



31st Annual Winter Games Coming to Dubuque



Over 300 athletes from across the state are set to compete in the 2017 Special Olympics Iowa Winter Games January 9-10 in Dubuque. More than 130 coaches and chaperones, as well as 150 volunteers, will donate their time to serve the athletes and make the event a success.

Children and adult athletes of all abilities will participate in sports like Alpine skiing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, short track speed skating and figure skating. The Grand Harbor Center, Sundown Mountain, Albrecht Acres and Mystique Community Ice Center will host the competitions and activities.

"Our athletes are very excited to showcase their skills and abilities at the Winter Games," said SOIA Director of Sports & Advanced Competitions, Rhonda Schwarzkopf. "Their dedication is amazing to watch. Winter Games would not be possible without the support and commitment of athletes' families, coaches and our volunteers." [Continue Reading](#)

Staff Column: Kathy Irving Reflects on 27 Years with SOIA

By Kathy Irving, Director of Athlete Initiatives

I remember the very first time I attended a Special Olympics Iowa event. I had signed myself up, along with my two children, to be volunteers at the State Summer



Games in Ames. This was when we were using an outdoor track at ISU. As we walked toward the track, we continually had athletes come up to us telling us they were there to compete or to ask us what we were there for. We heard nothing but positives about how hard they had worked, how much fun they were having, and that we could be their friend. I was hooked before I ever got started.

Little did I know what they meant by the word friend. For eight years, we kept coming back. Every year I made more "new friends." I ran the 50 meter dash and worked the relay races on Saturday. Later I became a member of the Summer Games Steering Committee. I was amazed at how much work went into just putting together the Summer Games. I couldn't get enough of Special Olympics. I dreamed of working for them full time, but in reality, I knew the odds were slim.

But one Saturday morning at the State Summer Games, the CEO at that time, Bob Ligouri, was standing beside me as a race was going on. I was my usual obnoxious self, screaming at my new friends to keep up the good work. When the race was over, he asked me if I had ever thought about switching careers. I looked at him, very puzzled as to why he would ask that. He then asked me, "How would you like to work for Special Olympics Iowa?" I told him I dreamed of working for them, but knew I wouldn't qualify. He said yes you would and asked me to meet with him and Pam Wagner the following Monday. On Monday morning he offered me the job, and I said yes.

Thus began the most wonderful 27 years of my life. [Continue Reading](#)

Iowa State Athletics and UnitedHealthcare Team Up in Support of SOIA



Thanks to a partnership between Iowa State University Athletics and UnitedHealthcare, Special Olympics Iowa athletes have been given opportunities to attend a men's basketball game during the 2016-2017 season.

In collaboration with SOIA, UnitedHealthcare presents the "Athlete of the Game" at ten men's basketball games at ISU. A Special Olympics athlete is recognized on the floor at Hilton Coliseum and presented with an autographed basketball.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with Iowa State University Athletics to honor and support Iowa's Special Olympics athletes," said Kim Foltz, CEO of UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Iowa.

"UnitedHealthcare is committed to improving the health and quality of life for all Iowans and will continue to invest in Iowa communities, as we have done for more than three decades." [Continue Reading](#)

Underwood Schools Promote Inclusion With New Delegation

Special Olympics Iowa is always proud to have new delegations starting up across the state. Whether they're big or small, beginners or experts, they add another voice for SOIA and all of our athletes.

And sometimes small can be mighty. That's what Jolene Whitmore thought when she came to Underwood Community Schools in Underwood, Iowa three years ago. She noticed that something was missing at her new job. "When I came here I started in a more self-contained classroom and started asking why there wasn't a Special Olympics," says Whitmore. "I had come from West Harrison where they had a big Special Olympics following. I thought OK, we need to change this. We need a Special Olympics team."



So Whitmore and another teacher decided to start a delegation at Underwood, making Whitmore the Delegation Manager and head coach. The Underwood team currently has four athletes, but that small number doesn't stop them from competing at the highest levels. Just this fall they had a student compete in State Bowling, where they came in first place. [Continue Reading](#)

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](#)

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](#)

LETR Extravaganza January 21

Join us on Saturday, January 21, 2017 for the Law Enforcement Torch Run Extravaganza hosted by the Des Moines Police Department in support of Special Olympics Iowa!

The event includes a DJ and Dance, silent and live auctions, appetizers, drinks, photo booth, drawing and more.

You can buy tickets the night of the dance or visit the SOIA website to register and get more information at soiowa.org/torch-run-dance-and-auction.

Event Details

Date: Saturday, January 21, 2017

Time: 7-11 p.m.

Location: Hy-Vee Hall

Cost: \$20 per person

LETR Norwalk 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.

There will be a max of 7 players per team to start the game. Teams can have up to 10 players on the roster and all players must be 12 years of age or older to participate. Teams will have a 6 match guarantee. Each match consists of best 2 out of 3. You can access the official rules [here](#).

Event Details

Date: January 28, 2017

Location: Lakewood Elementary, Norwalk

Cost: \$200 per team

Registration: [Register online NOW!](#)



For more information, contact:

[Rachel Bosworth](#), LETR Marketing/Event Coordinator
515-986-5520 x108

[Jayson Spurr](#), Norwalk Police Department
515-981-0666

Coaches Corner

Updated Coaches' Guide Available Online!

SOIA's updated **2016-2017 Coaches' Guide** is now available on our website. It can be found under the "Competitions" tab on the homepage or at this [link](#).

Updated Class A Application

We've updated our Class A Application on our website. If you need to renew your credentials or would like to become a Class A Volunteer, you can find the updated application [here](#).

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

Harlan High School

2102 Durant, Harlan, IA 51537

January 16, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Sport certifications offered: bocce, bowling, basketball, athletics, cheer/dance, softball, cycling

Reminders!

Special Olympics Iowa Physical and Consent Form

Formerly called our "Application for Participation," the process of sending physicals to the state office is the same, it just has a new name now!

[More Information](#)

Physicals to Practice

Athletes must be 8 years of age or older to compete with Special Olympics. However, children 6 or 7 years of age are allowed to practice with teams, but cannot compete in competitions. If a child does practice with a team they still need to turn in a physical to the state office. Contact [Rhonda Schwarzkopf](#) at 515-986-5520 with questions.

Calendar Highlights

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

CALENDAR

January

- 9-10- Winter Games
- 16- Harlan Coaches Sports Training Certification Clinic
- 19- Southwest Area Basketball Skills
- 21- East Conference Basketball Tournament
- 21- Northwest Area Basketball Skills
- 21- South Central Area Basketball Skills
- 21- LETR Extravaganza
- 26- North Area Basketball Skills
- 28- West Central Area Basketball Skills
- 28- East Central Area Basketball Skills
- 28- LETR Dodgeball Tournament

February

- 4- West Conference Basketball Tournament
- 4- WEst Central Conference Basketball Tournament
- 4- Grinnell Unified Day
- 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- Conference Team Basketball Competition

March

- 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

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