

# 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

# 1,404

POLAR PLUNGE  
PARTICIPANTS



## 5 HEALTHY ATHLETES SCREENING EVENTS ACROSS THE STATE

HEALTH DISCIPLINES  
OFFERED IN 2020:

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



# 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.

# CONNECT WITH US

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# WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR MOST GENEROUS PARTNERS

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