



## Special Olympics Washington Fall Update August 31, 2020

We have now been through six months of various stages of quarantines, partial openings (and then closing again), and virtual programming. Can the end of this year come fast enough!? We've heard great stories of perseverance, commitment to community, and learning new ways to stay active and fit while staying home and staying safe. We've seen our volunteers, sponsors, partners and donors step up to do all they can to help our athletes during this challenging time. And we're also aware that segments of our athlete population are struggling with isolation, uncertainty, and fear about all that is going on in the world.

To protect the health and safety of our community during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we will remain in this phase of limited in-person interaction and at-home training and competition through December 31, 2020.

Although we won't be face-to-face, that doesn't mean we won't be connected. Here's what you can look forward to this season:

- More **one-on-one athlete engagement**, especially to athletes who don't have internet access. Whether by email, phone or old-fashioned mail, staff and volunteers will personally touch base with as many athletes as possible.
- A **new Stride Challenge** that you can walk, run or roll.
- The **Fall season and the Fall State Games will be virtual**. Competitions will be offered in four sports – basketball, volleyball, cycling and flag football – plus an all-new Fitness Heptathlon. Like the Virtual Summer Games, there'll be awards ceremonies, ways to connect with other athletes, and of course another virtual victory dance!
- A new **Health Bingo** activity to help athletes stay active and maintain healthy lifestyles
- To help athletes train for and compete in the Virtual Fall Games, there will be opportunities to match up with a **virtual coach and/or Unified partner**.
- Monthly **Family Health Forum webinars** for families and caregivers of people with ID to engage with health professionals, community leaders and social service providers.
- The continuation of our bi-monthly **Athletes Connect Panels**.
- Our annual **Tasting Room fundraiser is going virtual** on Saturday, October 24. Everyone from all corners of the state is invited to tune in to celebrate stories of resiliency and the power of community.

More details and updates to come on all the above, plus more!

We know everyone is looking forward to getting back to normal so we can see each other, train together, and enjoy our amazing Special Olympics family. We are right there with you! But we also want to make sure everyone is safe and healthy so that can happen sooner. So, hold on for the rest of this year and **STAY IN TOUCH** with your friends, coaches, Special Olympics Washington staff and volunteers. Let us know how you are doing, what you need, and how you are staying fit, healthy, and happy!