

# 2024-2025 Annual Report



**Special Olympics**  
Newfoundland & Labrador



**Special  
Olympics**  
Newfoundland  
& Labrador



“—  
| Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt |  
—,”



**Special  
Olympics**  
Newfoundland  
& Labrador



# why we do it?



## Our Vision

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

## Our Mission

Special Olympics Newfoundland and Labrador is dedicated to enriching the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with an intellectual disability through sport.



## Our Values

**EMPOWERMENT**

We create opportunities to pursue full potential.

**EXCELLENCE**

We elevate standards and performance.

**RESPECT**

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

**DIVERSITY**

We honour what is unique in each individual.

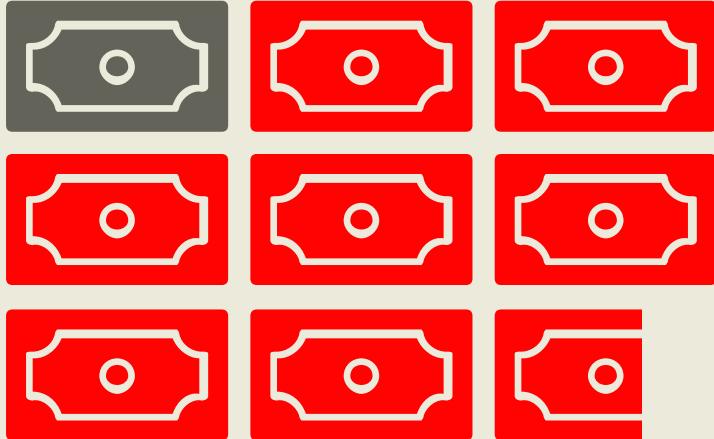
**INCLUSION**

We foster inclusive communities.

# Impact Snapshot

## Social Return

For every **\$1** invested in Special Olympics grassroots programming in Canada, at least **\$8.76** in social benefits is generated, including enhanced physical and mental health for athletes and increased enjoyment.



**10%** fewer athletes who are obese or overweight

**20%** fewer athletes with anxiety disorders due to access to sport

**16%** higher employment rate among Special Olympic Athletes

**49%** reduction in risk of depression

**15%** reduction in risk of diabetes

**+2.5** years increased life expectancy

**740**

Athletes

**1804**  
Sport Registrations

On average, athletes participate in 2.43 sports, with the majority being multisport participants

**11**

Core Sports

**295**

Coaches

**586**

**Individuals**

Providing support for weekly practices, competitions, events, fundraisers, and leadership meetings all year round!

**291**

Volunteers

# Community Reach



## Social Media & Website Reach 2017-2025

## Followers & Subscribers

/specialonl	7,386	8,611
@specialo.nl	1,142	1,292
/company/special-olympics-newfoundland-and-labrador	246	269
@specialONL	1,886	N/A
@specialONL	0	136
@specialONL	72	96

\*Statistics pulled on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025

2024

2025

## Sports

98

Programs offered across Newfoundland & Labrador



14 Community Clubs

- Lab West Biglanders
- HV-GB Howling Huskies
- Corner Brook Vikings
- BSG Bravehearts
- Exploits Hurricanes
- Gander Wings
- Bonavista North Polar Bears
- Clarenville Allstars
- Tri-Con Gentle Giants
- CBS Brightstars
- Mount Pearl
- St. John's Explorers
- Placentia Lions
- Burin Peninsula North Bears

# Executive Report

The time has come to reflect on the 2024–2025 season – a busy and inspiring year for Special Olympics Newfoundland and Labrador. We hosted five Unified Sports tournaments, eight provincial competitions, four regional competitions, and the 2025 SONL Provincial Summer Games. On the international stage, three of our athletes proudly represented us in Turin, Italy, at the 2025 Special Olympics World Winter Games – a remarkable achievement.



The 2025 Provincial Summer Games were a celebration of athletic excellence and community spirit. Our athletes showcased their incredible abilities, and the progress across all sports was nothing short of inspiring. This growth speaks volumes about the dedication of our coaches, volunteers, and families. Our athletes are a reflection of the communities that support them – and those communities should be immensely proud, not only of how their athletes perform, but of the character they display every day. A heartfelt thank you to our Games Organizing Committee and the many volunteers who made the event such a success. The Gander community welcomed our athletes, coaches, and families with open arms, going above and beyond to ensure a memorable experience for all. We hope to return to Gander again soon.

Looking ahead, 2025–2026 is a milestone year as we prepare for the 2026 Special Olympics Canada National Summer Games in Medicine Hat, Alberta. With athletes from every corner of the island – and Labrador too – we are proud to send a truly provincial team to the national stage. I have full confidence that our coaches and mission staff will have our athletes as well-prepared as any in the country. I can't wait to see what they accomplish together in Medicine Hat.

Finally, I want to take a moment to recognize and thank Trish Williams, SONL's former Executive Director. Trish was the glue that held this organization together for over a decade. Her leadership and passion for the Special Olympics movement opened doors and changed lives for hundreds of athletes. On a personal note, her guidance and support have meant the world to me. I'm committed to building on the strong foundation she created, and I'm confident in the team she's left behind. Together, we're ready to take on the 2025–2026 sport season with energy and excitement.

## Bobby Gamba

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bobby Gamba".

**Executive Director**

*Special Olympics Newfoundland  
and Labrador*

# Our Leadership

## Regional Leadership Council Executives

Christina Kendall, Chair

Susan Lamond, Vice-Chair

Arlene Holloway, Secretary

Associated Clubs	Club Representatives
<b>St. John's Explorers</b>	Maryanne Walsh, Connie Pittman
<b>Mount Pearl</b>	Brianne Collins, Sue Horne
<b>CBS Brightstars</b>	Gail Baker, Shirley Miller
<b>Tri-Con Gentle Giants</b>	Jill Robinson, Carmel Oliver
<b>Placentia Lions</b>	Gord Pike, Joyce Walsh
<b>Burin Peninsula North Bears</b>	Trudy Harris-Power, Lori Hunt
<b>Labrador West Big Landers</b>	Tony Lawrence, Sandra Gillam
<b>Clarenville Allstars</b>	Colleen Abbott, Arlene Holloway
<b>Bonavista North Polar Bears</b>	Dave Crocker, Hubert Spurrell
<b>Gander Wings</b>	Carmel Casey, Philly O'Grady
<b>Exploits Hurricanes</b>	Colleen Ryan, Pauline Price
<b>Corner Brook Vikings</b>	Tony Bullen, Karen Bullen, Brenda Thomas
<b>Bay St. George Bravehearts</b>	Rosie Ryan, Robin Young-Bennett
<b>Happy Valley-Goose Bay Howling Huskies</b>	Scott MacDonald, Amanda Budgell

## Board of Directors

<b>Juleah Lunden</b>	Chair	<b>Scott Andrews</b>	Director
<b>Billy Kelly</b>	Vice Chair	<b>Laurie Furlong</b>	Director
<b>Susan Collins</b>	Past Chair	<b>Kyle Mercer</b>	Progress Club Representative
<b>Kealey Martin</b>	Treasurer	<b>Ray Walsh</b>	Parent Representative
<b>Mark Dawe</b>	Director	<b>Christina Kendall</b>	RLC Chair
<b>Ken Marshall</b>	Director	<b>Shila Pennell</b>	LETR Representative
<b>Kate O'Neill</b>	Director	<b>Floressa Harris</b>	Athlete Representative



**Juleah Lunden**  
Board Chair



# Provincial Award Winners



**Johnny Philpott**

Athlete  
of the  
Year



**Colin Rumbolt**

Athlete  
of the  
Year



**Dr. Carmel Casey**

Coach  
of the  
Year



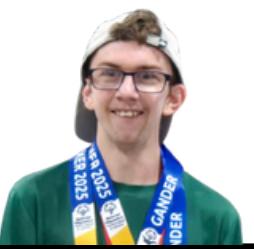
**Nigel Summers**

Coach  
of the  
Year



**Shirley Miller**

Evan Ash  
Builder  
Award



**Evan Wicks**

Gina  
Blundon  
Award



**Joe Philpott**

President's  
Award



**Lab West Big Landers Curling**

Team  
of the  
Year



**Ethan Tucker**

Rising  
Star



**Anna Paterson**

Rising  
Star



**Tina Stryde**

Volunteer  
of the  
Year



**James Moore**

Mark Mackey  
Memorial  
Award

# Meet Team NL



Special Olympics Canada  
Summer Games  
**Medicine Hat 2026**  
Jeux d'été d'Olympiques  
spéciaux Canada



Donald Kendall



Ryan Butt



Sarah Bursey



Tony Kyritsis



Michael Budden



Floressa Harris



Kendall Lambert



Kristen Bennett



Samantha Walsh



Erin Paterson



Kayla Sceviour



Junior Dumaresque



Cameron Stead



Michael Morrison



Bryan Parsons



Patrick Hynes



Gordon Reddy



Jonathan Eustace



Melvin Hanhams

# Meet Team NL



Special Olympics Canada  
Summer Games  
**Medicine Hat 2026**  
Jeux d'été d'Olympiques  
spéciaux Canada



Andrew Hynes



Dion Cantwell



Zach Mahoney



Michael Mullaly



Patrick Hollett



David Wells



Shaughn Connors



Mark Peddle



Jacob Haynes-King



Josh Haynes-King



Melanie Taylor



Nicholas Styles



Takara Lockyer



Daniel Moores



Thomas Pelley



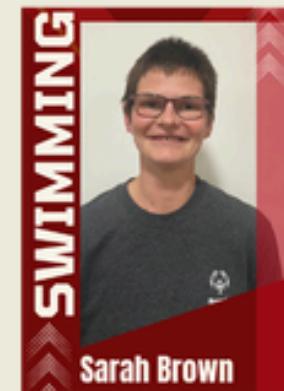
Ryan Dровер



Lauren Stanford



Tyler Robinson



Sarah Brown

# 2025 Provincial Games

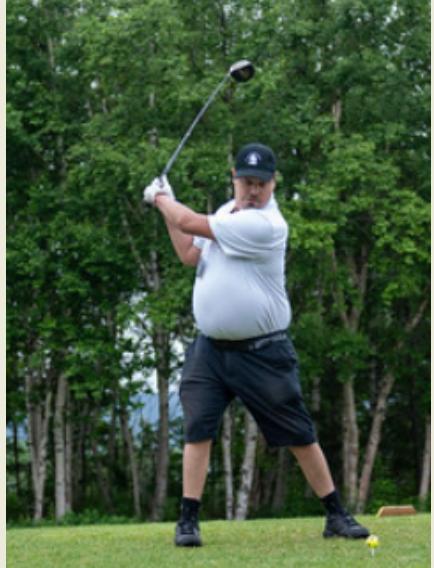
This past summer, our presenting sponsor, the **Town of Gander** proudly hosted the **2025 Special Olympics Newfoundland & Labrador Provincial Summer Games** - a weekend filled with energy, sportsmanship, and community spirit. The Games were more than a competition; they were a true celebration of inclusion, teamwork, and the incredible abilities of our athletes.

A heartfelt thank you to our Games Co-Chairs, **Geoff Goldsworthy** and **Tara Pollett**, whose leadership and dedication were instrumental in bringing the event to life. We also extend our gratitude to Games Coordinator, **Leslie Keough**, and Assistant Coordinator, **Hilary Humphries**, who served as our boots on the ground in Gander, ensuring every detail ran smoothly.

We're deeply appreciative of the Town of Gander, the Gander Wings, and our many volunteers whose passion and hard work made these Games possible. Special thanks to our Silver Level Sponsors: **NAV CANADA** and **United Way NL**, whose generous support helped make this celebration of sport and inclusion such a success.

Our Opening Ceremonies were brought to life by **athlete representative Sarah Brown** and **MC Brian Mosher**, whose enthusiasm set the perfect tone for the days that followed. A special acknowledgment also goes to Brent Keough for his steadfast support of the Games leadership team.

The 2025 Provincial Games in Gander will be remembered not only for the competition but for the friendships formed, the memories made, and the spirit of community that shone through at every event. Thank you to everyone who helped make it an unforgettable experience for our athletes and their families.



# LETR

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) for Special Olympics stands as the largest grassroots fundraiser and public awareness movement supporting Special Olympics around the world. At its heart, the Torch Run unites law enforcement officers and Special Olympics athletes as they carry the Flame of Hope™ to the Opening Ceremonies of Special Olympics competitions, symbolizing courage, inclusion, and community pride.

Over the years, the Torch Run has evolved beyond its signature run to include a variety of fundraising efforts such as T-shirt sales, Polar Plunges, Battle of the Badges, and countless other community-driven events. Each initiative strengthens the connection between law enforcement and the communities they serve while supporting Special Olympics athletes across Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Funds raised through the LETR in this province directly benefit Special Olympics NL programs** at the grassroots level—covering costs like travel, accommodations, meals, and training opportunities for athletes and volunteers, as well as grants to help new community programs get started. These funds make it possible for more athletes to train, compete, and thrive year-round.

The 2025 LETR season has been another incredible success, **raising over \$180,000** in support of Special Olympics NL. This remarkable achievement reflects the unwavering commitment of law enforcement officers, volunteers, sponsors, and community members who continue to champion inclusion and empower athletes throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.



# Empire Campaign

empire  
COMPANY LIMITED

## Meet Jackson Pink from Pasadena, NL!

Jackson, 11, discovered a love for sports—and a sense of belonging—through Special Olympics. From running and kicking to basketball and group games, Jackson says it best: **“I love it all.”**

He joined Special Olympics in 2024 when his mom, Jeannette, noticed there were no programs for younger athletes. She teamed up with another parent to launch a FUNdamentals program in their community. **“He’s never had that chance before,”** says Jeannette. **“Now he can proudly say he played a real basketball game.”**

Since then, Jackson’s confidence has soared. He’s even taken up golf and represented Canada in a tournament. **“We will forever be fans of Special Olympics,”** shares Jeannette.

Thanks to support from donors and Empire stores, kids like Jackson can be part of something meaningful, build confidence, and feel truly included. For Jackson and his family, Special Olympics has brought joy, pride, and community into their lives.

Empire Company Limited has been a proud national partner of Special Olympics **since 2016, raising over \$11 million through employees and customers.**

Beyond fundraising, Empire supports healthier, more inclusive communities by funding programs, providing nutrition education, and helping athletes like Jackson reach their full potential—both on and off the field.



**“JACKSON NOW STEPS OUT OF HIS COMFORT ZONE.”**





## SPECIAL OLYMPICS DONUT

**Tim Hortons** continues to proudly partner with Special Olympics, supporting programs that get youth moving, sponsoring National Games, and raising awareness through the beloved Special Olympics Donut campaign.

Like Special Olympics, **Tim Hortons believes in the transformative power of inclusion.** Across Canada, they've welcomed many individuals with intellectual disabilities—including Special Olympics athletes—into their teams, making their restaurants a place where everyone belongs.

A heartfelt thank you to Tim Hortons and all Special Olympics supporters nationwide who joined us in choosing to include from January 31 to February 2, 2025. We're thrilled to announce that nearly **\$1.3 million was raised through this year's Special Olympics Donut campaign**, setting a new milestone for fundraising in support of Special Olympics Canada!

**100% of the funds raised will go directly to our sport programs**, empowering thousands of athletes with intellectual disabilities across Canada.

**TOGETHER, WE'RE BUILDING A MORE INCLUSIVE CANADA!**

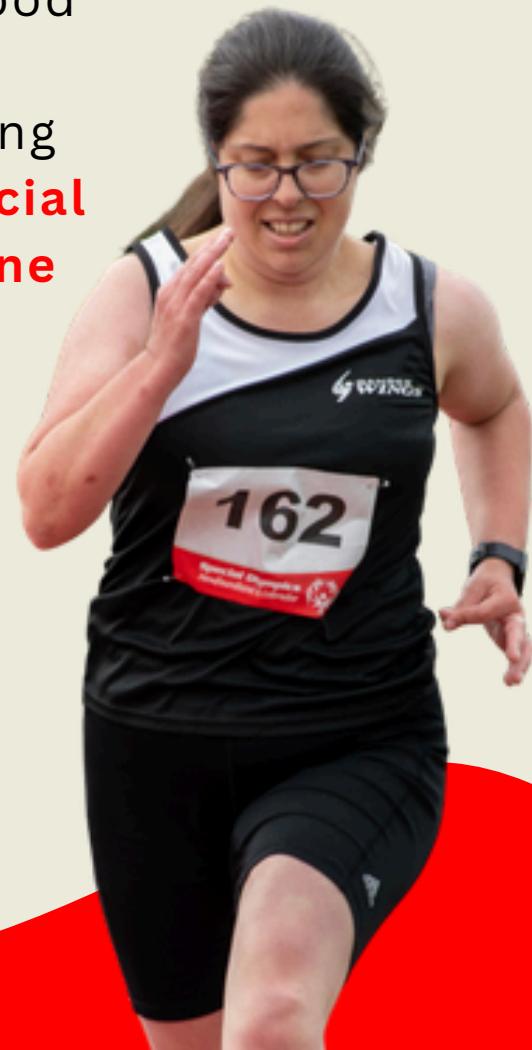


# Athlete Leadership

“My name is Floressa Harris and I am proud to be your athlete representative on the Canadian athlete leadership council. I hope everyone had a great summer and are looking forward to another great year in Special Olympics. I have to say we all had a great year and an especially good time at our summer games this past summer.

We had a lot of personal best times, achieved a lot of our goals and made good friends. I am looking forward to more leadership opportunities in the upcoming year. **Thank you to all who support Special Olympics. It is my sincere hope everyone will have another great year”**

Floressa Harris  
Athlete Representative



# In Memory



**Steven Maxwell** (Athlete)  
Corner Brook Vikings

**1973-2025**



**Mark LaCosta** (Volunteer)  
Corner Brook Vikings

**1963-2025**



**David "Davie" Ryan** (Athlete)  
Mount Pearl

**1950-2025**

# Provincial Sponsors

**Tim Hortons.**®

**empire**  
COMPANY LIMITED



Canadian Progress Club  
Club Progrès du Canada



**United Way**  
Newfoundland  
and Labrador



**Newfoundland**  
Labrador

**NAV**  
CANADA



**celebrate nl**  
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

**Hibernia**  
**NLCU**

# National Sponsors

## DIAMOND | DIAMANT



## COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS | CHAMPIONS COMMUNAUTAIRES



## GOLD | OR



The Annual Foundation

## SILVER | ARGENT



Samuel Family  
Foundation



## BRONZE & FRIENDS | BRONZE ET AMIS





# Staff

**Bobby Gamba**, Executive Director

**Jennifer McCann**, Program Director

**Brent Foote**, Youth & School Program Developer

**Phil Rendell**, Manager of Sport Development & Communications

**Funding provided by**



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

**Canada**