

## Special Olympics Canada – Key Messages Jan. 2017

- **Our Mission:** Special Olympics Canada is dedicated to **enriching the lives of individuals with an intellectual disability (ID)** through sport
- Special Olympics is **more than an event** – Special Olympics Canada delivers year-round **world-class sport programs** to people with intellectual disabilities **daily in communities across Canada**
- Special Olympics Canada’s programs cater to **all ages** and a **wide range of abilities:**
  - We have programs for children (2 yrs+), youth, and adults
  - We provide an introduction to sport and physical activity, programs that offer daily training and local competition, and the opportunity to participate in high-performance competition
- Special Olympics programs are delivered by **trained coaches and dedicated volunteers**
  - We continue to grow, with 42,000+ athletes and 20,000+ volunteers (including 15,700 certified coaches) in our movement today
- Special Olympics believes that people with intellectual disabilities can, and will, **succeed when given the opportunity** – we are leveling the playing field
- Special Olympics uses the **transformative power and joy of sport** to reveal the full potential of athletes with intellectual disabilities
- Special Olympics Canada is the **only organization in Canada** to provide grassroots sport programs **and** competition opportunities, from the local level to the world level, for people with intellectual disabilities
- Special Olympics is a catalyst for **social change**. Our programs help:
  - **Instill confidence, self-esteem** and other life skills in our athletes
  - Contribute to healthier athletes **with life-long physical fitness habits**
  - Change attitudes and create **a more inclusive society**
  - Strengthen communities

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- **For every \$1 invested** in Special Olympics community sport programs in Canada, **a minimum of \$7 of social benefit is created** through improved athlete physical and mental health and increased athlete employment. Our research tells us that, when compared with individuals with an 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 is the largest global health organization dedicated to serving people with an intellectual disability. **The Healthy Athletes Program delivers education and health screening services to athletes with ID regarding healthy lifestyle choices.**
- Special Olympics is a charitable organization that relies on public, corporate, and government support to **deliver low-to-no cost athletic programs** in communities across Canada.