

January 2015

Newsletter

Special Olympics
Iowa



Special Olympics Iowa Athletes and Coach Named to Team USA



Patrick Gulbranson

Special Olympics Iowa bowlers Patrick Gulbranson (Stuart) and Lisa Spencer (Ankeny), along with aquatics coach Mark Robinson (Cedar Rapids, Iowa), have been named to Special Olympics Team USA and will represent the United States at the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles, Calif., July 25-Aug. 2.



Lisa Spencer

Gulbranson and Spencer each earned a gold medal at the 2013 Special Olympics Iowa State Bowling Tournament, qualifying them to apply for a spot on Special Olympics Team USA Bowling. They are among a 491-member delegation representing the United States in competition in 17 sports.

"We are so proud of Patrick and Lisa for being selected to compete at the World Summer Games," said Special Olympics Iowa Interim CEO Gary Harms. "The hard work and dedication displayed by these two individuals is reflected not only in their athletic performance, but in all they do as representatives of their friends and families in our state."

Robinson has been an aquatics coach for Special Olympics for the past 18 years. He is currently coaching for the local delegation at Cedar Rapids Parks & Recreation.

"Being a member of Special Olympics has allowed me to experience life through the athlete perspective, especially at my two national games experiences," Robinson said. "I've grown as a person and I've developed lifelong friendships."

Every two years, the world transcends the boundaries of geography, nationality, political philosophy, gender, age, culture and religion to come together for Special Olympics World Games. Alternating between Summer and Winter Games, this event is the flagship event of the Special Olympics movement, which promotes equality, tolerance and acceptance through the power and joy of sport. This prominent world stage brings attention to the Special Olympics movement and the abilities of people with intellectual disabilities. Currently, more than 4.4 million Special Olympics athletes train and compete year-round in 170 nations across the globe.

More than 7,000 athletes from 177 nations will compete in 25 Olympic-type sports at the 2015 World Games, which marks the 14th Special Olympics World Summer Games. For more information visit www.specialolympicsteamusa.org.

Connect With Us!

Remember to follow Special Olympics Iowa to receive important updates and stay on top of the latest events and activities.

Be Our Twitter Reporter!

Training for a competition? Volunteering at an event? Having a great time at fundraiser? Let us know about it! Tag your tweets with @soiowa and we will retweet you!



Facebook at www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsIA

Twitter at @SOIowa

Instagram at www.instagram.com/SpecialOlympicsIA

YouTube at www.youtube.com/soiowa2

Special Olympics Iowa Thanks Area Directors

Special Olympics Iowa serves more than 12,000 athletes and Unified Sports Partners. Nearly 90 Special Olympics events and special programs are held each year throughout the state, giving athletes a fair opportunity to develop and demonstrate their skills and talents.

Thousands of volunteers are utilized each year at both the area and state levels to facilitate and manage sports competitions for the athletes. The key volunteers for scheduling and implementing the area competitions are the area directors. These volunteers understand and promote the Special Olympics mission, goals and philosophies.

Area directors ensure that quality Special Olympics sports training programs and athletic competition events are available to all eligible individuals in their assigned specific geographic area. They serve as the manager and team leader of all volunteers working in their local area. In addition to all of their program responsibilities, the area directors must also ensure financial support to sustain the area competitions.

These astounding area directors are dedicated to providing sport opportunities that challenge the athletes to achieve their full potential and attain the goals they have set.

The state office is extremely thankful for the area directors and wants to recognize them for their year-long support and commitment to the athletes, their families, the volunteers and coaches. We are extremely proud to have you all as part of the Special Olympics Iowa team!

SOIA on a Roll at the State Bowling Tournament

More than 740 Special Olympics Iowa athletes and Unified Sports® partners from across the state took to the lanes at Bowlerama in Des Moines, Plaza Bowl in Sioux City and Westdale Bowl in Cedar Rapids for the 2014 Special Olympics Iowa State Bowling Tournament November 22. Competition was held in singles, assisted ramp, unassisted ramp, doubles and four person team events. Those who competed at the state bowling tournament won the right to do so by earning first place in their event at one of the area bowling competitions held in September and October which featured competition among over 3,500 athletes and partners.

Central	Jenni Hart
East	Nancy Shannon
East Central	Theresa Werner Diane Courtney
North	Norm Johnson
North Central	Liz Rusher Lee Decicco
Northeast	Joe & Eileen Wilson
Northwest	Peggy Koele
South Central	Dawn Criss
Southeast	Brad & Julie Bengé
Southwest	Martin Wright & Will Schafer
West Central	Debby Eldred

The 2014 Special Olympics Iowa State Bowling Tournament would not have been possible without contributions from many individuals and organizations. We would like to thank Bridgestone America's Trust Fund for their contributions to the success of the state bowling tournament and for their continued support in providing quality competition opportunities to the athletes of Special Olympics Iowa.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered, coached, competed, sponsored and supported the 2014 Special Olympics Iowa State Bowling Tournament and congratulations to all of the athletes and partners who competed at both the area and state bowling tournaments.

Staying FIT Without Going to the Gym

Staying healthy and FIT does not have to be stressful or something you dread. Being FIT is all about being creative and doing what makes you feel good. Use these ideas to jump-start your own FIT exercise ideas!

1. Do 12 repetitions of an exercise of your choice during commercials of your favorite TV show. See how many different exercises you can get done in a night!
2. Jump roping is incredibly good for you and does not cost that much or take up that much space! Start jumping and see how good you can get!
3. Stretch before you go to bed. Stretching before you go to bed helps your muscles relax for the night and helps you sleep better which will give you more energy to be active!
4. Pick up a ball of some sort. Go play catch, shoot some hoops, run around in the yard with friends, family, siblings, or anyone you can get to come play with you.
5. Go on a hike or a nature walk with a group. Being outside in nature with friends makes the time go by fast and you won't even realize all the exercising you are doing!
6. As much as we all hate it, cleaning is exercise. It gets you up and moving and doing movements you might not do on an everyday basis.
7. Do some handstands and cartwheels! Works on muscles you might have forgotten you had and works on your balance and strength! Fun FIT way to pass time!
8. Too cold to go run around outside? Run up and down the stairs for a few minutes. Climbing stairs is great exercise!
9. Jumping jacks, push-ups, sit-ups, crunches, planks, chair dips, air squats, frog jumps, all directions of lunges, Russian twists, wall sits, jump squats, vertical jumping, single leg hopping, leg lifts and any other types of exercises don't require gym space! Turn your living room into your FIT space!

SOIA Welcomes New Board Members in 2015

Mike Lightbody is the program coordinator of Iowa Compass at the University of Iowa Center for Disabilities and Development and is a master's in public health in policy candidate for 2015. He has coached for the Iowa City Recreation delegation for 14 years and coached for Team Iowa at the Special Olympics National Games in Lincoln (2010) and New Jersey (2014).

Ted Oberlander is semi-retired from the accounting world. She is the board chair of the Iowa State University Alumni Association Board and is the proud parent/coach of SOIA athlete Angela Oberlander. Ted also lends her talents to helping with the Global Messenger program.

Keith Saunders is the state relations officer for the University of Iowa and associate counsel to the board. Keith has two children with special needs, Ella and Graham.

Jill Southworth is an attorney in West Des Moines. Her son, Brian Rolek, has been a Special Olympics athlete for almost 20 years. Jill is Brian's golf coach.

Charity Hodson is the new athlete representative to the board. She has participated in many different sports, including softball, bowling, track & field and cheerleading. She became a Global Messenger in 2012 and frequently goes out to speak about how Special Olympics Iowa has impacted her life.

SOIA Welcomes New Marketing and Communications Manager

Lauri Pyatt joined the SOIA staff on Dec. 2 as the marketing and communications manager. She was most recently the school/community relations specialist for West Des Moines Community Schools, where she worked for six years. She was also the assistant director of communications/multimedia coordinator for the Mountain West Conference after spending four years as a sports information director at Drake University.

Lauri brings a wide range of talents to the SOIA, including web design, social media, graphic design and media relations. She has won multiple state and national awards for her website, social media and design work.

2015 Special Olympics Iowa State Winter Games

For three days in mid-January the city of Dubuque will play host to over 325 Special Olympics Iowa athletes from across the state competing in events at the 2015 Special Olympics Iowa Winter Games. Beginning Monday, January 12 with preliminaries and ending Wednesday, January 14 with the finals of the 200M snow shoe competition, the 2015 Winter Games will feature competition in events in Alpine skiing, cross country skiing, figure skating, short track speed skating and snow shoeing.

In addition to preliminary competition, Monday also features the Winter Games Opening Ceremony and a dance at the Grand River Center. The Opening Ceremony will be held on the Grand Harbor patio overlooking the river walk. The Opening Ceremony includes the parade of athletes led by the East Dubuque Drum and Bugle Corps from the Grand Harbor Hall along the river walk to the Grand Harbor patio, the recitation of the Special Olympics Athlete Oath, the presentation of colors by members of the Dubuque Police Department, the presentation of the Flame of Hope and the lighting of the Winter Games cauldron.

Competition will take place on Monday and Tuesday in Alpine skiing at Sundown Mountain Resort, cross country skiing at the Dubuque County Fairgrounds and figure and short track speed skating at the Mystique Community Ice Center. Competition will take place Monday through Wednesday in snow shoeing at Camp Albrecht Acres. In addition to the Opening Ceremony and dance on Monday there will be a banquet and pool party held at the Grand Harbor Hotel and Waterpark on Tuesday evening for all athletes and coaches. The tentative schedule of events for the 2015 Winter Games can be found on page eight of the Winter Games registration at www.soiowa.org.

The financial and volunteer support of the Dubuque community is vital to the success of the Special Olympics Iowa Winter Games. In addition to our year-round Premier State-wide and Winter Games Sponsor Dubuque Racing Association, Special Olympics Iowa would like to thank the following for their generous support of the 2015 Winter Games: Camp Albrecht Acres, Dubuque County Fairgrounds, Dubuque Fire Department, Dubuque Kiwanis, Dubuque Police Department, East



Dubuque Drum and Bugle Corp, Good Sams of Dubuque, Grand Harbor Hotel and Waterpark, Grand River Center, Knights of Columbus, Mystique Community Ice Center, Radio Dubuque, Scorpio Productions, Spahn and Rose, Special Olympics Iowa Law Enforcement Torch Run, Sundown Mountain Resort, Texas Roadhouse, Theisen's, University of Dubuque, University of Northern Iowa, Upper Main Street Jazz Band and Anderson-Weber Toyota.

Divisioning Special Olympics Iowa Competitions

Special Olympics Iowa has begun, with competition at the State Bowling Tournament, and will be moving forward with modifications to the manner in which we division athletes and teams for our State Competitions. **The modifications we are making are available in detail on our website at www.soiowa.org.**

An athlete's ability is the primary factor in divisioning Special Olympics competitions. The ability of an athlete or team is determined by an entry score from a prior competition or the result of a seeding round or preliminary event at the competition itself. Other factors that are significant in establishing competitive divisions are age and sex.

Our goal in modifying our divisioning process is to enhance the quality of the competition experience for all of our athletes, giving them a reasonable chance to excel in the sports in which they participate while providing them with a vehicle to showcase their abilities and the results of their hard work, preparation and training. We believe the athlete experience is enhanced when all athletes have the opportunity for equitable competition against other athletes of similar abilities.

Reminder – State Competition Registration Information

As noted in the September issue of the newsletter, Special Olympics Iowa will no longer be producing a coaches handbook containing the registration materials for competitions. Instead, individual competition registration packets will be produced and made available through the Special Olympics Iowa website on the Participation Forms page as well as on each of the state competition pages. The Special Olympics rules for each sport can also be found on the State Competition page at which that sport is offered (for example the rules for athletics are on the Summer Games page).

Our goal will be to have registration packets up at least four weeks prior to the registration deadline for each competition. The full Mid-Winter Tournament registration packet may already be online by the time you read this newsletter and if not will be online shortly after the first of the year. The registration packet for Summer Games will be online shortly after the first of the year as well.

We will send emails to registered program managers as new registration packets become available.

Please make sure that you read and review the contents of the registration packets completely, as there have been changes in process and procedures for registering your delegation. It is also important that you are familiar with the deadlines for athlete physicals/releases, Class A Volunteer registrations and registration materials.

Coollest Day in Des Moines 2014

The water temperature was a balmy 38 degrees November 8 when more than 100 individuals plunged into the chilly waters of Big Creek. The event raised more than \$24,000 for Special Olympics Iowa. Throughout the day, individuals were able to cheer on their favorite contestant in the donut eating contest (Sgt. Jeff Rullman with the Polk County Sheriffs Office was the winner), take photos with some local mascots, check out all the Plunge costumes and get creative with spin art.

Special Olympics Iowa was able to partner with McAninch Corporation, Texas Roadhouse, Stew Hanson Dodge, Doll Distributing, West Bank, Freeman Decorating, Contractors Rental, Central Iowa Underwater Search and Recovery, Polk City Ambulance and Black Tie Beats, as well as a new partnership with the Iowa Wild.

Special Olympics Iowa along with the Iowa Wild joined together to create the "Coolest Day in Des Moines" campaign. Plunge participants were able to receive tickets to a game that evening, attempt to dunk officers in a dunk tank along with bid on turkey hand drawings that were created by the players and Special Olympic athletes. Thanks again to all the sponsors and those individuals that braved the cold water to raise funds for our athletes.

University of Iowa Hosts Two Special Olympics Iowa Events in January



University of Iowa Gymnastics is hosting Special Olympics Night during its January 18 meet vs. Michigan State and Ball State. Meet begins at 2 p.m.

Special Olympics members get FREE admission to the meet!

Call 1-800-IAHAWKS or visit our website at www.soiowa.org for details.

The University of Iowa women's basketball team is partnering with Special Olympics Iowa to showcase OUR ATHLETES during halftime of the Iowa vs. Michigan game on January 22 at 8 p.m.

Athletes, coaches, family members, volunteers and friends are invited to attend at a discounted rate to cheer on the Hawks and the Special Olympics athletes.

TICKET PRICES

Adult (18+)	\$5
Youth (under 18)	FREE
U of I Students	FREE

To purchase discounted tickets, contact Eric Heinkel at 319-384-4299, and for additional information, visit our website at www.soiowa.org.

New Venue Sponsors for Winter Games 2015

SOIA is excited to partner with Anderson-Weber Toyota and Theisen's Home-Farm-Auto for Winter Games 2015! These companies are serving as new venue sponsors at the 30th annual competition in Dubuque January 12-14. Both partners are committed to the community and ensuring inclusion for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

Anderson-Weber Toyota will be the venue sponsor for the Opening Ceremony which will be held the evening of January 12 at the Grand Harbor Resort. This company has proudly served eastern Iowa, southwest Wisconsin and northwest Illinois as a premier dealer for more than 50 years. As a Winter Games sponsor, Anderson-Weber Toyota will help athletes enjoy the Parade of Athletes, the lighting of the torch and the dance following the ceremony.

Theisen's Home-Farm-Auto, a long-time supporter of Winter Games, will be the venue sponsor for Alpine Skiing to be held out Sundown Mountain Resort. Approximately 150 athletes will participate in this competition, representing communities from across the entire state. The first Theisen's store was founded and opened in Dubuque in 1927, and now has a presence in several communities across Iowa.



Thank You to our 2014 Holiday Card Designer!



Karen Cooper, 13, is from Sioux City and is the designer of this year's holiday card. She has been a Special Olympics Iowa athlete for two years, competing in bowling, bocce, track and field and NAIA volleyball and basketball. In her free time, Karen likes to build puzzles, draw and play computer games. Here is Karen's design, and we would love to take this opportunity to say thank you for her dedication to this organization!



Torch Run Upcoming Events

Dance and Auction Saturday, February 21

Join us for an evening of fun! The Torch Run Dance and Auction is a night of food, beverages, live music by The Authority and a live and silent auction! Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. For more information and to purchase tickets, contact Lindsay Eastin at leastin@soiowa.org.

Iowa State Patrol Half Marathon April 19

Runners and walkers of all skill levels are invited to participate in the 2015 Iowa State Patrol Half Marathon event, which also includes a 10k and 5k. The event will take place at Banner Lakes at Summerset Park in Indianola on April 19. Keep an eye out for registration details at www.soiowa.org in January!

Special Olympics Iowa Calendar of Events

January

12-14	State Winter Games	Dubuque
15	Southwest Area Basketball Skills	Council Bluffs
17	East Central Area Basketball Skills	Coralville
20	North Area Basketball Skills	Spirit Lake
22	SOIA Event at Iowa Women's Basketball Game	Carver-Hawkeye Arena
24	East Area Basketball Skills	Eldridge
24	South Central Area Basketball Skills	Creston
24	Northwest Area Basketball Skills	Sioux
31	West Central Area Basketball Skills	Woodward
31	Iowa State Men's and Women's Basketball Game	Hilton Coliseum

February

12	North Central Area Basketball Skills	Fort Dodge
21	LETR Dance and Auction	Des Moines
28	Warren County Polar Plunge	Lake Ahquabi

March

14	Mid-Winter Tournament	Iowa City Field House
21	Council Bluffs Polar Plunge	Lake Manawa
28	Ottumwa Polar Plunge	Jimmy Jones Shelter
28	Ames Greek Polar Plunge	Lake Laverne at Iowa State University

April

11	Iowa City Polar Plunge	Coralville Lake
11	Cedar Rapids Polar Plunge	Pleasant Creek
18	Cedar Falls/Waterloo Polar Plunge	George Wyth State Park
18	Iowa City Greek Polar Plunge	Iowa City
TBA	Northwest Iowa Polar Plunge	Scharnberg Park

Know a College Student Looking to Join the Team at SOIA?

Special Olympics Iowa is seeking summer interns to help advance our mission. Opportunities are available in marketing and communications, the Law Enforcement Torch Run, fundraising, sporting events and competitions and athlete initiatives. Check out the internship page under "About Us" on our website (www.soiowa.org) to learn more!

Information Regarding Regional Bocce 2015

In order to focus our efforts on fully implementing and integrating the changes we have already made into the fabric of Special Olympics Iowa while continuing to fully support our key volunteers and coaches and provide quality competitions and events for our athletes, we are going to, for the time being, slow down the implementation and introduction of additional changes and additions to our programs. As such, we have determined that we will not be offering regional bocce competitions in 2015 as qualifiers for competition in bocce at Summer Games. Delegations interested in registering teams for bocce at Summer Games 2015 will be asked to submit a Quota Request Form as they did in 2014 indicating the number of teams they would like to bring. Based on the overall number of teams interested in attending, we will allocate each delegation a certain number of teams they can register for Summer Games. For details and more information regarding regional bocce in 2015, please visit www.soiowa.org.



Special Olympics Iowa

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Thank You to Our Partners!

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Premier Statewide Partners



Champion and Premier Statewide Partners provide a comprehensive level of support of all programs and services offered by Special Olympics Iowa (SOIA). Organizations may be recognized at these levels for financial support, in-kind donations or any combination thereof, and are recognized in many other ways. To find out more about our current partnership opportunities or for information on how to become one, visit our website at www.soiowa.org and look under Support Us, or contact the SOIA Vice President of Development Sherry Fuller at 515-986-5520 Ext. 103.