

2019

A YEAR IN REVIEW

**Special
Olympics**
Washington



WE ARE A CATALYST FOR INCLUSION!

Special Olympics Washington is the leader in sports, inclusive health, and community building, empowering children and adults with intellectual disabilities to be valued on and off the playing field.

Thanks to generous supporters like you, 2019 was our biggest year yet! You are transforming the lives of our athletes, and we're so grateful for your continued partnership.

2019 BY THE NUMBERS



19,500
ATHLETES

4
STATE
GAMES



25
SPORTS

180+ YEAR-ROUND
COMPETITIONS

11 PROGRAMMING
REGIONS

10,000+ **VOLUNTEERS**
brought our mission
to life at local levels

LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN CAMPAIGN



The LETR campaign for Special Olympics engages law enforcement worldwide championing acceptance and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities, starting first with their own communities. Over the years, the campaign has evolved and now encompasses a variety of innovative fundraising platforms.

14
TORCH RUNS
DELIVERED THE
FLAME OF HOPE
TO SPRING GAMES

LAW ENFORCEMENT CARRIED
THE FLAME OF HOPE OVER

300
MILES ACROSS WASHINGTON

6 POLAR PLUNGES

2,500+
LAW ENFORCEMENT
PERSONNEL INVOLVED



HEALTHY ATHLETES

The Healthy Athletes program is dedicated to changing the way health systems interact with people with intellectual disabilities. We provide athletes with free health screenings, education, and referrals for follow-up care in a fun, welcoming environment that removes the barriers our athletes too often encounter during visits with healthcare professionals.

Special Olympics Washington's health initiatives are supported by our Official Health Partner Kaiser Permanente, and made possible by the Golisano Foundation and in collaboration with the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

20 HEALTHY ATHLETES
SCREENING EVENTS
ACROSS THE STATE

1,805
HEALTH SCREENINGS

101 

PAIRS OF FREE GLASSES
GIVEN TO ATHLETES

PROVIDED
INCLUSION
TRAINING TO

200

HEALTHCARE
PROFESSIONALS



DID YOU KNOW?
Special Olympics is the
largest global public
health organization
specifically for people
with intellectual
disabilities.

UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

Dedicated to promoting social inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences, Unified Sports joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding. Through the Unified Schools program, this inclusive mentality moves off the playing field and into the classroom.



183 UNIFIED
CHAMPION
SCHOOLS

74,139

STUDENTS
RECEIVED THE
MESSAGE OF
RESPECT AND
ACCEPTANCE

In a powerful effort led by students, Fife High School received national recognition as one of the top five schools in the U.S. for inclusion in October. Inclusive activities range from Unified Basketball to Unified Prom. We're so inspired by a generation that chooses to include!



61 UNIFIED COMPETITIONS

WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR MOST GENEROUS PARTNERS



**KNIGHTS
OF COLUMBUS**



GRANTORS

Alvar & Louise Swanson Ephrata
Community Fund
Bainbridge Community Foundation
Baker Boyer Community
Foundation
Big Bend Electric
BNSF Railway Foundation
CenturyLink
Community Foundation of North
Central Washington
Florence B. Kilworth Foundation
Gabrielle Savage Fund
Gary E. Milgard Family Foundation
Windows of Hope
Gottfried & Mary Fuchs Foundation

Grays Harbor Community Foundation
Innovia Foundation
Island Thrift Inc.
Jane C. Artz & Frederick J. Artz Fund
Lockheed Martin
Lummi Nations
May and Stanley Smith
Charitable Trust
Moccasin Lake Foundation
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
Names Family Foundation
Paula Larkin Family
Names Family Foundation
Tom & Meg
Nez Perce Indian Tribe

Nisqually Indian Tribe
Port Gamble S'Klallam Foundation
Port Madison Enterprises
Puyallup Tribe of Indians
RealNetworks Foundation
Robert Chinn Foundation
Skagit Community Foundation
Suquamish Indian Tribe
Three Rivers Community Foundation
Snoqualmie Indian Tribe
Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund
United Way - Twin County
Walmart
Yakima Legends Casino
Yancy P. Winans Testamentary Trust

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW SPECIAL EDITION

Special Olympics
Washington



STRENGTH. RESILIENCY. HOPE.

We know this year hasn't been easy. 2020 certainly didn't turn out how any of us expected. The COVID-19 pandemic has required us to transform programming, resources, and community engagement in a way we'd never imagined. But with all the change this year has brought, one thing has remains steadfast: our commitment to the athletes of Special Olympics Washington and the movement of inclusion.

We transitioned to virtual sports programming and at-home fitness training, emphasizing the importance of staying physically and mentally fit while staying safe at home. We are so proud of our staff and volunteers, and most importantly, our athletes who continue to show us the true meaning of strength, resiliency, and hope.

Despite all the challenges that were presented to our community this year, you gave generously of your time, wisdom and resources, helping us achieve our goals. Thanks to your unwavering support, we can continue to provide opportunities for our athletes and further our mission to build inclusive communities with and for people with intellectual disabilities through the power of sport and well-being that leads to great health.

With gratitude,
The team at Special Olympics Washington



2020

BY THE NUMBERS



19,500 ATHLETES

3,500+ VOLUNTEERS

helped bring our mission to life at the local level and through new virtual volunteer opportunities



IN-PERSON EVENTS

During the first few months of the year, we were able to gather to compete and fundraise as we traditionally would. Here's what we were able to accomplish in January and February of this year:

1 WINTER STATE GAMES

16 REGIONAL TOURNAMENTS

ALPINE SKIING

FIGURE SKATING

BASKETBALL

SNOWBOARDING

CHEERLEADING

SPEED SKATING

5 HEALTHY ATHLETES SCREENING EVENTS ACROSS THE STATE

HEALTH DISCIPLINES
OFFERED IN 2020:

- FIT FEET
- OPENING EYES
- SPECIAL SMILES
- FUNFITNESS
- HEALTH PROMOTION



1,404

POLAR PLUNGE
PARTICIPANTS



408

HEALTH SCREENINGS

VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

Thanks to the innovation and collaboration of our community, programming has been transformed into meaningful and accessible ways to stay active and engaged from home.

HEALTH & FITNESS

Fitness programming in 2020:

- Weekly Live Online Workouts
- Taste Test Tuesdays
- School of Strength Pilot Program
- Fit 5 Challenge
- Stay Fit Challenge
- Passport to Health
- Stride Challenge
- Virtual State Games
- Healthy Food & Beverage Toolkit

Stride Challenge

To stay active and connected with the community, SONA encouraged all athletes and community members nationwide to participate in an 8-week challenge, tracking mileage walked, run, or rolled, with a Stride Challenge leaderboard.

177 REGISTRANTS

139 ATHLETES

43 UNIFIED PAIRS

8,000+ MILES LOGGED

Federal Way athlete Ariana Turchiano logging miles on her bike.



"Going outside to walk makes me feel good. I like the fresh air. I feel strong."

- Sam & Lucy E.
Thurston County

Virtual State Games

SOWA offered Virtual State Games for Summer and Fall seasons. Athletes could connect and compete with their peers by tracking their results in sports like basketball, cycling, flag football, volleyball, fitness, and more. Each season ended with a spirit week, virtual Victory Dance, and awards ceremony. Athletes were encouraged to continue building healthy habits through the Passport to Health program, which gave athletes a place to track progress, check-in with their health, and set goals.



Athletes who competed in the Virtual State Games received kits with sports equipment for each sport they signed up for, making participation as accessible as possible.

The lucky winner of our Passport to Health Raffle, Ellensburg athlete David Dunmore, showing off his new Brooks running shoes.



VIRTUAL RESOURCES

Opportunities to Connect and Learn in 2020:

- Follow-Up Care Referral Network Development
- Health Messenger Training
- Family Health Forums
- Athlete Leadership Training
- Coaches Conference
- Education Leaders Network Development
- Youth Activation Leadership Experiences & Training

Athlete Leadership

In order to truly become a movement led by athletes they must be given the opportunity to share their abilities, experiences and knowledge. In a year unlike any other, we need athletes' input more than ever before. Athlete Input Councils continue to provide ideas and feedback to help us innovate our programming to keep athletes active and engaged.

- 10** Athlete Input Councils (AIC) across the state
- 1** AIC representative attends SOWA staff meeting each month



NEW in 2020:

Athletes Connect, Hosted by Shalom Suniula

Held online, 12 different forum events featured SOWA athletes, professional athletes, community members, and board members. Our community had the opportunity to discuss, share, and learn about topics like staying healthy at home, the importance of community, setting goals, diversity & inclusion, advocating for yourself, and more.

Family Health Forums

Family Health Forums provide a space for the families and caregivers of people with ID to engage with health professionals, community leaders and social service providers. The Forums, which are conducted online via Zoom, introduce new families to Special Olympics and services provided through Healthy Athletes, Young Athletes and other community-based programs for people with ID, while also surfacing challenges that athletes and families face and how best to overcome them—with a special focus on bettering access to health care, education and inclusive activities.

UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

UCS programs offered in 2020:

- United Through Fitness Virtual Festival
- Virtual Unified Robotics Championships
- Virtual Fall Games Youth Leadership Experience
- State YAC Members at the Coaches Conference
- Virtual Unified Club Guide Development

United Through Fitness Virtual Festival

Special Olympics Washington's National Banner School, Fife HS, participated in the United Through Fitness Virtual Special Olympics Fitness Challenge. Fife HS was the first Unified School in North America to participate in the Triple Combination Fitness Competition, and one Fife HS athlete received a silver medal in the Individual Female Division.

During this challenge, Fife HS was in online learning and the Unified Fitness Club was creative in recording videos and collecting scores. Congratulations to Fife HS for showing true resiliency when it came to this challenge!



Virtual Unified Robotics Championships

SOWA UCS hosted the first ever Virtual Unified Robotics Championship in November -- a culmination of a six-week virtual build season, where 9 robots from 6 schools across Washington gathered virtually to compete in a sumo-bot tournament-style game that was streamed live.

Students of all abilities from Mercer Island High School, River Ridge High School, St. Madeleine Sophie, University of Washington, Liberty High School, and Newport High School spent the fall season learning to program new software and how to work as an inclusive team using video call and screensharing platforms.

WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR MOST GENEROUS PARTNERS



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Special Olympics Health supported by cooperative agreement #NU27DD001156 from the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are the responsibility of Special Olympics and do not necessarily represent the views of CDC. Alternative formats are available on request.

VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

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HEALTH & FITNESS

Some programming we offered in 2020:

Weekly Live Online Workouts

Led by SOWA staff, volunteers, and Anytime Fitness trainers, these workouts are inclusive and adaptable for anyone to participate in. Athletes can tune in live and watch again after they air.

Special Olympics Health, made possible by the Golisano Foundation in collaboration with the US Centers for Disease Control and prevention, is dedicated to changing the way health systems interact with people with intellectual disabilities. We provide athletes with free health screenings, education, and referrals for follow-up care in a fun, welcoming environment that removes the barriers our athletes too often encounter during visits with healthcare professionals.

Stay Fit Challenge

Incorporating the Fit 5 program (having 5 serving of fruits and vegetables per day, drinking 5 bottles of water per day,

and exercising 5 days per week) athletes participated in weekly challenges to invest in their physical health and emotional well-being. Athletes tracked their progress at home and connected with their peers in our SOWA Health & Fitness Challenges Facebook group.

Taste Test Tuesday

Health Messenger and Athlete Garrett Utz led cooking classes throughout the month of November to teach athletes how to make healthy, delicious, and simple recipes.

Because we can't safely provide screenings for athletes at this time, we're focusing on educating and empowering athletes to stay physically and mentally fit at home.

Stride Challenge

SOWA encouraged all athletes and community members nationwide to participate in an 8-week challenge, tracking mileage walked, run, or rolled, with a Stride Challenge leaderboard.

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VIRTUAL RESOURCES

Follow-Up Care Referral Network

In 2020, we developed a network of healthcare providers with whom we can connect athletes if we find they need follow-up care after going through our Healthy Athletes screenings. Connecting athletes with healthcare providers who have experience caring for individuals with ID helps make healthcare more accessible and effective for our athletes.

Health Messenger Training

A Health Messenger is an athlete who has been trained to serve as a health and wellness leader, educator, advocate and role model within the Special Olympics community and the community at large. In order to create more effective public health programs and improve health systems, individuals with ID must have leadership roles. Health Messenger trainings are offered every year, but 2020 presented a new opportunity to offer these trainings virtually.

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Coaches Conference

For the first time, the annual Coaches Conference was held virtually. Coaches received trainings on competition, nutrition, advocating for athletes, communication, and more.