & field, flag football, and soccer and spend the day learning and mastering the skills of that sport!

Parents who bring their child can stick around and enjoy our "Parents Pavilion." Here you can socialize with other parents or stop at a booth from area agencies/businesses to talk about what they might have to offer.



To register, please complete the form at the following link:

<https://goo.gl/forms/6Z05lYfHeCZcp1rp1>

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

IOWA ATHLETICS **GROUP INVITE**

**ALL SPECIAL OLYMPIC ATHLETES ARE INVITED TO
ATTEND IOWA ATHLETIC EVENTS!**

INCENTIVES INCLUDE:

- **PRIZE PACKS**
- **IN-GAME RECOGNITION**
- **POST-GAME MEET &
GREET WITH THE TEAM**

SWIMMING & DIVING

January 12 vs. Notre Dame/Illinois @ 7pm

TRACK & FIELD

January 27 - Black & Gold Premier @ 2pm

MEN'S TENNIS

March 4 vs. Oregon @ 11am

WOMEN'S TENNIS

April 22 vs. Wisconsin @ 12pm

ADMISSION IS FREE TO EACH EVENT.

RSVP TO AARON HOWARD

Aaron-Howard@hawkeyesports.com or (319) 335-9431



Special Olympics
Iowa



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:

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.

Share Your Story!

Do you know someone with a great story to share? We're always looking to share our athletes' stories in the newsletter. If you have a story idea for us about an athlete, coach, volunteer, or family please email Stephanie Kocer at skocer@soiowa.org for a chance for them to be featured in the newsletter!

Event Calendar

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

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 Athletes Play Day
- 24- Warren County Polar Plunge

March

- 3- East Area Swimming
- 3- Ruby Van Meter Challenge Day
- 4- Northeast Area Spring Games (Track & Field and Swimming)
- 6- NAIA National Basketball Tournament Special Olympics Clinic
- 9- Mid-Winter Tournament
- 10- Mid-Winter Tournament
- 15- North Area Swimming
- 24- East Central Area Swimming
- 24- Council Bluffs Polar Plunge

April

- 7- Grinnell College Unified Sports Day
- 7- East Area Spring Games
- 7- East Central Area Spring Games
- 7- Cedar Falls Challenge Day
- 7- Central Area Spring Games

7- Southeast Area Spring Games
 10- Southwest Area Spring Games
 10- West Central Area Spring Games
 10- West Central Area Swimming
 12- North Central Spring Games
 12- Ankeny Young Athletes Play Day
 12- North Area Spring Games
 14- Northwest Area Spring Games
 14- South Central Area Spring Games
 19 DMPS Special Olympics Unified Sports Day- Inclusion Unites All
 19- Cedar Rapids Young Athlete Play Day
 20- SOIA Youth Games
 25- Western Regional UCS Youth Summit
 27- River Hills Young Athletes Play Day

Thank You to Our Partners!

Champion Statewide Partners



Premier Statewide Partners



Special Olympics Iowa



www.soiowa.org