



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

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 to Celebrate 50th Anniversary in 2018

The spark that became today's Special Olympics movement ignited at the first 1968 International Summer Games in Chicago, Ill., USA. Special Olympics Iowa was represented by Iowa athletes at those first games and in 2018 SOIA will also be celebrating it's 50th Anniversary!

Since 1968, Special Olympics has been changing attitudes about the talents of people with intellectual disabilities. For our year-long anniversary, we are celebrating 50 years of joy, courage and empowerment. Starting in January 2018, you'll see the 50th Anniversary logo at SOIA events and on our website. We'll also be making some exciting announcements about upcoming fun in honor of the 50th Anniversary.



In July, it was announced that Chicago will host the Special Olympics movement's 50th Anniversary global celebration events July 17 – 22, 2018. Mary Davis, Special Olympics International CEO, and Justice Anne Burke, who founded Special Olympics Chicago, announced the news along with other organizers of the upcoming events. Special Olympics International, Special Olympics Illinois and Special Children's Charities have united to host nearly a week of exciting events to celebrate the past 50 years of Special Olympics and to launch the movement into the future.

"The 50th Anniversary will be a pivotal moment for Special Olympics, as we aim to end discrimination against people with intellectual disabilities and as the leaders of inclusion through sport," shared Mary Davis. "We have spent the past 50 years breaking down barriers for our athletes and creating opportunities through sport, but we still have much more work to do. For our 50th Anniversary, we are inviting all to join us as we shape a more accepting and inclusive future." [Continue Reading](#)

SOIA Athletes Play During Halftime at ISU Men's

Basketball Game

On Monday, December 4, Special Olympics Iowa athletes got an opportunity to play during the halftime festivities of Iowa State University's Men's Basketball game against Northern Illinois.

Athletes from Johnston team "The Johnston Outlaws" scrimmaged each other on the full court in Hilton Coliseum, while they were cheered on by an excited student section. The scrimmage game was even announced by the ISU game announcers.

The Johnston Outlaws began playing together as a Special Olympic basketball team in 1996. Over the years the delegation has grown to form two teams. They have gone to state competitions 18 times and have come home with 10 gold, 5 silver and 7 bronze metals between the two teams. The team is coached by Jeff Simpson and assistant coaches Natalie Ginty, Courtney Fritz and Chris Ayers.

"My favorite part of playing in Hilton Coliseum was the atmosphere and having some of the students I met from Greek Week be there to watch us. They were all very excited for both teams and everyone cheered us on when we made a shot," said SOIA athlete Tyler Leech. "It was like they were fans of us and even though we played against each other it was as if everyone was on the same side. It really means a lot since I never did anything like this before." [Continue Reading](#)

Add Volunteering to Your 2018 New Year's Resolutions



By Elin Phipps, SOIA Director of Volunteers

It is that time a year again! The New Year is here and it is time to start making a list of 2018 New Year's resolutions. Exercise more, lose weight, eat healthier, spend more time with family and friends, pick up a new hobby, travel more...these are all popular resolutions. Why not add "spend time volunteering" to your New Year's resolutions list? Volunteering not only benefits the community and the organization, it has benefits for you too! Here are some ways volunteering has a positive impact on your life and the lives of those around you.

Did you know that volunteering can be beneficial to your health? According to the [Corporation for National and Community Service](#), research indicates volunteering provides individual physical and social health benefits. It has been established that those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer.

In relation to physical health, often times volunteer positions have some level of physical activity involved. Whether it is lifting boxes, helping a child or adult at a sporting event, or even just getting up off your feet and walking around, volunteer positions can help individuals stay active. It has been reported that those who volunteer frequently throughout the year have better overall physical health and are some of the healthiest people in the U.S. [Continue Reading](#)

Invest in Something Special Social Media Effort Raises \$10,000 for Special Olympics Iowa



Voya Financial, Inc. announced on Friday, December 7 that it will donate \$10,000 to Special Olympics Iowa as a result of the success of its Invest in Something Special™ effort – a week-long social media campaign designed to share the goals and dreams of Special Olympics athletes on social

media, and to raise money for local Programs.

“Every day at Special Olympics Iowa, we work to ensure that people with intellectual disabilities are recognized, accepted and valued as members of our communities,” said John Kliegl, President and CEO of Special Olympics Iowa. “We are grateful to Voya for supporting this important work and for helping to raise awareness of the strength and determination that Special Olympics athletes bring to our community.”

During the Invest in Something Special campaign, Special Olympics athletes from across the country were encouraged to share their goals beyond sport on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Voya pledged to donate \$1 for every like, share and comment on athletes’ #InvestInSomethingSpecial stories, up to \$500,000. The response to the campaign was overwhelming, resulting in more than 940,000 people participating on social media and an amplified donation of \$520,000 from Voya, which will be shared among the 52 U.S. Special Olympics Programs, including Special Olympics Iowa. [Continue Reading](#)

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](#)

Upcoming Events at SOIA

Special Olympics Night with the Iowa Wolves

Special Olympics Iowa athletes

are invited to the January 21 Iowa Wolves game against the Reno Bighorns at a discounted ticket price! The game will also feature a special in-game dance performance by a SOIA team and a post-game basketball scrimmage by SOIA teams.

Event Details:

Date: Sunday, January 21

Time: 4 p.m.

Location: Wells Fargo Arena, Des Moines

Tickets: Buy tickets online at

Special Olympics Night with the Iowa Wolves



When: Sunday, January 21st @ 4:00 PM - Wells Fargo Arena

Promos: Super Hero Night
Special in-game dance performance by Special Olympics
Post-game basketball scrimmage by Special Olympics athletes

Tickets: Starting at \$5 each*
<https://groupmatics.events/SpecialOlympics17>
or by contacting Kyle Davy at
Kyle.Davy@IAWolves.com / 515-564-8563

*Handicap accessible seating available upon request





<https://groupmatics.events/SpecialOlympics17> or contact Kyle Davy at
kyle.davey@iawolves.com or 515-564-8563

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.

DES MOINES
**HOME
+GARDEN
SHOW**

FEB. 8-11

IOWA EVENTS CENTER

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.

Save the Date: Spread the Word to End the Word

The Spread the Word to End the Word® Campaign is a grassroots effort to educate people around the world about hurtful language and advocate for them to stop using the “R-word.” The campaign targets students through school events and social networking, inviting them to sign an online pledge, and spread the word on their campuses. To date, more than 650,000 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. **Take the pledge at www.r-word.org.**



Event Details

Date: Thursday, February 15, 2018

Location: Iowa State Capitol Building, Rotunda

For more information, contact:

Bryan Coffey, Director of Unified Sports and Volunteers
515-986-5520

Spread the Word to End the Word resources are also available at www.r-word.org.

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

Date: Sunday, January 14, 2018

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

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



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

Brrrrrrrring 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



Cedar Falls/Waterloo

Date: Saturday, April 14

Location: George Wyth State Park

Cost: \$75 fundraising minimum

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' 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.soiowa.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](#).

Event Calendar

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

January

- 8- Winter Games
- 9- Winter Games
- 9- Southwest Area Basketball Skills
- 14- Tennis coaches re-certification clinic
- 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

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

Thank You to Our Partners!

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Special Olympics Iowa



www.soiowa.org