

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Special Olympics Washington Flag Raised at Seattle's Space Needle in Landmark 50th Anniversary Celebration

Seattle, WA, July 22, 2025 — In a powerful tribute to five decades of advocacy and impact, the Special Olympics Washington flag was raised high above the Seattle skyline today, flying atop the iconic Space Needle. The moment marks the celebration of the organization's 50th anniversary and shines a spotlight on its mission to promote inclusion for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) across the state.

Surrounded by athletes, civic leaders, and corporate partners, Special Olympics Washington President & CEO Mary Do stood proudly beneath the flag as it ascended—an inspiring symbol of unity and progress.

“For 50 years, our athletes have broken barriers, challenged stereotypes, and inspired change across Washington,” said Do. “Raising our flag over one of the most recognized landmarks is more than a celebration, it’s a bold reminder of where we’ve been, the inclusive future we’re building together, and the work still ahead.”

Washington is home to over 200,000 individuals with IDD, yet only 6% currently participate in inclusive sports and leadership programming. With 50 years and counting of inclusion and impact, this milestone moment kicks off a renewed statewide effort to expand access, increase visibility, and invite more athletes and families into the Special Olympics community.

The event drew prominent civic and philanthropic leaders, including former Sounders FC goalkeeper Kasey Keller; Seattle Storm CEO Alisha Valavanis; Mario Bailey, VP of Community Engagement & Legends at the Seattle Seahawks; Board Chair of Special Olympics Washington; Erika Tucci of the Cheney Foundation; and celebrated Seattle chef Ethan Stowell.

As the Special Olympics Washington flag flies above the city, it serves as a beacon—a public reminder that inclusion isn't just a value; it's a movement.

Get Involved: <https://specialolympicswashington.org/>



Photo Credit: Amber Ballentine



Athletes, civic leaders, and Special Olympics Washington leadership gather beneath the flag atop the Space Needle in celebration of the organization's 50th anniversary.

Photo Credit: Rod Mar

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