



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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2013 Special Olympic BC Summer Games spirit alive in Langley

Athletes, supporters kick off the Games and Fill the Stands campaign with inclusive basketball game

Langley fans came together today to kick off the 2013 Special Olympics BC Summer Games with a fun, inclusive basketball game that showcased the skills of local Special Olympics BC (SOBC) athletes and the great support the community is showing to the Games.

The centrepiece of today's launch was a basketball game involving members of the SOBC – Langley Warriors, a team that has been training hard for the 2013 Provincial Games, taking on challengers in the form of Langley RCMP members, Trinity Western University Spartans players, and R.E. Mountain Secondary School athletes.

Thanks to Basketball BC, the game also benefitted from all-star officiating from celebrity referees Allison and Mike McNeill, former Senior Women's National Team coaches now working with Basketball BC.

While the matchup proved to be a lot of fun for all, the game itself wasn't the objective – it was part of a much larger vision, as described by 2013 SOBC Summer Games Chair Arne Olson.

"The bigger picture is that persons with an intellectual disability, wherever they are, have the right to pursue excellence, just like anybody else. They have the right to dream big, just like anybody else. And they have the right to push past their limits, to compete and excel, to experience the joy of teamwork, the passion of sport, to leave it all on the field, just like anybody else. And that is what this Provincial Games is all about," Olson said.

From July 11 to 14, more than 1,100 athletes with intellectual disabilities will converge on Langley from communities all across B.C. and the Yukon to give their best and go for gold in 11 sports. Supported by 400 coaches as well as their friends and family cheering them on, they will light up Langley on that July weekend.

The launch also saw Olson kick off the Fill the Stands campaign for the Games, encouraging all locals to be a fan and come out to the events to "cheer on these athletes and help them on toward their personal best." The display of sportsmanship, skill, dedication, and joy won't be found anywhere else.

Approximately 1,000 local volunteers are being sought to give their time in support of this life-changing experience.

“Special Olympics changes lives,” SOBC Chair Pam Keith said at Wednesday’s event. “It gives athletes with intellectual disabilities opportunities to empower themselves through their achievements, the friendships they develop, and the inclusion and encouragement they experience on their teams and in their programs. It gives them the chance to take centre stage in their communities and be accepted and celebrated for all that they can do. And everyone who gets involved with them is changed for the better too.”

The sponsors who have generously signed on to support the Games know the value of the Special Olympics experience. The media launch also welcomed the first Games sponsors:

- SOBC Provincial Sponsors: Goldcorp, the Government of B.C., the New Car Dealers Association of B.C., Safeway, and Staples;
- Games Platinum Sponsors: the Township of Langley, the Langley School District #35, and media sponsors the Langley Advance and Langley Times;
- Games Gold Sponsors: the Canadian Progress Club and City of Langley;
- Games Silver Sponsors: the Christian Life Assembly, Canadian Union of Public Employees, and Northwest Tank Lines Inc.;
- Closing Ceremonies and Dance Sponsor: Ron Lloyd;
- Games Bronze Sponsors: Aldergrove Financial Group, Heat & Frost Insulators Local 118, JD Farms, and Eric Woodward;
- Friends of the Games: the Aldergrove Rotary Club, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and the Township of Langley Professional Firefighters Local 4550.

To get involved with the 2013 SOBC Summer Games experience, contact Carol Madill in our Langley office at 604.533.2233 or games@specialolympics.bc.ca. The office is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from Monday to Friday except Thursday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Support from current SOBC Summer Games Platinum and Gold Sponsors

Township of Langley Mayor Jack Froese: “The Township of Langley is thrilled to be hosting the 2013 Special Olympics BC Summer Games and we look forward to the energy and excitement this event will bring to our community. We know the Games will offer a real show of skill, sportsmanship, and spirit, and most importantly it will be a lot of fun for both the participants and the audience. The Township of Langley is known for its world-class recreation facilities, dedicated volunteers, and enthusiastic fans, and we are honoured to partner with Special Olympics BC and the Langley School District for these Games.”

Langley Board of Education Chair Wendy Johnson: “The Langley Board of Education is honoured to support the hosting of the 2013 Special Olympics BC Summer Games in our community. The athletes are such incredible role models for our young people and we look forward to joining our students in cheering them on as they inspire us with their dedication and commitment to achieving their goals.”

Langley Advance Publisher Ryan McAdams: "The Langley Advance is proud to partner with the Special Olympics BC Summer Games, and we encourage the community to celebrate the success of all participants. The dedication and commitment that these people make – participants / athletes and volunteers – is to be congratulated and this summer will showcase that commitment ... and one that the Advance takes special pride in helping recognize these contributions."

Langley Times Publisher Dwayne Weidendorf: "The Langley Times is honoured to be a partner of such a world-class event as the 2013 SOBC Summer Games in Langley B.C. We wish all the success to the athletes, fans, sponsors, and the committee."

City of Langley Mayor Peter Fassbender: "I extend my most sincere congratulations to each Olympian whose enthusiasm and dedication has brought them to the pinnacle of their success as they participate in the Special Olympics BC Summer Games. The City of Langley is delighted to be a sponsor for Special Olympics BC and it is a privilege to have these games come to our community."

Ron Lloyd, Canadian Progress Club President, Greater Vancouver: "The Canadian Progress Club has supported the Special Olympics BC since 1980 and is proud to be a Gold Sponsor of the 2013 Summer Games being held in Langley."

About Special Olympics BC

Special Olympics BC is dedicated to providing individuals with intellectual disabilities opportunities to enrich their lives and celebrate personal achievement through positive sport experiences. In 55 communities around the province, we provide year-round training and competitive opportunities in 18 different sports to more than 4,100 athletes of all ages and abilities, thanks to the dedicated efforts of over 3,200 volunteers. For more information, please visit www.specialolympics.bc.ca. Find us on Facebook and Twitter: www.facebook.com/specialolympicsbc | @sobcsociety.

Be a Fan and Fill the Stands at the 2013 SOBC Summer Games!
#beafan

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