



2017

*Annual Report*

**Special Olympics**  
Alberta





## Mission

Special Olympics Alberta is dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with an intellectual disability through sport.

## Vision

Our vision is that sport will open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities and create inclusive communities all over the world.

## Values

### Inclusion

We foster inclusive communities.

### Diversity

We honour what is unique in each individual.

### Empowerment

We create opportunities to pursue full potential.

### Respect

We operate in an environment of cooperation, collaboration and dignity.

### Excellence

We elevate standards and performance.

# Affiliates and Community Programs

Communities Represented:

# 143

# 30

Number of Affiliate and Community programs:

### North West

*Grand Prairie, Spirit River*

Sports Offered: **14**

Affiliates/Community Programs: **2**

No. of Athletes: **156**

### North Central

*Barrhead, Edmonton, Edson, Leduc, St. Albert, Strathcona County, West Central, Whitecourt*

Sports Offered: **20**

Affiliates/Community Programs: **8**

No. of Athletes: **1081**

### North East

*Lac La Biche, Lloydminster, St. Paul, Vegreville*

Sports Offered: **8**

Affiliates/Community Programs: **4**

No. of Athletes: **128**

### Central

*Camrose, Lacombe, Lakeland, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House, Sylvan Lake, Wetaskiwin*

Sports Offered: **15**

Affiliates/Community Programs: **7**

No. of Athletes: **632**

### South Central

*Airdrie & District, Calgary, Drumheller, Foothills, Olds & District*

Sports Offered: **20**

Affiliates: **5**

No. of Athletes: **1153**

### South

*Brooks, Crowsnest Pass, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat*

Sports Offered: **13**

Affiliates/Community Programs: **5**

No. of Athletes: **248**

### Total Athletes:

3,398

Year	Total Athletes
2016/17	3,398
2015/16	3,178
2014/15	3,092

### Number of Sports Athletes are Active In:

6,454

increase of 7% from last year

Year	Total Athletes
2016/17	6,454
2015/16	6,032
2014/15	5,558

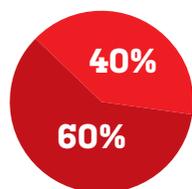
### Total Young Athletes (21 & Under):

988

Year	Number of Athletes
2016/17	988
2015/16	860
2014/15	851

### Average age of athlete: 32 years old

32



- Female (1,351 Athletes)
- Male (2,047 Athletes)

### Total Unified Athletes and Partners:

315

Year	Number of Athletes	Number of Partners	Total
2016/17	156	159	315
2015/16	43	43	86

\*The number of Unified athletes and partners have increased over 300%

### Number of Events

8

Sports: Basketball, Bean Bag Toss, Bocce Ball, Track Relay 4 x 100m

Year	Number of Participating Schools
2016/17	27
2015/16	8

### Total Number of Coaches: New certified coaches: 98

557

Year	Total Certified Coaches
2016/17	399
2015/16	390
2014/15	441

### Special Olympics Alberta Volunteers:

1,388

Year	Total Volunteers
2016/17	1388
2015/16	1089
2014/15	1204



Sport	No. of Athletes	Communities
Active Start	111	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Red Deer, Spirit River, West Central
Athletics	224	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Edmonton, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Albert, Strathcona County, Vegreville, West Central
Basketball	360	Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Olds & District, Rocky Mountain House, St. Albert, Strathcona County, St. Paul, Sylvan Lake, Whitecourt
Bocce Ball	326	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Camrose, Crowsnest Pass, Edmonton, Lacombe, Lakeland, Leduc, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House, St. Paul, West Central, Wetaskiwin, Whitecourt
10-Pin Bowling	285	Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Albert, Strathcona County, West Central, Wetaskiwin
5-Pin Bowling	1922	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Camrose, Drumheller, Edmonton, Edson, Foothills, Grande Prairie, Lac La Biche, Lacombe, Lakeland, Leduc, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, Medicine Hat, Olds & District, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House, St. Albert, St. Paul, Strathcona County, Vegreville, West Central, Wetaskiwin
Curling	206	Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Leduc, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Albert, West Central, Wetaskiwin
Fitness	106	Calgary, Camrose, Lloydminster
Floor Hockey	609	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Edmonton, Foothills, Grande Prairie, Leduc, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Albert, Strathcona County, Vegreville, West Central, Wetaskiwin
FUNDamentals	80	Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Red Deer, Robin Hood Association (Strathcona County), Spirit River
Golf	331	Airdrie, Barrhead, Calgary, Camrose, Crowsnest Pass, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Paul, Vegreville, West Central
Powerlifting	71	Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, West Central
Rythmic Gymnastics	126	Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Olds & District, West Central
Figure Skating	44	Calgary, Edmonton
Speed Skating	33	Calgary, West Central
Alpine Skiing	99	Calgary, Crowsnest Pass, Drumheller, Lethbridge, Olds & District, Strathcona County
Cross Country Skiing	36	Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton
Snowshoeing	64	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Edmonton, Edson, Grande Prairie, West Central
Soccer	355	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Leduc, Lethbridge, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Albert, Strathcona County
Softball	453	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Foothills, Grande Prairie, Lacombe, Leduc, Lethbridge, Olds & District, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House, St. Albert, St. Paul, Vegreville
Swimming	625	Airdrie & District, Brooks, Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Edson, Foothills, Grande Prairie, Lacombe, Leduc, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Albert, West Central, Whitecourt



**MESSAGE FROM THE THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
CHAIR, WILMA SHIM**

**This was a year of opportunities.**

Who knew that the opportunity to coach powerlifting for Special Olympics would turn into 10 incredible years of helping make the movement grow in Alberta? My coaching commitment turned into more opportunities to use my skills. It led me to being elected on the Board and most recently taking on the role of chair for the board of directors for Special Olympics Alberta. My unique double role in Special Olympics allows insight into policy and the impact it creates on a local level for coaches and volunteers.

I am proud to say that we have reached out to more athletes this year, with 220 more athletes joining Special Olympics. These athletes are not only encouraged to succeed in their sport, but they are also encouraged to try out other sports.

**It was a year of opportunities for competition.**

We had 31 regular competitions that were attended by affiliates and community programs. These competitions allowed each community to take part in a competition and interact with other athletes and coaches throughout the province.

We reached out to coaches who were interested in the sharing of best practices for coaching. This culminated into a Coaches Summit where 82 coaches, representing 50% of our communities attended. This Coaches Summit energized and inspired coaches as they continue to support their athletes. It allowed coaches the opportunity to receive expert advice on mental training and nutrition, as well as creating a performance program.

Alberta was well represented on Team Canada with two coaches, one mission staff and eight athletes. Coming home with 16 medals, our athletes had the satisfaction of knowing they contributed to the full Team Canada medal count of 117. All our members represented us with pride, dignity and joy.

**It was a year of opportunities to connect.**

You cannot deny our presence on social media! Our local communities' Facebook and Twitter pages created a voice for our programs, volunteers, coaches and athletes. We provided key messages and created posts that supported national campaigns and amplified our global message. We saw an increase in our social media followers by an average of 28% on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. We reached over 200,000 people on Facebook. The community became more aware and engaged and we were finding an untapped audience who voiced their support for more inclusion of our athletes.

Even the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau recognized the achievements of Special Olympics and tweeted out encouragement for Team Canada!

**It was a year of building relationships.**

We joined Special Olympics members across Canada for a Special Olympics Hill Day event and sent four Albertans to meet MPs and Senators to discuss the importance of Special Olympics. We saw an entire country join us on Twitter to commemorate the event, tagging #SOHillDay16.

Building on this relationship, we partnered with our Law Enforcement Torch Run and the Speaker of the House, The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, to bring the Flame of Hope to the steps of the Alberta Legislature building. As emcee of our event, Honourable Wanner helped kick off the Provincial Summer Games. I was fortunate to be in good company with the likes of the Honourable Ricardo Miranda, M.L.A. Leela Aheer, M.L.A. Ric McIver, Honourable Stephanie McLean and law enforcement members: Deputy Chief Sheriff James Stiles with Alberta Sheriffs, acting Deputy Chief Debbie Jolly with the Edmonton Police Service and Inspector Peter Ormshaw, Executive Officer to the Commanding Officer for the Alberta RCMP. Together, we stood proudly to declare the undeniable courage, determination and potential of Special Olympics athletes.

All these opportunities would not be possible without the dedicated team of staff and volunteers who we cannot thank enough.

As we move forward, I know that we will continue to make opportunities available for athletes and volunteers to excel. We will make our province a leading example of what inclusion looks like for people with intellectual disabilities.

Sincerely,

**Wilma Shim**

Board of Directors Chair, Special Olympics Alberta



### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO, JOHNNY BYRNE

I am pleased to present the 2016-2017 Annual Report for Special Olympics Alberta. The organization reached new heights this year and this report helps us chronicle and celebrate accomplishments that I am tremendously proud of.

In 2016-2017 Special Olympics Alberta embarked on the first year of the Global Strategic Plan with the vision of “opening the hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities and create inclusive communities all across the world”. Inspired by that vision we invested heavily in developing coaches, school based Unified Sports and supporting our amazing existing grass roots programs.

Our athletes were phenomenal on and off the playing field. We excelled on the world stage sending 8 athletes as part of Team Canada to the World Winter Games in Austria. At home, athletes committed to training in preparation for the Provincial Games and performing at 31 different local competitions. Our athletes also played critical ambassador and leadership roles sitting on management committees, leading athlete councils and being spokespeople for the movement at high profile events. Our athletes were the driving force behind our health movement and helped play a critical role in shaping Sobey's Special Olympics Nutrition Series.

This past year saw our partnership with the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association exceed all expectations. Unified Sports grew from three events and 86 athlete experiences, to eight events, over 300 student experiences while engaging over 20 schools across the province. Unified Sports has shown the power of sport and inclusion in the school setting. It is creating a unified generation and we are just scratching the surface.

Our Motionball and Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) partners continued to awe and amaze. Their level of commitment to our

athletes is unwavering and they brought in over \$850,000 combined for the movement last year. Motionball set records in Calgary and showed the abilities of our athletes to a new generation of volunteers and donors through their Gala and Marathon of Sport. LETR plunged with Rick Mercer, brought the Flame of Hope to Legislature Grounds and inspired athlete across the province.

One of the proudest and most impactful moments for our movement last year was the induction of Dr. Frank Hayden into the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame. I was lucky enough to start my career in Special Olympics working alongside Dr. Hayden and experience first hand his passion and drive. Having a Canadian who is a builder of the movement be finally held in this high regard is something that makes us all stronger.

As we move toward our movement's 50th Anniversary we stand on the shoulders of visionaries like Dr. Hayden and Eunice Kennedy Shriver. Our athletes, volunteers and staff continually honour their legacy and we were thrilled to have the opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments through this report. Thank you for your ongoing support and helping our movement do important work.

Sincerely,

**Johnny Byrne**  
President and CEO, Special Olympics Alberta



## Athlete Excellence



Joshua Engel is an athlete who lives and breathes golf. He began hitting balls at the Heritage Pointe driving range nearly 13 years ago and hasn't looked back since.

Josh has been involved with Special Olympics for over 20 years and has really enjoyed meeting new friends, working with amazing volunteers, and improving his golf skills stating that "the coaches are really helpful and I have been lucky to travel for so many tournaments."

Special Olympics Alberta (SOA) provides athletes the ability to compete in one of the 18 sports offered. All 3,398 athletes from across the province have the opportunity to participate in programs at a level that suits their individual needs. There is no ceiling for growth and Josh is an example of how an athlete can develop from an athlete beginning to learn the sport into a competitor performing at the highest level.

Josh is one of the 331 athletes who compete in golf across the province and is a member of the Calgary affiliate, which currently includes 140 golfers and 55 coaches/caddies.

The golf program in Calgary provides a diverse ability level from the novice, intermediate and advanced. Novice competitors are offered lessons at the driving range and putting greens where they can learn the basic fundamentals of the game. Intermediate and advanced golfers work with dedicated coaches who will split the athletes practice into skill development on the range and full practice on the course. Beyond practices, golfers are offered the opportunity to play

competitively in local tournaments, provincial games, national games, and international events; a trajectory of growth that Josh has achieved.

Each morning Josh starts his day by trying to hit a few balls or putts before his shift at the Silver Springs Golf and Country Club. After work, you can catch him hitting the links for another round, always looking to improve his skills.

His dedication is producing results as he recently competed at the 2017 Special Olympics North America (SONA) Golf Championship in Seattle from June 26 to 28. SONA brought golfers together from across North America to compete and Josh was able to walk away with the gold in the 18-hole level 5 division II.

**"It was a privilege to be invited down to the tournament and to represent Canada," said Josh, adding that "I would definitely do it again. I would like to try another city and another course. It was a great experience overall."**

Josh maintains that his experiences only further motivated him to keep improving claiming that "I can tell I have a lot of practicing [still] to do." Josh's father Dan describes Josh's commitment as a "relentless pursuit of excellence," adding that "[golf] is Josh's gig and he owns it. He has an innate ability with golf; rain or shine he will be hitting balls, its pure dedication."



Special Olympics has helped Josh develop into an athlete mentor who is able to give back to beginner athletes in developing the fundamentals that he once learned through the novice programs and his own practice. Earlier this year, after being rained out Josh was able to work with novice golfers at the Golf Dome in Calgary. He was able to show them some ways to help with their swing and give demonstrations to help athletes who are looking to improve.

The Engel family described Special Olympics as an “accepting, wonderful group of people,” and state that they will never take the experiences for granted. Dan admits that while Special Olympics Alberta has helped Josh grow immensely, he is now able to share his gained knowledge with younger athletes.

Golf for Josh and his parents, Dan and Betty-Lynne, is a family affair. Josh’s mother, Betty-Lynne, has been one of his biggest supporters and believes Special Olympics has been key to Josh’s growth as a golfer and person stating “Special Olympics have allowed [Josh] to have some great successes in things and allows him to belong to a community of people who really do care about each other.”

Dan believes Special Olympics has been a catalyst for Josh’s improvement advocating that “Special Olympics has given Joshua a venue to test the things he has been trying all week long. He has been so focused that SOA allows him to show up once or twice a week and work with another coach or athlete and learn things, it’s great!”

Betty-Lynne and Dan claim that the skills Josh has learned through golf have affected his growth as a person. “[Josh’s] steely nerves and dedication [have] helped in his work life and in his interactions with his siblings, family and friends. One of the biggest things is that it allows him to be very calm and straightforward – just like a golf shot. Golf has really given him a lease on life from numerous angles,” stated Dan.

Golf is one of the many sports in which Special Olympics offers the ability to promote inclusion through sport. While respecting the diversity of each individual athlete, our programs encourage our athletes to try their best and empower them to improve at their own pace. Special Olympics aims to provide athletes with a platform where they can achieve excellence in whichever sport they are passionate about. Josh is the definition of an athlete who has utilized the opportunities granted by Special Olympics and continues to be a model for promoting inclusiveness in sport.

# 3,398

### Total Athletes:

Year	Total Athletes
2016/17	3,398
2015/16	3,178
2014/15	3,092

# 6,454

### Number of Sports Athletes are Active In: increase of 7% from last year

Year	Total Athletes
2016/17	6,454
2015/16	6,032
2014/15	5,558



## DID YOU KNOW?

*Golf is just one of the 18 official sports Special Olympics Alberta offers with 331 athletes learning, training and competing in tournaments. It is offered in 14 affiliates and community programs: Airdrie, Barrhead, Calgary, Camrose, Crowsnest Pass, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Paul, Vegreville, West Central*

## Coaches Going the Extra Mile



Special Olympics coaches continue to go the extra mile as role models, motivators and character builders for our athletes. While not only teaching athletes how to play their respective sports, our coaches are catalysts for promoting inclusion and helping athletes find their unique strengths and abilities.

Conrad Clement is one of those amazing individuals and has been coaching Special Olympics soccer in Edmonton over the past seven years. Clement was drawn to the program through a former employee who he would cheer on while he competed in softball and floor hockey tournaments.

During his coaching tenure, the soccer program in Edmonton has evolved immensely. "We're one of the few affiliates in the country with a women's only soccer team. I'm also confident that our men's advanced soccer team can compete with any Provincial team in the country," said Clement.

Clement maintains that volunteering with Special Olympics has made a significant impact on him and that he is motivated to find ways to help his athletes continue to develop. Speaking on his experiences, Clement stated that "I've always volunteered for various causes but nothing compares to Special Olympics. I get as much back as what I contribute. The athletes are exceptional individuals and so appreciative of their coaches."

"Knowing that you are making a positive contribution to the lives and development of people with intellectual disabilities is both gratifying and rewarding. No matter how stressful my day is, I always come home with a smile on my face after coaching Special Olympics."

**- Conrad Clement, Special Olympics coach**

Special Olympics is committed to providing coaches with the tools they need to help recognize the potential of each athlete and enhance training regimens. Dedicated to coaching excellence, Special Olympics offers courses in two streams: community and competition. Community courses help coaches learn skills to promote participation and techniques to teach the basic skills required for each sport. The community stream emphasizes: safety, fun, teamwork, and ethics. Competition courses give coaches the resources to train athletes in their preparation for local, provincial, national, and international competitions. While still focusing on basic skills and safety, competition courses teach coaches effective and innovative ways to improve fitness and performance.

Beyond introductory courses, Special Olympics strives to offer as many tools and resources as possible to coaches. In 2016, Special



Olympics Alberta hosted a Coaches Summit on October 1 and 2. The Summit brought coaches from the province together for sessions on mental training, nutrition, conditioning, coach development, and technology tutorials.

"The Coaches Summit was very informative. The speakers were excellent. I specifically enjoyed the session on nutrition and learning about Special Olympics British Columbia's Performance Program," said Clement.

He advocates that the information is beneficial for coaches; furthermore reinforcing his belief that Special Olympics Alberta-Edmonton is on the right track in its pursuit to improving athlete performance. "Conditioning continues to be an important component of the soccer program. We offer a 90 minute conditioning session to Special Olympics athletes every Saturday year-round," stated Clement. As a coach, Clement is always looking forward to the future with his club stating, "I am so proud of our soccer team. They are Provincial Champions on and off the soccer pitch." Clement is blown away by the dedication of volunteers and asserts this is one of the qualities that defines Special Olympics. "We would not be where we are today with Special Olympics soccer if it weren't for Amanda Trenchard. The time, energy and commitment Amanda devotes to Special Olympics are beyond comprehension."

Clement continues to inspire his athletes to be all they can be and advocates that his experiences motivate him to continue give all that he can to enriching the lives of his Edmonton soccer club.

"Volunteer for a season or a life-time. It's important to give back to others. As for Special Olympics soccer, we have such a great coaching staff supporting our program. There is great chemistry and everyone is so passionate about Special Olympics."

- Clement

**Total Number of Coaches:**  
**New certified coaches: 98**

557

Year	Total Certified Coaches
2016/17	399
2015/16	390
2014/15	441

**2016 Coaches Summit**

Number of Coaches **82**

Communities represented **19**



## Volunteers Driving the Movement



A mother, volunteer, coach, chair person and fundraiser, Karen Mengersen is like the Energizer Bunny of Special Olympics volunteers.

A typical Special Olympics program season consists of Karen taking on the role as the chairperson for Special Olympics Alberta-Olds and District and head coach of 5-pin bowling. When she's not teaching athletes on how to hit their sweet spot for a strike, she's trying to strike up a conversation about the movement and how to support it.

"Special Olympics is so very important," said Mengersen.

"It provides the members of our communities who have any sort of intellectual disability or different ability a chance to participate in a variety of sports and to experience success and acceptance."

Her belief in the power of sport and inclusion has remained as strong as it did when she first witnessed Calgary Flames offensive forward, Lanny McDonald, declare the 1986 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games closed. Watching the closing ceremony initiated her and her husband, Ernest to seek out a Special Olympics program in their hometown of Olds for her two year old son, Mark.

She couldn't have known that the closing of one set of games would lead her and her family to the opening of a new life being a driving force for Special Olympics in her community.

"Both my husband and I were very impressed with the fact that there were sports programs which our son, Mark, could eventually participate in. We envisioned entering him in athletics and parking our van at the end of the 50 metre dash and having his brother on the sidelines."

Karen started in assisting her husband, Ernest with bowling and continued building her commitment to the betterment of the local Special Olympics program as a parent representative. When she reflects on the growth of programs in the past 16 years, she has seen great progress to provide more sport options and more athlete participation from starting with 69 athletes taking part in five

sports and a wait list for bowling to currently offering 12 different sports for 120 athletes and four session times provided for 5-pin bowling athletes. This progress was possible because of the community supporting and investing into the movement.

"I have done a number of presentations to groups in our community, showing with enthusiasm what our athletes are capable of and how important they are to the community," said Mengersen.

"We now receive money donations from Shoppers Drug Mart, Gallery of Floors, Olds Rotary Club, Olds Legion and Tim Hortons. We also have received food donations from Olds Co-op, Sobeys and No Frills grocery stores."

Karen has built a community within Special Olympics with many friendships she has acquired throughout the years and has also invited the full community of Olds to be part of Special Olympics.

It is her openness and strong belief in making her community a better place for all through inclusion and providing awareness that people with intellectual disabilities can accomplish and succeed when given the opportunity.

"Special Olympics has been a great organization to be part of over the last 31 years (Wow, that long!). I am involved with church and other volunteering in my community and am a widow with my son and three cats at home. My participation in Special Olympics gets me out of the house; provides me with close friendships; keeps me active – I can still run and bowl ; and keeps my mind active and busy.

**"Special Olympics provides the opportunity to give back to your community and to help members of your community to reach their potential physically and emotionally ....doing things they enjoy doing with people they wish to be with. It is a great place to make friends and to expand your own horizon. More than this it is FUN and you get to DANCE!"**

**- Karen Mengersen on the impact of Special Olympics**

Special Olympics can only be a movement to drive change, awareness and acceptance because of the commitment of our volunteers. If one volunteer is able to make this kind of impact in their own community, imagine what our province can show the world when we have volunteers in each city, town and community opening hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disability?

Special Olympics Alberta would like to celebrate the milestones reached by our volunteers across Alberta during 2016-17.

## 30 Years

Kim Coupland, West Central  
Barbara Umpherville, West Central

## 25 Years

Caroline Rippe, Calgary  
Patricia Enns, Medicine Hat

## 20 Years

Lee-Ann McBride, Brooks  
Holly Burton, Calgary  
Kari Hurley, Calgary  
Hugh O'Neill, Calgary  
Barb Prystai, Calgary  
Karen Chipman, Lethbridge  
Shirley Maurer, Medicine Hat

## 15 Years

Rob Desbiens, Calgary  
Rene Hale, Calgary  
Jennifer Price, Calgary  
Marilyn Ritchie, Calgary  
Pat Stel, Calgary  
Daron Ink, Calgary  
Rodger Gratton, Edmonton  
Marguerite Smale, Edmonton  
William Carter, Edmonton  
Irene Colliton, Edmonton  
Lenny Andrichuk, Edmonton  
Linda Hook, Edmonton  
John Carr, Edmonton  
Chris Odding, Edmonton  
Sue Wasylchew, Grande Prairie  
Chris Merkl, Lethbridge  
Hayley Goring, Red Deer  
Jan Gair, Red Deer  
Alice Muntjewerff, St. Albert  
Deborah Foster, St. Albert  
Brian Scott, St. Albert  
Richard Yaceyko, West Central

## 10 Years

Amanda Lo, Calgary  
Glen McArter, Calgary  
James McBain, Calgary  
Meghan McCarthy, Calgary  
Mark Ogle, Calgary  
Wilma Shim, Calgary  
Carol Wideman, Camrose  
Warren Pattison, Edmonton  
Connie Perreault, Edmonton  
Amanda Trenchard, Edmonton

Tina Copp, Edmonton  
Dennis Alyward, Edmonton  
Kathleen Worobec, Edmonton  
Tai Munro, Edmonton  
Christopher Field, Edmonton  
Dwayne Campbell, Lacombe  
Margorie Krossa, Lacombe  
Becky Lore, Lethbridge  
Mark Murphy, Lethbridge  
Darren Brown, Olds & District

Jacqueline Easy, Olds & District  
Dolores Simmons, Medicine Hat  
Matthew Pedwell, St. Albert  
Chelsee Pedwell, St. Albert  
Catherine Friesen, Strathcona County  
Trevor Popik, Strathcona County  
Doug Cook, Strathcona County  
Kenneth Meachin, West Central  
Elizabeth Meachin, West Central

## 5 Years

Josiah Porteous, Brooks  
Sean Tiffin, Brooks  
Penny Allsopp, Calgary  
Breanna Borys, Calgary  
Debbie Boris, Calgary  
Shayna Campbell, Calgary  
Charlene Clark, Calgary  
Martin Corbett, Calgary  
Jerry Demchuk, Calgary  
Brent Dunn, Calgary  
Kathy Dunn, Calgary  
Neil Manchee, Calgary  
Steve Scott, Calgary  
Florence Spalding, Calgary  
Grant Willcocks, Calgary  
Kyra Wood, Calgary  
Shyla Coykendall, Camrose  
Jason Delwo, Camrose

Lyndsey Delwo, Camrose  
Ryan Sandberg, Camrose  
Angeliene Selin, Camrose  
Vanessa Sheppard, Camrose  
Joyce Wrubleski, Camrose  
Lisa Hoecherl, Camrose  
Roland Richard, Camrose  
Lorrie Sitler, Camrose  
Katherine Girgulis, Edmonton  
Kaley McLaren, Edmonton  
Salene Matheson, Lacombe  
Shannon Goulet, Lakeland  
Leona Vachon, Lakeland  
Shauna Armstrong, Lethbridge  
Janice Madsen, Lethbridge  
Chris Tissot Van Patot, Lethbridge  
Ken Van Rootselaar, Lethbridge  
Laurene Nielsen, Lloydminster

Michael Rooks, Olds & District  
Drew Adkins, Red Deer  
Melissa Adkins, Red Deer  
Brady Brookes, Red Deer  
Eldon Carlson, Red Deer  
Nick Henger, Red Deer  
Bill Riches, Red Deer  
Jeanette Riches, Red Deer  
Robert Adamic, St. Albert  
Erin Kohler, Strathcona County  
Todd Mitchell, Strathcona County  
Robert Arts, Strathcona County  
Cinda Lilley, Whitecourt  
Margo Bissett, Whitecourt  
Gwen Card, West Central  
Lorne Card, West Central

### Special Olympics Alberta Volunteers

Year	Total Volunteers
2016/17	1388
2015/16	1089
2014/15	1204

### DID YOU KNOW?

Our volunteers are in over 140 communities that stretch as far as Paddle Prairie to Raymond.

## Play Unified. Live Unified



Playing together and promoting inclusion continue to pave the way to friendship and understanding through Unified Sports.

Inspired by the dream to join people with and without intellectual disabilities playing for the same team, Unified Sports is no longer just a goal in Alberta, but it is quickly becoming a popular program at high schools throughout the province.

Unified Sports was introduced in Alberta in the 2015/2016 season in partnership with Alberta Schools' Athletic Association (ASAA) with high schools currently participating in basketball, bocce, and bean bag toss. Numbers skyrocketed over the past year as evidenced by the amazing growth in athletes, partners, schools and events.

One of the early adopters of the program was Bert Church High School (BCHS) in Airdrie under the tutelage of Ian Ferguson. Basketball was the first sport that BCHS introduced as a Unified Sport at their school in 2016 after Ferguson read about a tournament on the ASAA website.

Ferguson couldn't be happier about the impact the program has had on students at BCHS stating "I think it has been a chance for our students to become more connected to the school, for some of athletes and partners, it is their first chance to put on a Charger uniform and represent their school. For everyone, it's a chance to get to know one another and build relationships that carry over into our hallways and classrooms."





"I am so thankful to be able to be a part of this program, it is the most rewarding coaching I have ever done."

**– Ferguson on Unified Sports at BCHS**

Last year 14 athletes and over 40 partners donned the Charger uniform and Ferguson expects more participation in the future as BCHS aims to get more Rocky View schools involved and host another event. Special Olympics and ASAA work to support high schools in implementing the program and act as a source of support in hosting tournaments. Last year, there were eight tournaments and the sky's the limit in terms of potential events over the upcoming years.

BCHS has thoroughly enjoyed hosting its own events as well including its massively successful bean bag toss tournament. "We had 18 teams from four schools attend, [including] over 80 athletes and partners," said Ferguson.

His views on the program's success reflect Unified Sports goal, which is to build friendships and understanding while promoting inclusion. "Our Sports Performance class hosted and officiated the tournament, our Culinary Arts program prepared food for it and our Construction Tech program built our boards," states Ferguson.

"Do it! It is a great opportunity. Shanna Kurylo with the ASAA is amazing and will help get you set up." – Ian Ferguson on potential high schools looking to implement #PlayUnified

For Ferguson coaching Unified has been extremely rewarding and he has already witnessed incredible moments stating, "Our athletes had a bit of a jump on our partners in bocce this year. They started practicing in class and when it came time for our team practices they ended up teaching the partners the rules and how to play."

Speaking on the future of the program at BCHS, Ferguson claims, "Absolutely we will continue to run our Unified programs, it has been an amazing addition to Charger Athletics and [it] is something our students look forward to."

Special Olympics Alberta and ASAA will continue to spearhead Unified Sports to reach more schools and expect that more events will be implemented in the coming seasons!

Our opponent is intolerance. Only shoulder-to-shoulder, as teammates together, can we defeat it.

**Total Unified Athletes and Partners:**

**315**

Year	Number of Athletes	Number of Partners	Total
2016/17	156	159	315
2015/16	43	43	86

*\*The number of Unified athletes and partners have increased over 300%*

**Number of Events**

**Sports: Basketball, Bean Bag Toss, Bocce Ball, Track Relay 4 x 100m**

**8**

Year	Number of Participating Schools
2016/17	27
2015/16	8

*Thank you to all the amazing schools for playing Unified and hosting events throughout the province.*

*High schools participating: Bert Church High School, Cochrane High School, W.H. Croxford High School, Chestermere High School, Cold Lake High School, Notre Dame High School, Assumption Junior Senior High School, St. Paul High School, Lester B. Pearson High School, Lord Beaverbrook High School, Bishop McNally High School, St. Martin de Porres High School, Father Scollen Jr. High School, Bev Facey High School, L.Y. Cairns High School, Archbishop O'Leary High School, Chief Napaweaw Comprehensive School, Winston Churchill High School, Immanuel Christian High School, Magrath Junior Senior High School, Sturgeon Composite High School, Strathcona High School, Bishop Carroll High School, William Aberhart High School*

**DID YOU KNOW?**

*The number of athletes and partners has more than tripled than the first year of Unified Sports in Alberta?*

## Healthy Athletes



Special Olympics has become the largest global public health organization dedicated to serving people with intellectual disabilities.

Good health improves the lives of people with intellectual disabilities (ID). It improves each Special Olympics athlete's ability to train and compete in sports. Special Olympics works with global partners, governments and policy-making organizations to ensure health services, education and opportunities reach people with ID.

Despite severe need and higher health risks, people with ID are often denied health services. There is often a misconception that the poor health of people with ID is due to their disability. Research has shown that it is in fact a result of a breakdown in health education, health promotion, and health care.

In Alberta, we've taken on this challenge to provide more athletes with fitness options, education on health and nutrition, and access to health professionals.

"Being a healthy athlete means everything to me. When a person is healthy, you are able to go longer. The workshops and having a nutritionist for athlete means everything to me," says Dallas Sorken, Special Olympics athlete and provincial athlete representative of the board of directors.

Last year, through our national partnership with Sobeys, Alberta had the opportunity to launch pilot health and nutrition sessions in communities in Alberta: St. Albert's Sobeys, Calgary's Health and Nutrition Conference, Athlete Leadership Conference and at our AGM and Conference. The Sobeys partnership through their Better Food Fund reached over 150 Special Olympics athletes in Alberta through the various opportunities this past year.

"We had two classes. We had a nutrition workshop and cooking class. The classes made me understand how much sugar is in products and the importance of reading labels. The nutritionist taught me portions for cooking and how to make small healthy snacks and breakfasts," said Sorken.

Sorken has already starting putting all his nutrition knowledge to good use by looking up more recipes for smoothies, creating quick and easy healthy meals and snacks and passing the knowledge to fellow athletes.

"Ever since I've taken the classes, I have more energy. I have more energy for sports and after work. The more energy I have, the more drive I have for sports," says Sorken.

The vision of the Sobeys Inc. Better Food Fund is to help more Canadians - regardless of income, age or ability - have access to affordable wholesome food, basic cooking skills and nutrition education.

**"At Sobeys, healthy means making good choices, being knowledgeable about what choices are available and having the tools to do so," said Renee Hopfner, director of community investment for Sobes Inc.**

"Each and every day the athletes show us what's possible. Our employee volunteers continuously say that they initially signed up to lead nutrition sessions to share their knowledge about food, however the athletes have given them so much more. The partnership challenges us to look closely at the information we are pulling together while considering who the primary audience is – the athletes. There are always lots of laughs and at the end of the day, a feeling that we are making a difference."

On a grassroots level community programs have also adopted more health and fitness programs. In 2016/17, Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton and Lloydminster offered walk/run programs and general fitness programs to engage athletes who want to take a step towards fitness or athletes who want additional programs to supplement their training.

Year	Number of Athletes in Fitness Programs
2016/17	106
2015/16	90
2014/15	53

Over the years, Special Olympics health programs have improved the health of our athletes. In many cases, the programs have profoundly changed or saved lives. Special Olympics Alberta is committed to make sure that we are putting our athletes' health first and they're able to have the resources and tools to have a healthy lifestyle on and off the field. We are incredibly thankful to have local programs take initiative and health advocates like Sobeys bring healthy athletes to athletes across our province.



## Next Generation of Partners: motionball



Educate. Integrate. Celebrate.

Motionball is a proud partner of Special Olympics Canada and their goal is introduce the next generation of volunteers and donors to the movement through integrated social and sporting events, creating relevant, meaningful experiences that help bring the fun back into giving. Across Canada, there are 15 cities that host motionball events which keeps growing since it started in 2002. In 2016 alone, motionball raised \$1.36 million in Canada with over \$290,000 raised in Alberta.

Two events really define the experience in Alberta: Marathon of Sport and the Gala. In Alberta, both events have a strong presence with Calgary's young professional social scene and are the talk of the town.

"For our gala, it's an easy pitch. I tell people that it's a different thing to do and you get dressed up on a Friday night for a good cause. The gala is more the celebrate and a bit of educate and integrate. You get to hang out with movers and shakers and Special Olympics athletes who love to get on the dance floor," said Paul Horton, western regional director of motionball and lead for Calgary's motionball gala.

Paul Horton has been the regional director of motionball and sits on the national motionball board for about eight years. He was first introduced by his friend Paul Etherington, chair and co-founder of motionball back in Toronto and found the organization's way to support Special Olympics athletes contagious.

"One of the biggest thing for me is the impact of the stories from Special Olympics athletes. I don't cry very easily, but the stories the athletes share move me to tears. Through Special Olympics, they break through years of being excluded and being bullied and how it has shifted to to having a peer group that is welcoming and how it makes a difference in their social network," said Horton.

"And the recognition of human potential and what it brings forth. The more I got in touch with athletes and heard more stories, the easier

it was to continue to be involved. I know that every dollar raised has a profound and lasting impact for the athletes and families."

Marathon of Sport is another unique event that has teams of young professionals team up with athletes for a full day of competing in a fun environment in various sports. Last year, Mount Royal College hosted the event which had a full day of sports like basketball, benchball, floor hockey, soccer, ultimate, football and even human foosball.

"From an event standpoint, I explain that marathon of sport is like corporate challenge meets elementary fun day with the benefit of Special Olympics athletes," said Karen Unger, co-director of motionball Marathon of Sport in Calgary.

Karen Unger's dedication to motionball was an easy choice with a sister who is a Special Olympics athlete and her love of spreading inclusion.

"Through motionball, I love the fact that I'm getting connected to people that don't have a direct connection to it and who want to be part of it. It attracts people who want to be part of something bigger than themselves. To see young professionals in Calgary who are dedicated to integration and inclusion and making Calgary an environment that brings inclusion to Special Olympics athletes gives me shivers."

Both Horton and Unger have big goals to expand motionball. Marathon of Sport is set to make its debut in Edmonton on September 30 with their sights set to expand to universities and colleges with motionball University. For Horton, he would love to see the model expand to all the major centers in Alberta and expand outside the Canadian borders.

With passionate and motivated partners who are taking up the challenge of spreading awareness and making fundraising fun and engaging the next generation to take up the torch, Special Olympics Alberta is proud to have partners that share the goal of building resources for our movement of inclusion and celebration of sport.

## Our Global Footprint

Special Olympics Alberta is showing the world our talent and voice.

### The word quit is not part of Evan James's, vocabulary.

"Knowing all the training I put in back home, the hard work, all the sweat and putting in 110 per cent, that in the end it will pay off. Knowing I will get the results I want to get," said Evan James, Team Canada speed skater.

At the age of 13, Evan joined his local Special Olympics program in West Central which provides sport opportunities to athletes in the area of Stony Plain and Spruce Grove. He first started his introduction to sports joining swimming and athletics and expanded to winter sports like speed skating and floor hockey.

With his spirit, tenacity and go-getter attitude, James built his physical fitness and strength throughout the years with the help of dedicated coaches and volunteers who provided guidance and encouragement to mold him into a Team Canada athlete.

### "I was definitely one of the kids that was small," said James.

"Doctors and people would say it would be tough for me growing up and they would say I would be lucky if I grew past five feet, but here I am now at 5'7 going strong and making it to worlds."

And Evan James definitely delivered at the World Games. He came home with a gold in 777 m M11 division and a silver in the 1000 m M5 division which added to Alberta's medal count of 16 medals and Team Canada's 117 medals.

"Evan is one of those athletes who is focused and sets his mind to a goal," said Jill Moore, Team Canada speed skating mission staff.

"He really takes in all the tips and advice from coaches to make sure he's going to perform his best. Every athlete on Team Canada is dedicated and strives for their personal best and I'm fortunate to be able to support their development and growth. One of the best things I've experienced with Team Canada is witnessing the talented athletes across Canada that push themselves to be better and go beyond of their comfort zones."

### 2017 Special Olympics North America Golf Championship - June 25 to 28, 2017



Willows Run Golf, 10402 Willows Rd, Redmond, WA, USA Invitational golf tournament hosted in Seattle where 230 golfers, coaches and caddies from United States, Canada and Caribbean competed in individual and team competitions on 9- and 18-hole courses, as well as individual skills competitions.

Over 100 Canadians competed in the 2017 Special Olympics North America Golf Championship where four Albertans had the opportunity for represent Canada through the luck of the draw.

"With ten applications from golfers across Alberta, we needed to select our golfers with a lottery draw where we selected Andrew Chamczuk from Stony Plain, Tyler Champman from Barrhead, Joshua Engel from Calgary and Allie Price from Calgary," said Jill Moore, director of sport for Special Olympics Alberta.

The four golfers and their caddies travelled to Seattle, Washington where they took part in the opening ceremony and experienced first hand the hospitality of the 2018 Games Organizing Committee for the Special Olympics USA Games. The golfers competed in 9 and 18-holes holes on the Willows Run Golf Course which have hosted professional golfers with the likes of Freddie Couples. After a few days on the links, the golfers returned with new friends, golf tips and 4 medals: two gold and two silver.

#### Alberta golfers reached personal bests and the podium:

- Allie Price, Calgary: 2nd place in 9 hole, level 4 division 11
- Andrew Chamczuk, Stony Plain: 2nd place in 9 hole, level 4 division 2
- Josh Engel, Calgary: 1st place in 18 hole, level 5 division 2
- Tyler Champman, Barrhead: 1st place, 18 hole, level 5 division 8

## Team Canada at 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games - March 14 to 25, 2017



Graz, Shchladming-Rohrmoos and Ramsau in Austria  
One of the world's largest sporting and humanitarian events to be held in 2017, the World Games in Austria is a nine-day competition bringing together 3,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities and 1,100 coaches from as many as 105 countries.

# 148

Team Canada was the third largest team at the Worlds Games with 148 members representing provinces and territories across Canada. The team competed in six winter sports: alpine skiing, cross country (Nordic) skiing, figure skating, floor hockey, speed skating and snowshoeing.



# 12

Team Canada had 12 Alberta members: Holly Burton (cross country skiing coach), Kristen Hudson, (cross country skiing athlete), Evan James (speed skating athlete), Benjamin Maesele (figure skating athlete), Jill Moore (speed skating mission staff), Sarah McCarthy (cross country skiing athlete), Barb Prystai (figure skating coach), Katie Saunders (speed skating athlete), Jamie Sale (honorary coach), Elouise Stewart (cross country athlete), Shane Stewart (cross country athlete) and JorDen Tyson (figure skating athlete)

## #NoGoodWay

Every March 1st  
Across Canada

The #NOGOODWAY campaign for Special Olympics is an anti-bullying movement and aims to end the use of the R-word (retard) in everyday conversation. Special Olympics athletes have voiced how harmful the use of the R-word is to them. Through awareness, Special Olympics is championing inclusion for people

No one should ever be shamed or feel less than others and the r-word reduces the limitless the potential of people with intellectual disabilities. Alberta takes a strong stance against the negativity and hurtful bullying against our athletes and those with intellectual disabilities. We took on the challenge of spreading awareness on March 1 and advocated to end the use of the the r-word with the #NoGoodWay campaign through social media and events across the province that activated champions in schools, towns, partners, media and even sports teams like the Calgary Flames! One tweet from Alberta to take the pledge reached over 90,000 impressions, 30 times more than our athlete population in the province and a video with Madison Tevlin's mean tweets of #NoGoodWay received over 482,000 views and 4.8 million people reached through medi a coverage. Imagine what we can achieve when we have all of Alberta taking the pledge?

# 1

1 Tweet launched 90,000 impressions and over a 1,000 engaged people to stand for respect and take the pledge to end the use of the r-world.



## Our Guardians of the Flame



The Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) is the largest public awareness vehicle and grass-roots fundraiser for Special Olympics.

Known honorably as Guardians of the Flame, law enforcement members and Special Olympics athletes carry the “Flame of Hope” into the opening ceremony of provincial competitions along with national, regional and world games.

Annually, more than 97,000 dedicated and passionate law enforcement members carry the “Flame of Hope,” symbolizing courage and celebration of diversity uniting communities around the globe. In Alberta, over 375 officers from 14 communities champion for acceptance and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities and have secured funds to ensure we are providing quality sports programs and competitions.

In just one year, LETR have hosted 39 events that ranged from camping on roof tops, bussing dishes and serving customers pizza and brunches, half marathon runs, a truck convoy, cycling for a day, car show and shines and plunging into freezing lake waters. From all their hard work and effort, they were able to raise over \$560,000.

There is no doubt that our LETR members will do anything for Special Olympics athletes!

**“My goal is to keep the program going and to grow it,” says Constable Amanda Trenchard with the Edmonton Police.**

“I would like to see more officers involved. I want the events we have grow- not more events. And It’s not just getting police officers involved but other people. We need the word out there and give more opportunities for athletes either through speaking or to be part of event. I’d like to see more and more athletes want to be part of the events with us and share their abilities.”

Trenchard’s passion doesn’t stop at her role as LETR’s executive council member and lead for many Edmonton events, but also extends to her role as a coach for soccer and snowshoeing with Special Olympics. Her commitment and dedication of putting athletes first has made a big impact on the partnership of LETR and Special Olympics at fundraising and awareness events.

“We do it all to support them and know it allows them to compete. We’ve really been getting athletes involved more and getting them to be the speaker,” says Trenchard.

“We are getting the athletes involved as an equal because the best way to create awareness is to partner with them. They can use our events and opportunities to be their own voice. This way they can show they can do things like everyone else like in the past Polar Plunge, they got to showcase their own abilities and we give them a platform to do that. ”

Another important component of being part of LETR is being the Guardians of Flame of Hope. From the 84 police officers from 24 nations, Sgt. Katrina O’Rielly of the Calgary Police Services was selected to be one of the Canadian representatives at the LETR Final Leg Run for the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria.



"I was one of eight Canadians and the only one from Alberta," said O'Reilly.

"Quite honestly, it was an incredible honour to represent LETR Canada. It's probably the most crazy, unbelievable, moving experience in my career. We took the Flame of Hope in 49 cities in 10 days to spread awareness and excitement for the World Winter Games."

The experience for O'Reilly was 3,000 collected miles through Austria with her fellow law enforcement members. At each town they passed, they received a warm welcome from villagers waving flags and cheering. Community members listened to the stories LETR members shared about their experience with Special Olympics and the impact it creates to not just the athletes and their families, but the whole community.

"I work with incredible volunteers and police officers that are like minded and make an impact for Special Olympics. For me it's about the athletes, appreciating the differences that bring us all together and separating abilities versus disabilities. For me, I've learned more from Special Olympics athletes than other officers or mentors I've been around, in particular around being open, easy to acceptance and tolerance."

On a smaller scale, Special Olympics Alberta held a mini Final Leg event to celebrate the provincial Summer Games in Medicine Hat. On May 16, 14 LETR officers partnered with Special Olympics athletes to bring the Flame of Hope torch to the steps of the Alberta Legislature. This was the first time Alberta has launched a Final Leg torch lighting ceremony in partnership with the government of Alberta. Of the law enforcement members that took part in the event, Amanda Trenchard with Special Olympics athlete, Jessica McLean had the honour to run the Flame of Hope after being lit by the miner's lamp.

"I thought (the Final Leg Torch Lighting) really highlighted the partnership and brought it to the next level," said Trenchard.

"It got more people asking about the Torch Run and it got government and media out to help bring awareness. It showed the athletes and LETR together- really showing that partnership."

Trenchard and O'Reilly are just one of many officers whose passion for inclusive communities drives LETR. Special Olympics Alberta is incredibly grateful to have a group of dedicated law enforcement members driving the movement forward and ensuring we have the resources to reach and provide for more athletes. We know our guardians will continue to grow and spread the movement that will open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities throughout Alberta.



*LETR increased the number of events in the past year by 23%*



*Events: Free Our Finest, Cops, Pops & Pizza, Polar Plunge, Cops & Crepes, LETR Runs, World's Largest Truck Convoy, Flame of Hope Raffle, Cycle for a Cause, Provincial Bike Ride, Cars, Cops & Kidz.*



*2017 LETR Community Service Award Winner: Chris Zelko demonstrated exceptional dedication and commitment to the city and province.*

*In 2018, we hope to have 1,000 plungers across the province diving in the 2018 Polar Plunge season.*

## Awards 2016-17



### Male Athlete of the Year: Connor Bissett

**Affiliate:** Edmonton, **Sport:** Swimming

Connor has been involved in Special Olympics for five years and has participated in many competitions and has represented Canada at the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles where he won two silver and two bronze medals. Connor initially joined Special Olympics to assist in his social development, and in this regard he has greatly improved his adaptability with adversity and change. Regardless of his own results, Connor always congratulates all of his competitors and cheers on his teammates. Whether at a practice or at a meet, he shows respect to everyone he works with and always has a positive attitude.



### Male Coach of the Year: Ryan Barberio

**Affiliate:** Calgary, **Sports:** Head Coach of Floor Hockey, Assistant Coach of Basketball and Softball

Ryan has been with Special Olympics for four years and recently took on the role of head coach for the Thunderbirds floor hockey team. Ryan is gentle, friendly and approachable for all coaches and athletes. He has a calm demeanour and always encourages athletes to do their best. When the head coach position suddenly opened, he took it without batting an eye, and saw the opportunity to help out in any way he can. Ryan shows concern for the overall development of every athlete he works with and he is always there to listen.



### Female Athlete of the Year: Sarah McCarthy

**Affiliate:** Calgary, **Sports:** Athletics, Cross Country Skiing, Powerlifting, Swimming

Sarah has an impressive sport record, competing at three Special Olympics World games, nine National Games, nine Provincial Games, and two Western Canada Summer Games. From these games, she has proudly stood on the podium many times, winning 18 Gold, five silver and seven bronze medals in total. Outside of her sports, Sarah is a swim instructor at her local YMCA, wanting to give other athletes the opportunity to learn to swim. Sarah demonstrates the true spirit of Special Olympics by always working hard, persevering and being an amazing role model and leader for her fellow athletes.



### Female Coach of the Year: Marsha Bredeson

**Affiliate:** Red Deer, **Sports:** Head Coach of Floor Hockey and Softball

Marsha has been with Special Olympics for 24 years now and has worked with many different affiliates as she moved around the country with the military. Marsha has been able to use her organizational and planning skills from the military to create structured practices that are both educational and enjoyable. Marsha cares about all of her athletes and is always there to listen; they know she is someone they can trust and depend on. Supportive to all athletes and coaches, Marsha pushes everyone to be the best they can be. She always encourages assistant coaches to take initiative working with athletes, allowing them to improve their coaching skills and get the most out of their experience with Special Olympics. Marsha is definitely a people person and connects with everyone she works with, which is what makes her such an effective coach and mentor.



### Team of the Year: Lightning Floor Hockey

**Team Affiliate:** West Central, **Head Coach:** Louis Babin  
**Athletes:** Ernie Pitseolak, Jared Larsen, Chetwyn Rychlik, Jack Feth, Jaycopie Qaqqaq, Douglas Peecheemow, Jeffrey James, Andrew Chamczuk, Aris Radicchi, Luke Stelter, Kyle Stelter, Michael Weir, Carter Hyslop, Donovan Evetalegak

Over the past year this team has worked very hard to improve on their fitness and skill, which has transferred into their overall growth and success as a team. In competitions they have done very well, with a perfect record year. Lightning's teamwork is exceptional with each player supporting each other. Members are very involved in all aspects of the club, including fundraising and community events. This team has an excellent attitude and is committed to the game- always focusing on having fun playing together

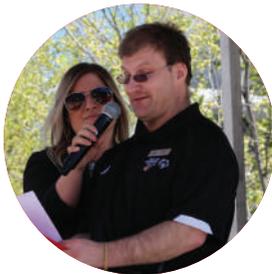


### Rising Star Volunteer Award: Marlene Bell

**Affiliate:** Whitecourt  
**Roles:** Bocce Program Volunteer

Marlene always ensures the athletes are following rules and regulations and makes sure they understand the game and are having fun. She arrives early to set up and steps in to cover and help in other sports. She encourages athletes to be their best and facilitates excellent sportsmanship.

Her contributions allow athletes a consistent routine and expectations. Coaches appreciate her flexibility- enabling the programs to run smoothly. She instills a strong ethic for sportsmanship and pride and is a positive image for Special Olympics in Whitecourt.



### Volunteer Leadership Award: Warren Pattison

**Affiliate:** Edmonton  
**Roles:** Athlete Representative, Event Volunteer

Warren is the voice of the athletes in his community. No matter where he goes, he passes along a positive message about Special Olympics and why this opportunity is so important for athletes. He also serves to inspire athletes to be active leaders in their community, which he achieves through his membership in his affiliate's Athlete Leadership Committee. Warren is extremely active in volunteering for Special Olympics, LETR and community events. He gives everything he has and is such an incredible addition to any team he is a part of.



### Athlete Spirit Award: Rachel Clark

**Affiliate:** Lethbridge, **Sport:** 5-Pin Bowling

Rachel has participated in many Special Olympics sports in Ontario, PEI, and now Alberta! Rachel always has such a positive attitude and puts others before herself. She will always try to help and offer a hug if someone is struggling, and she cheers for all of her teammates regardless of the outcome. Rachel has taken on the task of being captain of her 5-pin bowling team and she never misses a game. Having fun is the priority for Rachel which allows her to enjoy the game regardless of the score.





### **LETR Outstanding Contribution Award: Amanda Trenchard**

**Affiliate: Edmonton**

**Roles: Head Coach of Snowshoeing and Soccer, Event  
Volunteer, LETR Volunteer**

Amanda goes above and beyond to provide the best experience possible for all athletes. She is constantly thinking of new ways to create a more inclusive environment for the athletes. She even provides opportunities for athletes to give back to the community and take part in other great charity events. Amanda is the lead on all LETR events in her area, and she works tirelessly with the staff and athletes to ensure successful events and programs that are meaningful to participants.



### **Murray Koch Youth Development: West Central**

The West Central Young Athletes Programs have showed consistent growth every year, growing from 11 athletes in 2015/16 to 15 athletes in 2016/17. The program leaders are always looking for new resources and using their creativity to build lesson plans delivered to the athletes. Always looking for new and exciting ways to build physical literacy, program leaders have identified a need for more challenging lesson plans and new equipment for their athletes. All of the volunteers in the program go above and beyond expectations to make sure the athletes are receiving the best program possible. They continue to look for further training opportunities and resources to continue to better their already booming program. It is their remarkable initiative and enthusiasm in providing these opportunities that make West Central a champion for Young Athletes.



### **LETR Community Spirit Award: Calgary**

Calgary not only supports every LETR initiative within their home community, but is always willing to assist at LETR events outside their community. This was evident twice this year when volunteers were needed for an annual roof sit in Airdrie, and also drove to Red Deer to assist at the Harley Raffle Barbecue. Calgary always reaches out to law enforcement to ensure that members from their local LETR program receives an invitation to many of their events. They are the first to recognize and celebrate LETR as one of their closest and dearest sponsors. Members from LETR annually get invited to their bowling banquet to present ribbons, serve food and be recognized. This bowling tournament is represented by approximately 600 athletes throughout Alberta. The relationship that has been developed and maintained throughout the years is why there is no question of their community spirit.



### **MDA Community Leadership Award: West Central**

West Central has had an incredible year and their efforts have not gone unnoticed. This affiliate is always looking to grow and provide new opportunities for athletes. They've recently started up a Young Athletes program and hosted their first Floor Hockey tournament, among several other initiatives. They also take every opportunity to involve their athletes, whether it be helping out at events or developing strong athlete leadership. Their athletes are definitely out in the community! They are always on top of their registrations and submission of forms, ensuring athletes receive all possible opportunities. At a competition level, they have had several athletes who compete at an international level, including the World Games and the 2017 Special Olympics North America Golf Championship.



**Unified School Award:  
Bert Church High School, Airdrie**

**Sports:** Basketball, Bean Bag Toss, Bocce

Bert Church High School (BCHS) has been involved in Unified Sports since its introduction to Alberta in 2016. Under the leadership of coach and teacher Ian Ferguson, BCHS has participated in more Unified events than any other school. They were also the first school to host a tournament, introducing more Airdrie schools to Unified Sports along the way. Through their full-school approach and unwavering display of sportsmanship at every event, BCHS has set a marvellous example of inclusion both for schools that already participate in Unified Sports and for schools who want to get involved.



## Athlete Leadership: The Voice of Special Olympics



**Two female leaders are making their voice heard across the province and are proving how powerful athlete leaders are.**

Jessica McLean joined the provincial athlete leadership committee last October with one motivation- to help other athletes.

"I've been getting good feedback (from athletes) about how they like their sport and I ask if they like coaches and they all say they like their coaches," Jessica McLean, Edmonton representative for the Alberta Athlete Leadership Committee (ALC)

Even though McLean joined the Alberta ALC last year, she's been helping and mentoring athletes longer than the official role as a Special Olympics Alberta athlete since 2002 competing in snowshoeing, softball and swimming.

**"It's about making sure my voice is heard. One of the athletes is using me as a mentor," said McLean. "I'm giving her help and tips on improving her front crawl and she even wanted advice about relationship. It makes feel really good and awesome," declared McLean.**

The provincial ALC formally started in 2013, but has always been part of Special Olympics athlete development. The program provides more opportunities for athletes to move forward and gain experience to be mentors, spokespeople and advocate for their fellow athletes. Each year Special Olympics Alberta holds an Athlete Leadership Conference



that was attended by 19 athletes representing 13 communities this past year. The conference dove into topics of governance, of how to be an athlete leader and bringing athlete leadership back to their communities, and ended with a an informative health session.

"I want to help more people, be a mentor and voice of the athletes. I'm really open to talking, and speaking to people now. I use my voice and I help with fundraisers and get people to sponsor me," said McLean.

In Calgary, Allie Price, a Special Olympics athlete, was selected to be the representative of Special Olympics Canada and Staples' campaign Give a Toonie. Share a Dream. This bright, bubbly and positive athlete wins over everyone she meets and is happy to share her experience with Special Olympics.

"I like being part of the community, talking about Special Olympics and talking to people," said Price.



"I talk about my goals and what I want to achieve. I like the opportunity of meeting new athletes. (For Staples) I went to a conference in Niagra falls and talked about being a Special Olympics athlete. I got a little emotional at the end and handled it and mom did too."

During the campaign, Price took on the role as spokesperson for all Special Olympics athletes in Canada. She was a public speaker at a Staples convention, visited local stores and helped launch a grand opening of a new store in Calgary. She did all this while balancing a work schedule at Sunterra, volunteering at a preschool, working with children from three to five years old at summer camps and doing her crossfit session every Monday. She took on the responsibility all to share her experience and show the power of Special Olympics. With her help, the Staples Give a Toonie. Share a Dream. campaign raised over \$628,000 with \$85,469 staying in Alberta.

Athlete leadership brings to light an athlete's a voice and is shaping the Special Olympics movement. It is the personal experiences of athletes that strongly spread the word about the transformation Special Olympics can bring to individuals and families. Athlete Leadership provides a way for athletes to showcase talents and interests that may have gone unnoticed, builds confidence and empowers them to be bold enough to share their hopes, dreams and goals for inclusion.

### Communities with Athlete Leadership programs:

11

Calgary

6

Edmonton

9

Grande  
Prairie

8

St. Albert

### Number of athletes in the Athlete Leadership Program:

34

### Number of Provincial Athlete Leadership Committee members:

9

### Provincial Athlete Leadership Committee Members

**North:** Hector Jean

**Edmonton:** Jessica McLean

**Central:** Matthew Mundorf

**Calgary:** Mark Evans

**South:** Vacant

**Athlete Board Representative:** Dallas Sorken

**Member at Large:** Doug Hutt

**Member at Large:** Andrew Chamczuk

**Member at Large:** Warren Pattison

**Member at Large:** Rodger Gratton

## Young Athletes: Active Start and FUNdamentals



"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair."

- Nelson Mandela

Nothing is more truer than the power of sport to change the world. Sport reveals what people with intellectual disabilities can do and achieve. This hope needs to be planted at the start.

Through Special Olympics Young Athletes, children and families are welcomed and supported to succeed earlier. Two key programs were set up to ensure success can be accomplished from the start: Active Start and FUNdamentals.

Children from two to 12 years old learn basic motor skills and sport skills through fun and positive movement experiences. These skills provide support for everyday activities as well as a base for Special Olympics sports training and competition as athletes grow older.

In Alberta, there has been a steady growth of the Young Athletes programs with eight communities offering Active Start program and six communities offering FUNdamentals program.

As a first step to sport development, Active Start introduces children to develop fundamental movement skills like walking, running, jumping and balancing. In just two years, Grande Prairie has seen a great impact with the children and their families in their community, like the McCool family. In 2015, Beverly McCool enrolled her son Jett after her search for activities for Jett led her to Special Olympics Active Start.

"This program has helped Jett by providing an outlet for him to be active throughout the fall, winter and spring months where in Grande Prairie we might otherwise be housebound. It has helped him to practice skills that I wouldn't have thought of or wouldn't have had the equipment to work on with him. It has helped him with his muscle tone and endurance as well as his speech development (Ready! Set! Go!)" says Beverly McCool.

It is these victories that really defines the Active Start and FUNdamentals programs. Kelly Hollahan has been a driving force with the start and progress of the Young Athletes programs in Grande Prairie. She has said that the program numbers have tripled since she helped launch the program where it was less than a handful of children to about 12 to 15 children each session.

"It's not just the development in the sport skills, but also just seeing improvement in personal bests. I like watching them grow and go from not wanting to participate to willing to try and even try something new. One example I can think of is one of our athletes who is Autistic that couldn't handle noise. At first he couldn't come into the gym to bounce balls, but at the end of the program he was in the gym bouncing balls. He even went to a Storms hockey game. It's not just about sports skills. They're improving their daily life," says Hollahan.

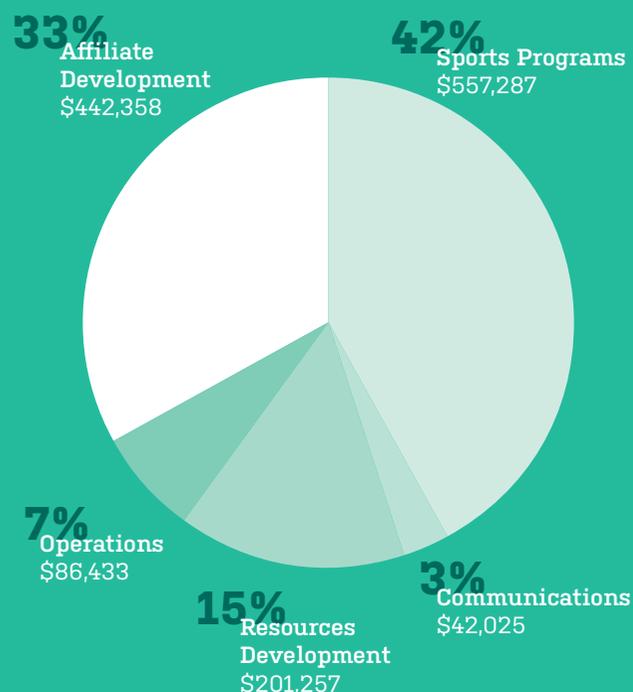
Through Active Start and FUNdamentals, children, their families and people in the community are welcomed into the world of Special Olympics and can be a part of an inclusive team. Our Young Athletes programs show that all children should be valued for their talents and abilities and sets the stage for a life of physical activity, friendships and learning.

Year	Total Number of Young Athletes in Active Start and FUNdamentals
2016/17	191
2015/16	148
2014/15	149

### DID YOU KNOW?

*Participation in Young Athletes also benefits parents of athletes, most notably by raising expectations for their children, providing a network of support of other families with similar issues and simply giving them an opportunity to enjoy watching their children participate.*

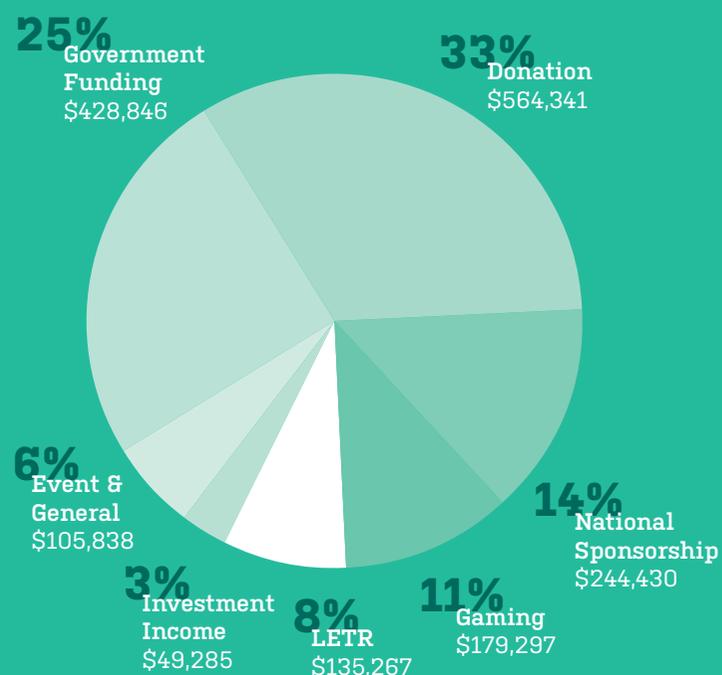
## Where does your money go?



**Total Expenses: \$1,329,360**

For full financial report, go to [www.specialolympics.ca/alberta](http://www.specialolympics.ca/alberta)

## Sources of Funding



**Total Revenue: \$1,707,304**

**Surplus: \$377,944**

**For every \$1 invested in Special Olympics community sport programs in Canada, a minimum of \$7 social benefit is created through improved athletes physical and mental health and increased athlete employment.**

**Our research tells us that when compared with individuals with an intellectual disability (ID) who are not engaged in Special Olympics, our athletes experience the following health and lifestyle benefits:**

- 10% fewer athletes who are obese or overweight, vs. average individuals with ID
- 20% fewer athletes with anxiety disorders due to access to sport vs. average individuals with ID
- improved lifespan and significantly improved overall health for Special Olympics athletes
- 16% higher employment rate for Special Olympics athletes vs. average individuals with ID

Special Olympics Alberta pursues its vision that sport will open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities and create inclusive communities all over the world.

We recognize and extend a sincere thanks to the many community partners who support us in enriching the lives of Albertans with an intellectual disability through sport.

Special Olympics Alberta thanks the generous support of our donors. Visit our website for the full list of annual donors (\$100+) [www.specialolympics.ca/alberta](http://www.specialolympics.ca/alberta).

### DID YOU KNOW?

*Special Olympics Alberta raised over \$40,000 in its first year with the 2016 BMW raffle? We expect even larger sales and greater impact in the local communities for the 2017 raffle.*

# Our National Partners

## Platinum



## Gold



## Silver



## Bronze



STRONGER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER™



## Friends





## Provincial Partners

On behalf of over 3,300 athletes with intellectual disabilities who participate in Special Olympics programs throughout the province, we would like to thank our incredible partners for strengthening our movement.

### Platinum



### Gold



Eat better.  
Feel better.  
Do better.



### Silver



### Bronze



## Board of Directors

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 Jodi Flanagan  
 Sallie Szanik

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Jerry Tennant- Central  
 Jack Gregory- Calgary & Area  
 Stephen Siu- Edmonton & Area  
 Sandra Mullen- South  
 Shannon Leonard- North  
 Andrea Yaremie- North-East

## Athlete Leadership Committee

Dallas Sorken- Board of Directors Athlete Representative  
 Hector Jean- North  
 Jessica McLean- Edmonton  
 Matthew Mundorf- Central  
 Mark Evans- Calgary  
 Rodger Gratton- Member at Large  
 Warren Pattison- Member at Large  
 Andrew Chamczuk- Member at Large  
 Doug Hutt- Member at Large



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