

Special Olympics BC

Bulletin

Winter 2014

Special
Olympics
British Columbia



Spectacular performance by Team BC at Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games

When B.C.'s largest-ever provincial team competed at the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games in their home province, the 275 athletes displayed outstanding achievements and sportsmanship while earning 288 medals and delivering so many personal bests and outstanding team performances that thrilled their coaches, fans, families, and team staff.

Held in Vancouver July 8 to 12, the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games brought together 1,700 athletes with intellectual disabilities and their dedicated volunteer coaches and mission staff from across the country to compete in 11 sports. These were the first Special Olympics Canada Games held in B.C. since 1990, and the largest-ever Special Olympics Canada Games. The competitions were held in fantastic facilities, with the University of British Columbia Vancouver campus serving as the

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host venue, the University Golf Club hosting the golf competition, and The Zone Bowling Centre in Richmond welcoming the 5- and 10-pin bowling action.

"Throughout the week, the athletes inspired all of us with their dedication, competitive spirit and sportsmanship," said Cathy Priestner Allinger, Chair of the Games Organizing Committee. "We saw records broken, personal bests achieved and indomitable spirit."

Among the exciting results for the home-province team, Team BC squads topped the A division in all team sports and excelled in the three sports being contested at the National Games level for the first time: basketball, bocce, and golf. Special Olympics BC's four



basketball teams and three bocce squads all earned medals—two gold and two bronze for basketball; one of each colour in bocce. They enter the history books as B.C.'s first-ever National Games medallists in these sports, alongside the seven B.C. golfers who medalled in the first Special Olympics Canada Games golf event.

"We raised expectations to a whole new level, and these guys met them," Team BC Chef de Mission Shawn Fevens said. "We left our mark on Vancouver 2014."

Softball

BC Grizzlies gold

BC Dynamite silver

"That was so exciting!"

SOBC – Kelowna coach Dennis Richardson right after the BC Grizzlies won gold and closed out their undefeated run in the tournament

"In Special Olympics, everyone has an opportunity, and everyone is taken as equals."

BC Dynamite athlete Jeff Martin of SOBC – Victoria

Soccer

Gold

"Special Olympics has gotten me doing sports I've always wanted to do. It gets me to try new things. There's lots of opportunities, and I've had lots of great new experiences out of it."

Athlete Tony Carter of SOBC – Mission





Rhythmic gymnastics

10 gold, 13 silver, 18 bronze

"It is an opportunity to compete in different sports with my friends. It gives me confidence and new friendships. I feel like I am part of a team and my teammates feel like my family. When I win medals I get very excited and happy."

SOBC – Surrey athlete Krista Milne

"They stuck everything, they listened to all the instructions, and they kept getting better."

Rhythmic gymnastics mission staff Barb Tull

Powerlifting

15 gold, 3 silver

"I felt great, I really did. I felt proud and did my hardest for my coach and myself and the rest of British Columbia, to prove to B.C. that we're all one together."

Powerlifter Will Richardson of SOBC – Kelowna, who deadlifted a personal best of more than 400 pounds



Golf

3 gold, 1 silver, 3 bronze

"Outstanding. Ecstatic. My first Nationals, I never expected to do as well as I did. I'm flabbergasted. ... I never thought I would win. I knew I did my ultimate, but I didn't think I would win."

Golfer Nellie-Jo Kurta of SOBC – Vancouver expressing her feelings after capturing gold



Bocce

BC High Rollers gold
BC Ball Busters silver
BC Bocce Pirates bronze

"I really feel excited. My parents are going to be so proud!"

SOBC – Penticton athlete Ariel Eastland of the Bocce Pirates

Basketball

BC Grizzlies gold
BC Warriors gold
BC Adanacs bronze
BC Eagles bronze

"I wanted to play in school but didn't have the chance. I believed I could be a good player on the right team. Now I am a good player on a great team. Basketball gives me and my team a chance to show people what we are capable of."

SOBC – Langley athlete Carson Buzdegan of the BC Warriors

Athletics

20 gold, 19 silver, 21 bronze + relay medals and tons of PBs

"I was just—boom. I was fired up. When I was seated [marshalling for the race], my legs were twitching. After the race, [coach Tom Norton] had to help me—I could not walk. It was full adrenaline from the get-go."

SOBC – North Shore athlete Stephan Schoeller after his explosive 200-metre race that ended in a four-person photo finish

"[I feel] so proud of those three nice medals."

SOBC – Comox Valley athlete Robert Burns



Aquatics

45 gold, 38 silver, 34 bronze + waves of PBs

"It's like a dream come true. I never thought I would make it this far. ... I overcame a lot of things before National Games so I could get here, and it's just, wow. I'm pumped, I'm so excited, I'm very appreciative. I'm blown away."

SOBC – Trail athlete Sherry Altrogge



5-pin bowling

13 gold, 5 silver, 6 bronze

"She has learned so much for this, it's been amazing."

SOBC – Elk Valley Local Coordinator Georgina McIntosh on the training and hard work of Team BC 5-pin bowler Kathy Sheppard

10-pin bowling

4 gold, 4 silver, 3 bronze

Special Olympics means "doing my best in whatever sport I am in. It makes me happy we have Special Olympics in Prince George."

SOBC – Prince George bowler Linda Renner



"[Competing in National Games] is a great experience if it is their first or fifth time. It is a challenge to make it this far and everyone should be glad they made it and most importantly have fun and do your best."

Athlete and Team BC 2014 flagbearer Jake Huff of SOBC – Penticton



More Special Olympics Team BC stories and photos:
specialolympics.bc.ca/team-bc-2014

Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games



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Inspiring celebrity support for 2014 National Games and Team BC

Many celebrity supporters from the sport world and sponsors of Special Olympics and the Vancouver 2014 Games showed their respect for Special Olympics athletes by taking part in the 2014 Games Opening Ceremony. Among the participants were:

- BC Lions Travis Lulay, Wally Buono, Adam Bighill, Marco Iannuzzi, and alumnus Angus Reid;
- Vancouver Whitecaps Jay DeMerit, Bob Lenarduzzi, and Nigel Reo-Coker;
- Vancouver Canucks Bo Horvat and Hunter Shinkaruk;
- Olympic medalist swimmers Brent Hayden and Mark Tewksbury;
- Olympic ski cross champion Ashleigh DeMerit;
- Two-time Stanley Cup champion Willie Mitchell;
- Jake Gardiner of the Toronto Maple Leafs;
- Olympic pairs figure skating champion Jamie Sale; and
- representatives from generous sponsors of Special Olympics and the Vancouver 2014 Games including the Government of Canada, Government of British Columbia, Goldcorp, Silver Wheaton, the University of British Columbia, AltaGas, Eldorado Gold, Blake, Cassels, & Graydon LLP, Teck, the City of Vancouver, STAPLES, and Home Hardware. ○

Goldcorp makes second \$1-million donation to Special Olympics BC

At the 2014 Goldcorp Invitational Golf Tournament, Vancouver-based gold miner **Goldcorp Inc.** announced a \$1-million gift to Special Olympics BC, providing meaningful, life-changing opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities, and doubling the

company's previous gift of \$1 million, which was announced in 2011.

"Goldcorp is pleased to support Special Olympics BC as part of our commitment to creating lasting positive social and economic benefits in each of the communities where we have operations," said Chuck Jeannes, Goldcorp President and CEO and Vice Chair of the SOBC Board of Directors. "It's so rewarding to sponsor these athletes who would otherwise be on the sidelines and to watch them compete, learn, and grow."

The 2011 gift from Goldcorp allowed SOBC to more than double the number of youth programs offered around the province from 30 to 78. Now almost 900 children with intellectual disabilities as young as two years old are learning vital social and motor skills and becoming active in sport. The announcement



at the tournament of an additional \$1 million, to be disbursed over four years, will enable further growth of those programs, and the establishment of new program offerings that will increase the opportunities for SOBC athletes to train, compete, and improve their health.

"Over the last eight years, Goldcorp has been an incredible partner that genuinely seeks to make a lasting difference for individuals with intellectual disabilities. They see the powerful impact Special Olympics has on the lives of athletes—the confidence and joy these frequently marginalized people feel through their opportunities to participate and compete with Special Olympics, and the essential skills and important health benefits they attain through sport," said SOBC President & CEO Dan Howe. "Goldcorp has made a huge difference for our organization and their new commitment will support our next four-year plan for expansion and enhancement of opportunities for athletes with intellectual disabilities of all ages."

Special Olympics BC is deeply grateful for Goldcorp's continued year-round support of Special Olympics. ○



Chuck Jeannes, James Sutherland, and son Oliver.

Goldcorp is pleased to support Special Olympics BC as part of our commitment to creating lasting positive social and economic benefits in each of the communities where we have operations.

**Chuck Jeannes
Goldcorp President and CEO
and Vice Chair of the
SOBC Board of Directors**

Government of Canada funds vital opportunities for SOBC athletes

The Government of Canada has been a crucial supporter of Special Olympics Canada and Special Olympics BC, providing funds to develop new and existing sport programs and competitive opportunities. Without this significant support, we could not offer the full range of opportunities that have been shown to make such a difference in the lives of Special Olympics athletes and their families.

When planning started on the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games in Vancouver, organizers knew they would need the support of corporations, the provincial government, and the federal government to help fund the National Games. Knowing how important these Games were, the Government of Canada made a major financial commitment. They signed on as a Gold Sponsor and funded athletes' travel to these Games. This helped create the opportunity for Special Olympics athletes from across Canada to showcase their abilities in a world-class event and experience friendship, pride, and joy.

The Government of Canada will also fund all training and travel expenses for Special Olympics Team Canada, including SOBC athletes, who will compete and be part of the life-changing experience of the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles.

Recognizing the great impact Special Olympics has on people, the federal government is providing funding to help expand our programs and allow more people to experience the tremendous benefits that Special Olympics provides. Through this funding, we have been able to hire new program staff to support the great work being done by volunteers throughout the province. We have also been able to fund new training opportunities for coaches and develop new guides and resources.

SOBC is extremely grateful for the support of the Government of Canada. If you have a moment, thank your local Member of Parliament for this support as it truly makes a difference. ○



Gearing up for 2015 World Games in Los Angeles

We're thrilled to congratulate all the members of the Special Olympics Team Canada Training Squad for the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles, including the 57 athletes and 16 coaches and mission staff from B.C.!

The B.C. team members hail from 19 SOBC Locals around the province. They earned their Special Olympics Team Canada berths through their outstanding performances with Team BC in the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games in our home province.

For the first time, Special Olympics Team Canada includes basketball, bocce, and golf athletes and coaches. The Team Canada 2015 basketball and bocce teams are from B.C., and the group of five Team Canada golfers includes SOBC – Kelowna's Kyle Grummett.

Congratulations and best of luck to all the members of the largest delegation Special Olympics Canada has sent to a World Summer Games!

"It's such an honour to be on Team Canada," says track and field athlete Jeneka Greif of SOBC – Kelowna. Greif has been a Special Olympics athlete for four years and this is the first time she has qualified for the national team.

Working with her training coach Ken Saunders of SOBC – Kelowna, she is now training six days a week, alternating gym workouts for upper body, lower body, cardio, and core strength with her running. Her short-term goal is to slowly build her endurance, core strength, and overall strength and balance, while her long-term goal is to try to get her 400m time under one minute, 30 seconds, since she clocked in at 01:31.73 at the 2014 National Games.

"I love training, I do—pretty much school and training is my life. Since I joined Special Olympics, it just gives me something to look forward to, and goals to set," Greif said. "It's really brought up my confidence and self-esteem."

The national team members from SOBC are listed at right by sport and alphabetically by last name.



Swimmer Kelsey Wyse being interviewed by CBC's Rick Mercer at her October training camp.

Greg Maher, SOBC – Kelowna

Name	SOBC Local	Name	SOBC Local
10-PIN BOWLING		GOLF	
Athletes		Athlete	
Annabelle Davis	Vancouver	Kyle Grummett	Kelowna
Jake Huff	Penticton	Coach	
Austin Johnston	Abbotsford	Ben Postmus	Trail
Linda Renner	Prince George	POWERLIFTING	
Karalyn Summer	Cowichan Valley	Athlete	
AQUATICS		Joanne Bunnin	Chilliwack
Athletes		SOCCER	
Magnus Batara	Richmond	Athletes	
Carrie Dignan	Coquitlam	Liam Barry	Mission
Josh Low	Langley	Tony Carter	Mission
Avery Newton	Penticton	Jeremy Cheverie	Victoria
Amanda Schleppe	Penticton	Glen Griner	Mission
Kelsey Wyse	Kelowna	Chris Hamilton	Abbotsford
Coach		Tom Hanna	Mission
Marie Telder	Sunshine Coast	Mitchell Howell	Mission
ATHLETICS		Justin King	Mission
Athletes		Amanda Peebles	Mission
Robert Burns	Comox Valley	Bryce Schaufelberger	Mission
Jeneka Greif	Kelowna	Coaches	
Mandy Manzardo	Coquitlam	John Scholtes, Head Coach	Mission
Mike Palitti	Abbotsford	Vince Astoria	Abbotsford
Coach		Stuart Coates	Mission
Aleila Miller, Head Coach	Smithers	SOFTBALL	
Deborah Carter	Surrey	Athletes	
Tom Norton	Abbotsford	Karl Anderson	Coquitlam
BASKETBALL		James Blacke	Kelowna
Athletes		Ryan Courtemanche	Kelowna
Nicholas Bobek	Vancouver	Richard Gillis	Kelowna
Shane Carr	Vancouver	Chris Harrington	Kelowna
Casey Cochran	Vancouver	Brad Hogan	Comox Valley
Michelle Forberg	Campbell River	Jim Laitar	Surrey
Jacky Law	Vancouver	Jonathan MacDonald	Kelowna
Jeff Leung	Vancouver	Jake MacFarlane	Kelowna
Alexander Pang	Vancouver	Andrew McIntyre	Kelowna
Alastair Singh	Langley	Dale Ramsden	Kelowna
Matthew Williams	Langley	Chris Roberge	Comox Valley
Sangeon Yoo	North Shore	David Scott	Kelowna
Coaches		Danny Sperling	Kelowna
Zak Klein, Head Coach	North Shore	Carl Willing	Surrey
Jayne Baggott	North Shore	Coaches	
Jimmy Peterson	North Shore	Lorena Mead, Head Coach	Kelowna
BOCCE		Ian Olive	Kelowna
Athletes		Dennis Richardson	Kelowna
Margaret Burnell	Penticton	MISSION STAFF	
Chad Conlon	Penticton	Leslie Thornley	SOBC MCD Region 2
Kevin Ellis	Penticton		
Lynden Hicks	Penticton		
Ben Willms	Kelowna		
Coach			
Dona Cade, Head Coach	Penticton		



Team Canada 2015 team sports members at their training camp in Kelowna, joined by Olympic medallist swimmer Ryan Cochrane.

Allison Fallis, SOBC – Kelowna

Safeway makes a difference for Special Olympics



From March 7 to 21, **Safeway** cashiers asked their customers to make a difference for Special Olympics by donating \$2 at the till. In return, donors received 5 AIRMILES Reward Miles. Huge thanks to Safeway and everyone who supported the **You Have the Ability to Make a Difference** campaign, which raised \$698,732 for Special Olympics programs across the country!

The funds and awareness raised support athletes such as SOBC – Smithers athlete Luke Smith, a strong alpine skier and proud Safeway employee. Smith has worked for Safeway for almost three years, and he is a dedicated employee who regularly goes above and beyond—when he finishes his own duties, he seeks to help out in other areas such as stacking shelves.

“I always enjoy my job all the time. You meet people and talk to people you know,” Smith says.

In 2009, Canada Safeway launched the People Living with Disabilities campaign benefitting Special Olympics and Easter Seals. This year, Special Olympics was the sole beneficiary of the You Have the Ability to Make a Difference campaign in March, with 100 per cent of all funds raised supporting Special Olympics athletes and programs in communities across Western Canada.

In Kamloops, host community for the 2015 Provincial Games, SOBC – Kamloops Fundraising Coordinator Michael Maveety said that the Northshore Kamloops Safeway went “so over and above in helping us raise funds, it was impressive.”



Abbotsford

“Most importantly, the sincerity that the Safeway staff used in working with our athletes bagging groceries and working the barbecue was very impressive to witness,” Maveety wrote. “I’ve always been a Safeway shopper but even more so now.” ○



Vancouver



North Shore



Salmon Arm



Trail

Government of B.C. a vital backer of SOBC

The lawn of the Legislative Buildings in Victoria was transformed into a sport hub on May 27, 2014, as Special Olympics BC – Victoria athletes played in fun bocce matches alongside MLAs in anticipation of the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games.

The Province of B.C. was a Gold Sponsor of the National Games held in Vancouver in July, generously contributing \$300,000 in funding.

“B.C.’s Special Olympics athletes are an inspiring and amazingly skilled group of athletes who taught us all so much,” said Community, Sport and Cultural Development Minister Coralee Oakes, who joined in the matches.

The Province of B.C.’s longtime support has allowed SOBC to offer more life-changing experiences and programs to athletes. Financially, between the Province’s funding of sport and funds received through Community Gaming Grants from the Gaming Policy



Enforcement Branch, SOBC received more than \$445,000 this year. SOBC Locals also received gaming grants to support their year-round community programs.

This significant level of funding is much appreciated and much needed.

Funds received are used to help reduce costs of programs and competitions, host sport camps and events, transport athletes and coaches, and create new opportunities for Special Olympics athletes and coaches.

SOBC has also been able to expand its Healthy Athletes screenings with financial support from the Province, helping address the unique health needs of people with intellectual disabilities.

The Province’s Sport Branch has also been a tremendous

source of assistance and resources to SOBC. Understanding and supporting SOBC’s goals, Sport Branch staff have been working hard to open doors and inform us of other resources, contacts, and opportunities. This is invaluable as we grow programs, reach out to more athletes, increase the number and quality of competitions, and create opportunities. ○



Goldcorp Invitational guests tee off for “a great cause”

The **2014 Goldcorp Invitational Golf Tournament** was a great success again this year, attracting significant support for Special Olympics BC from Vancouver’s corporations and business elite.

Held on June 17, 2014, at Northview Golf & Country Club, this fully stocked golf experience includes two simultaneous tournaments followed by an evening of inspiration where participants enjoy a full dinner, entertainment, live and silent auctions, and powerful messages from SOBC athletes and supporters.

Chuck Jeannes, Goldcorp President and CEO and SOBC Board of Directors Vice Chair, gave a moving speech to tournament participants about the opportunities Special Olympics brings into the lives of children, youth, and adults with intellectual disabilities.

“As parents, as grandparents, as family and friends ... all we want as loved ones is for them to have the opportunity to live as full a life as they can, to have the ability to engage in social activities, to compete in athletics, which is what we all love to do out on the golf course and in other areas, and to be a part of something beyond their normal lives,”



Jeannes said. “And that’s absolutely what this is about and I’m just so thrilled that Goldcorp and I and so many of us here in the room have been a part of that, and so I want to thank everybody.”

The evening also featured a speech by James Sutherland, accompanied by his young son and SOBC athlete Oliver, about the confidence and abilities Oliver has gained through SOBC youth programming.

During the tournament, Special Olympics athletes were on hand to welcome participants, and SOBC – Vancouver’s national

gold medallist in golf Nellie-Jo Kurta showed her skills on the green at the event’s Special Putt hole.

Jeannes noted that many people had travelled from Toronto and other parts of Canada for the tournament.

“I really, really appreciate it,” Jeannes said. “It’s a great cause. I know because I sit on the Board that your money is going to do very good things for very special people.”

Sincere thanks to Goldcorp and the generous tournament sponsors for their continued support of SOBC. ○



Thank you to the supporters of the 2014 Goldcorp Invitational

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- Colin MacKinnon
- Christine Marks, *Goldcorp*
- Greg Noble
- Dan Howe, *Special Olympics BC*
- Christina Hadley, *Special Olympics BC*

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SOBC Board of Directors update

Special Olympics BC is fortunate to have outstanding leadership and support from our **Board of Directors**. We truly appreciate their significant contributions and dedication to supporting the ongoing quality and value of this organization.

At our 2014 AGM, several Directors moved into new executive roles, and we are grateful to them for taking on these vital leadership

positions. **Ted Hirst** of Canaccord Genuity has been elected as the Board Chair, and **Chuck Jeannes** of Goldcorp has been elected Vice Chair. **Pamela Keith** of Dueck Auto Group is stepping into the role of Past Chair, and business analyst and Money Talks host **Michael Campbell** has been elected Secretary. Completing the executive is **Colin Yakashiro** of Grant Thornton, who joined us as Treasurer this year.



Yakashiro is the Office Managing Partner for the Victoria, Vancouver, and Langley offices of Grant Thornton. He is also a member of the firm's Partnership Board, and serves on the Governance and Financial Oversight sub-committees.

Yakashiro takes over as Treasurer from **Jim Kerr**, who was kind enough to assume the role along with his responsibilities as Secretary after John Sims, longtime champion of SOBC, retired from the position last fall. We were very saddened by the passing of Sims in January after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

Our sincere thanks to James Kerr, who retired from the Board after serving nearly 20 years as a Director to benefit SOBC.

Our sincere gratitude to all of the members of the Board of Directors who so generously give their time to strengthen SOBC. ○



Special Olympics British Columbia

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- Past Chair:** Pamela Keith
- Vice Chair:** Chuck Jeannes
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Patty Wheeldon

2015 events

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events, and stay tuned to www.specialolympics.bc.ca/calendar for additions and updates!

2015 Special Olympics BC Winter Games
February 19 to 21, Kamloops

Healthy Athletes screening events
Kamloops: February 20 and 21
(at Provincial Games)
Vancouver: April (date TBA)

2015 Regional Conference for Regions 1 and 2
April 17 to 19, West Kelowna

Goldcorp Invitational Golf Tournament
June 16, Northview Golf & Country Club

2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games
July 25 to August 2, Los Angeles

Original Joe's Community Care Fund contributes to SOBC

From February to May, **Original Joe's** raised funds for Special Olympics and other charities through their popular community pint program, part of their Community Care Fund. Thanks to Original Joe's for raising \$7,149 for Special Olympics BC in the 17 locations around the province!

"Part of being a good community partner means giving back to the areas we serve," said Ed Gackley, Area Partner for Original Joe's. "We're excited to be able to support organizations like Special Olympics that make such an impact in the lives of British Columbians." ○

Play Unified

This year Special Olympics International launched a multifaceted marketing campaign targeting young people age 14 to 25 around the world. Centred around the call to action to Play Unified, the campaign aims to raise the profile of Special Olympics and to create a Unified Generation—young people who have joined Special Olympics to make a difference and to help create more unified and just communities.

Check out the #PlayUnified hashtag on social media for more inspiring posts from this growing campaign.

Please contact SOBC's Megan Grittani-Livingston with any questions about the campaign and its use in B.C.: megan@specialolympics.bc.ca / 604-737-3077 ○



Vital volunteers get behind new SOBC Locals

In 2014, committed cadres of volunteers across B.C. worked hard to bring to life or re-establish several Special Olympics BC Locals to offer opportunities for athletes in their communities.

Supporters got behind an **SOBC – Revelstoke** comeback after the Local's eight-year hiatus, with enthusiastic response from a town known for active living and community spirit. The Local is running the Active Start youth program and will have **FUNDamentals** and **Club Fit** in 2015.

"Most exciting is being able to enable individuals to participate and to shine,"

said **SOBC – Revelstoke** Local Coordinator **Craig Brown**.

Melissa Jameson, **SOBC – Revelstoke** Public Relations Coordinator, was excited for the athletes and the community as a whole.

"It's a great way to bring together community and to celebrate abilities," **Jameson** said.

When a wonderful group of volunteers came together to launch **SOBC – Mackenzie**, the idea was greeted with great



Mount Waddington



Merritt



Revelstoke

support and excitement. Some of the local athletes had previously participated in **SOBC** programs in **Prince George**, and were thrilled to have **Special Olympics** back in their lives. Now they can participate in **5-pin bowling** and look forward to **swimming** in 2015.

The new Executive Committee includes an **Athlete Representative** who will help share the athletes' perspective as the Local develops.

"In **Mackenzie** we are very excited to get started. We are encouraged to have our future athletes experience the rich atmosphere of a healthy lifestyle and the opportunity to develop lifelong friendships while they enjoy achieving empowerment through their personal goals," says **Doris Kilba**, **SOBC – Mackenzie's** first Local Coordinator.

The new Local of **SOBC – Mount Waddington** is now offering athlete opportunities to communities at the north end of **Vancouver Island**. Through the leadership and support of **Anita Brennan**, a former **SOBC – Prince George** coach, athletes can now train and compete in **aquatics** and **5-pin bowling**. Many community members have shown interest in the Local's creation, including a city official, media, rec centre coordinators, special needs day programmers, parents, and past **Special Olympics** coaches.

Volunteers began forming **SOBC – Merritt** in 2013 and the Local has been up and running with **Club fit** since April 2014. A **5-pin bowling** program was offered to athletes later in the year and plans are in the works for **curling**. The Local has been very visible in their community and has put on great fundraisers, with **pub dinners** and a **bowl-a-thon**. ○

Most exciting is being able to enable individuals to participate and to shine.

Craig Brown
Revelstoke Local
Coordinator

Remembering John Sims

We were saddened by the January 2014 passing of John Sims, longtime member of the Special Olympics BC Board of Directors, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. John was a true champion of Special Olympics, and a generous and wholehearted supporter of the goals and ideals of this organization. He will be missed.

Sims was a tremendous supporter of SOBC and saw the profound effects that involvement could have on athletes and their families. He was particularly interested in the efforts by Special Olympics to make individuals with intellectual disabilities healthier. Sims served on the Board of Directors from 2003 to 2013, and was Treasurer for many of those years.

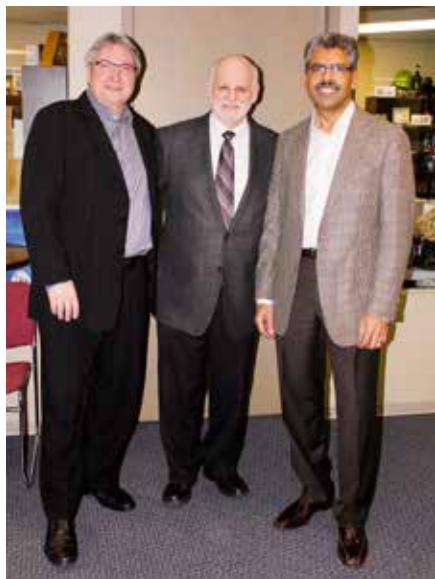
In 2013, to honour Sims' dedication to SOBC, his commitment to the community, and to recognize his recent retirement, his friends initiated the John M. Sims Fund in support of Special Olympics. This endowment fund will continue Sims' association and support of Special Olympics BC in perpetuity.

To make a donation to the John M. Sims Fund in his honour:

Online: Donation form at specialolympics.bc.ca (Please check the Tribute option, select the "In Tribute Of" button, and enter "John M. Sims Fund")

By phone: 604-737-3180 / 1-888-854-2276 toll-free

By mail: The John M. Sims Fund
c/o Special Olympics BC
#210 – 3701 Hastings Street
Burnaby, BC V5C 2H6



John Sims (centre) with longtime friends and clients Greg Forrester and Milton Carrasco, initiators of the John M. Sims Fund.

Coaching Summit participants share ideas, energy

The 115 Special Olympics BC coaches who took part in the **Provincial Coaching Summit** held in November 2014 in Richmond were the epitome of peer inspiration in action. Not only did these coaches from all around the province learn from the summit's presenters in order to build skills and tools to take back to their home communities, they inspired each other with their knowledge, ideas, and ongoing commitment to their athletes and programs.

The summit involved valuable sessions led by approachable experts, and the coaches had time to talk and network in order to exchange ideas and best practices for the betterment of all. The weekend included presentations on nutrition led by Karine Duval of Douglas College's Department of Sports Science, mental performance training with Dr. Laura Farres of Mind in Motion Consulting Inc., effective training with speed coach and international sports performance consultant Derek Hansen, coach development and planning with internationally recognized speed skating and training expert Jacques Thibault, video technology in coaching with SOBC Region 5 Coordinator Darren Inouye, and functional testing with SOBC's Lois McNary and Lauren van Oosten.

All presentations and resources are available on the SOBC website thanks to ViaSport British Columbia, who came out to film the sessions so they can be shared widely with even more SOBC coaches province-wide.

With participating coaches hailing from 85 per cent of the 57 SOBC Locals around the province, the summit had a valuable group of participants with diverse experiences who had so much to share with each other. Participants

from Special Olympics Alberta and Ontario joined in to benefit as well.

SOBC – Salt Spring Island swimming coach Jo Logan said the jam-packed and well-organized weekend provided her with many ideas she is looking forward to implementing with her athletes at home, including much of the nutrition and mental training information. The ideas from the Coaching Summit will help build on the nutrition work they have already been doing with several athletes, she said.

Having already started implementing some of the new tools and lessons with the SOBC – Salt Spring Island swim program, Logan said, "I think it's already making a difference."

SOBC – Kitimat curling coach Tim Martin is looking forward to talking with his Regional Coordinator about where to go with all of the information gleaned from the summit. He found a lot of value in the discussions with other coaches as well as the nutrition, mental performance, and coach development sessions and opportunity to work with the technological apps.

"Being a newer coach and being invited, it gave me a lot of opportunities to see the different levels of coaching, and the people who were there were very informative," Martin said.

The Coaching Summit lessons, tools, and discussions are all part of the first stage of the Performance Program, through which coaching and training knowledge and resources are intended to be shared around the province through a trickle-down effect. Groups learn together and take ideas home to be shared with their local coaches and athletes, strengthening programs province-wide. ○

Raising awareness at World Outlook Financial Conference

Since 1990, the **World Outlook Financial Conference** has been bringing together top-quality financial analysts together with sophisticated Canadian investors to share world-class information and analysis.

The 2014 WOFC was held on January 31 and February 1 in Vancouver. For the first time, the conference this year included a fascinating assortment of industry panels and heated debates. We are grateful that Special Olympics BC once again had a presence at the conference, accepting donations from

generous attendees and raising awareness.

The 2015 WOFC will be held January 30 and 31 in Vancouver.

Our thanks to conference founder Michael Campbell for the WOFC's amazing support of SOBC.

Please see www.moneytalks.net/outlook for more information. ○



Valuable and inspiring experiences with Healthy Athletes

In 2014, Special Olympics BC held popular Healthy Athletes screening events in Vancouver and Kelowna, and worked year-round to empower athletes to be as healthy as possible to help them in their sports and throughout their lives.

The Special Olympics **Healthy Athletes** program addresses the issue that many people with intellectual disabilities

have unique issues around health care and communicating their needs. Many individuals with intellectual disabilities have trouble realizing or expressing their health concerns, and many health professionals have not had the opportunity to receive specific training, or are not familiar enough with this population, to know the best questions to ask to draw out the issues.

The professionals who lead Healthy Athletes screenings have received specific training to help them ask the right questions, and their interactions with Special Olympics athletes lead to referrals back into the health care system that ensure the individuals will get the treatment they need.

In July, the Healthy Athletes program at the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games in Vancouver saw 635 athletes receive screenings in Healthy Hearing, Health Promotion, Opening Eyes, Special Smiles, FUNFitness, and Fit Feet. These clinics

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®



uncovered numerous unaddressed issues affecting athletes.

Diseases of the gum were found in 80 per cent of the participating athletes, blocked or partially blocked ear canals in 39 per cent, and eye disease in 20 per cent.

International Special Olympics research has found that people with intellectual disabilities have a 40 per cent higher risk for health problems.

SOBC also hosts standalone Healthy Athletes screening events outside of Games. The events offer examinations and health information in disciplines such as Special Smiles, Opening Eyes, Healthy Hearing, Health Promotion, Fit Feet, and the recently added physiotherapy discipline called FUNfitness.

SOBC's **Healthy Athletes Screening Day** in Vancouver on February 15, 2014, was fun and full of helpful advice. Among the issues uncovered was a serious tooth problem for an SOBC – Coquitlam athlete, which may otherwise have gone undetected but for the Special Smiles dental clinic. In addition to finding the problem, the screening gave the athlete a referral for followup treatment.

"The Special Olympics athlete actually had a tooth that had decayed and broken off and all that was left was a retained root tip," said Carol Yakiwchuk, B.C. Clinical Director for Special Smiles. The athlete was in danger of getting a serious infection. "Those root tips



actually have to be extracted."

With SOBC redoubling efforts to support athletes to secure followup appointments after Healthy Athletes events, the February screenings led to nine dental referrals needing urgent care, and 23 hearing, 12 physiotherapy, and five Health Promotion referrals.

The free screenings in Vancouver attracted 73 Special Olympics athletes and newcomers, and had the support of 117 volunteers.

SOBC also hosted the first Healthy Athletes Screening Day at UBC Okanagan in Kelowna on April 12, 2014. This standalone screening event was also a great success, with 51 athletes participating—most of them members of Team BC preparing for the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games—and 40 student volunteers helping out.

Along with the Healthy Athletes screenings, SOBC has ramped up efforts year-round to emphasize athlete health in other avenues. In the Team BC 2014 training program, for example, functional testing helped measure athletes' progress and health, and nutrition sessions gave athletes the tools to make healthy food choices and to realize the importance of rest and hydration.

To find out more about SOBC's Healthy Athletes program, visit specialolympics.bc.ca/healthy-athletes. ○

Athletes get ahead with Club Fit

Special Olympics BC's **Club Fit** program is raising the bar for physical fitness, and athletes are rising to the challenge and showing stellar results.

Club Fit helps athletes of varying skill levels age 14 and up improve their overall health and fitness outside of regular sports training. The weekly program emphasizes strength and cardio, and can include life skills and nutrition education.

"It helped me get healthier," said SOBC – Vancouver athlete Nellie-Jo Kurta. "I'm now starting to watch what I eat." Kurta joined Club Fit to improve her cardio for Regional Qualifiers and went on to win gold in golf at the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games. ○



2014 Special Olympics BC award winners

Athletic Achievement Award

Special Olympics BC – Richmond athlete Magnus Batara has consistently strived to develop his considerable athletic abilities, independence, and discipline since joining Special Olympics seven years ago. As a result, this talented athlete has competed nationally and internationally, broken records, and won many medals.

Batara gave a stellar performance in the pool at the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games in Vancouver, winning one gold, two silver, and one bronze medal.

He has competed in Special Olympics divisions in swimming at BC Games, winning 13 gold and two silver medals, and Canada Games, taking home three gold and one bronze medal, and he broke the Canada Games eight-year record for Special Olympics 50 metre breaststroke at the 2013 Canada Summer Games in Sherbrooke, Que.

In training with Team BC 2014, Batara showed amazing determination, making incredible gains in strength and flexibility during the season, and gaining seven pounds to help him ramp up his power.



A local hero, this multi-sport athlete was named Adult Male Athlete of the Year at the Richmond Sports Awards and Recognition Banquet in 2013.

Congratulations to Batara and nominees Kellie Robertson (SOBC – Surrey), Ashley Rosenberger (SOBC – Abbotsford), Beau Wryghte (SOBC – Campbell River), and Cullen Yee (SOBC – Richmond). O

Grassroots Coach Award

Special Olympics BC – Richmond coach Glen Ellison is the type of person who everyone knows, admires, and finds inspirational. For more than 30 years Ellison has lent his considerable coaching talents to Special Olympics and shown incredible support of athletes.

Ellison has been involved in almost every sport in Special Olympics, as the Head Coach of SOBC – Richmond’s floor hockey, basketball, soccer, and softball programs and assisting with many other programs.

“Glen makes each practice fun and motivating for the athletes, which in turn inspires them to work hard,” his nominators wrote. “Knowing each athlete personally has given each a feeling of importance, acceptance, and uniqueness. Glen makes each athlete feel special and that they are able to accomplish anything they put their minds to.”

Ellison’s generous spirit and strong connection to the athletes is exemplified in his close relationship with his big brother, SOBC – Richmond athlete Scottie Ellison.

Ellison is always developing his own skills, attending sport and Special Olympics courses, and researching ways to support the athletes. This dedicated volunteer also organizes tournaments in the Local and helps promote Special Olympics within the community.

Congratulations to Ellison and nominees Kurc Buzdegan (SOBC – Langley), Rosemary Collins (SOBC – Campbell River), Brian Gaudet (SOBC – Abbotsford), Donny Gillanders (SOBC – Richmond), Roland Handley (SOBC – Castlegar), Rod McKenzie (SOBC – Surrey), Jason Philips and Mark Wilson (SOBC – Golden), Dave Robson (SOBC – Quesnel), Susan Storry (SOBC – Powell River), and Wilma Van Hage (SOBC – Prince George). O

Howard Carter Award

Throughout her more than 10 years of dedicated and skillful coaching with Special Olympics, **Special Olympics BC – Surrey athletics Head Coach Deborah Carter** has demonstrated her inspiring ability to help athletes achieve their full potential, employing a winning combination of firm leadership and genuine care.

“She motivates all of her athletes to be the very best that they can be,” one parent of an athlete coached by Carter wrote in her award nomination. “She celebrates their victories as enthusiastically as they do. Every personal best achieved is a victory for the whole group.”

Carter is an outstanding coach both locally and at National and Provincial Games levels,



Glen Ellison (fifth from left)



Deborah Carter (right)

and will take her talents to the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles with the Special Olympics Team Canada athletics team.

She has also given her time to coach SOBC athletes at BC Games. She was a member of Team BC 2014 and was Head Coach for the SOBC athletics team at the Nanaimo 2014 BC Summer Games. Carter also supports the most dedicated athletes who want to train year-round beyond the program weeks, building training plans and tracking their performance to help them see they are making progress.

While excelling in her support of athletes, Carter also does an excellent job of leading efficient, well-organized practices, and creating an environment where other coaches can grow and take on challenges. She sets a strong example of sportsmanship, fair play, and respect for officials and judges.

Congratulations to Carter and nominees Calvin Dyck (SOBC – Prince George) and Nell McGarrigle (SOBC – Elk Valley). ○

Spirit of Sport Award

Special Olympics BC – Prince George athlete **Barbie Conway** is not only dedicated to sport and to helping her Local thrive, she is also known for going above and beyond to support her fellow Special Olympics teammates.

Conway has been an SOBC – Prince George athlete for 16 years. She is an avid swimmer, cross-country skier, golfer, and member of the athletics team. Her talent and commitment have taken her far; she's competed in three Special Olympics Canada Games and a Special Olympics World Games.

Conway has shown her compassionate and genuine nature on many occasions, such as when she competed at the National Winter Games in St. Albert. When one of her teammates was disappointed about not winning a medal, she wanted to lend him one of hers for the team photo so he wouldn't feel left out.

Conway is a valued member of the SOBC – Prince George Executive Committee as Athlete Representative. She generously gives her time to the annual JYSK and Staples Canada campaigns for Special Olympics. This Athlete Speaker speaks annually at the Special Olympics BC Charity Golf Classic hosted by Dick Harris in Prince George, addressing sponsors and guests who help make the tournament such a success.

Congratulations to Conway and nominees Man Lok Au (SOBC – Campbell River), Yoshi Doldersum (SOBC – Chilliwack), Scott Jonasson (SOBC – Quesnel), Matthew Lai (SOBC – Richmond), Glenda Melnychuk (SOBC – Quesnel), Roxanna Podrasky (SOBC – Kimberley/ Cranbrook), and Kelsey Thomson (SOBC – Richmond). ○



Barbie Conway (right)



Helen Gaulin

President's Award

Ever since **Special Olympics BC – Fort St. John** started up 28 years ago, **Helen Gaulin** has given her heart and soul to the community and played a critical role in the Local's growth.

Gaulin has held nearly every position a volunteer can on the SOBC – Fort St. John Executive Committee including Treasurer, Program Coordinator, and Local Coordinator. She has also been a coach and the go-to social event organizer for many years.

Thanks to her encouragement of athletes and her tireless recruiting over the years, SOBC – Fort St. John grew from a bowling-only community to a Local that now offers more than seven sports and has sent athletes all the way to World Games.

Gaulin has long been regarded as the local athletes' biggest fan, and her spirit and support have left a lasting impression on the athletes, who adore her. She goes above and beyond to support them, whether it's helping pack for competition or preparing for a world event.

Over her amazing volunteer career, Gaulin has forged lifelong friendships with other volunteers and parents, and watched many athletes grow from children into fantastic adult athletes. At every event or practice she attends she is greeted with cheers, smiles, and stories from the athletes eager to share their successes with her.

Congratulations to Gaulin and nominees Denise Barker (SOBC – 100 Mile House), Kathy MacDonald (SOBC – Chilliwack), Gail Ponto (SOBC – Nakusp), Geoff Uttley (SOBC – Surrey), Bill and Joan Woikin (SOBC – Nelson), and Chuck Yee (SOBC – Richmond). ○

Regional Qualifiers re-ignite winter competition cycle

Special Olympics BC – Nanaimo cross-country skier Dennis Lynch had one thing on his mind as he rested between Regional Qualifier races at the **2014 Snow Sports Festival** in West Kelowna. “I want to go to Kamloops,” he said, referring to the **2015 Special Olympics BC Winter Games** to be hosted in Kamloops.

SOBC – Quesnel athlete Danny Dodgson, who travelled the eight hours from the north with his teammates to compete in snowshoeing and cross-country skiing at the Snow Sports Festival, had a slightly different goal. He was all about personal bests.

“Just go out and do my best,” Dodgson said. “If I place, it doesn’t matter what I place as long as I finish the race.”

The **2014 Regional Qualifiers** restarted the winter sport competition cycle that builds toward the Special Olympics Provincial, National, and World Games. Excited athletes showed their drive, skill, sportsmanship, and fun-loving side as they competed in SOBC’s seven winter sports at 15 events around the

province from February to April.

Regional Qualifier events were held in Burnaby, Chilliwack, Comox Valley, Coquitlam, Delta, Fort St. John, Kelowna, Langley, Mill Bay, Port Alberni, and Terrace.

The Snow Sports Festival in February was an action-packed weekend with Regional Qualifier racing for more than 180 athletes from all over the province. The event included exciting first-time participation from a number of groups, including great athletes and coaches from SOBC – Burns Lake and awesome alpine skiers from SOBC – Invermere. There were also strong first-time contingents of SOBC – Quesnel alpine and cross-country skiers as well as SOBC – Kamloops snowshoers.

SOBC – Quesnel snowshoeing coach Dave Robson applauded the achievements of the athletes, and noted how much they get out of both the social element and the chance to compete. An important part of competition for athletes is to gain confidence, meet new friends, and renew old bonds.

“What we find more than anything is they enjoy the social aspect of it... For the most part, yes, [the opportunity to compete] does energize them. We found this with the Provincial Games also,” he said.

The **Snowshoeing Regional Qualifier for Region 6** at Vancouver Island’s Mount Washington was “well organized, well attended, exciting, fun, and really gave the athletes a chance to do their best,” said SOBC – Victoria snowshoeing Head Coach Daniel Mallet.



SOBC figure skaters own the podium at Region 6 Regional Qualifier.



Speed skaters take their marks.



Racing at the 2014 Snow Sports Festival in Kelowna.

“The smiles on their faces, the pure enjoyment of watching them compete and have fun means more to me as a coach than the final results do,” Mallet said.

The Victoria team enjoyed themselves so much that six of the athletes—all of whom had never competed in snowshoeing before—said they would be registering for the sport next year.

The **Figure Skating Regional Qualifier for Region 7 and 8** was a big thrill for SOBC – Terrace athlete Laura Dale, who was the only skater from Region 7 competing at the event that was part of the 2014 Totem Interclub skating competition held in Fort St. John in February.

Dale’s parents Jody Kelly and Chris Dale said that while their daughter was nervous on her first competition away from home, the community and the skaters were very friendly and welcoming and her coach was a huge support. The event was a positive experience for Dale, who went on to proudly win gold in her Special Olympics Level 3 Performance.

The **Floor Hockey Regional Qualifier** (for all Regions except 6) saw plenty of action as 18 determined teams from across the province converged on Simon Fraser University in Burnaby in March. The heart-pounding gold-medal matches included an overtime win by the Coquitlam Road Runners that had everyone in the stands on edge.

It was a weekend of close matches at the **Floor Hockey Qualifier for Region 6** in Comox in March, with teams from seven Island Locals competing. Port Alberni, which last competed at a Floor Hockey Qualifier in 2006 with players from Nanaimo, won gold in their division in overtime with all hometown players.

We would like to congratulate all the athletes for their hard work, determination, and great spirit at Regional Qualifiers. Good luck to all the athletes and coaches advancing to compete at the 2015 SOBC Winter Games! ○

Summer of *motionball* fundraisers a big success

The summer of 2014 meant another season of fun and inspiring *motionball* fundraising events in B.C. for Special Olympics.

The **Vancouver Marathon of Sport** organizers once again partnered with EA Sports in June to host their event at the amazing EA complex in Burnaby, with 18 teams and 40 Special Olympics BC athletes taking part. Teams collectively raised \$55,000 for SOBC and the Special Olympics Canada Foundation.

Heartfelt appreciation to John Hibbard, who started the Vancouver Marathon of Sport eight

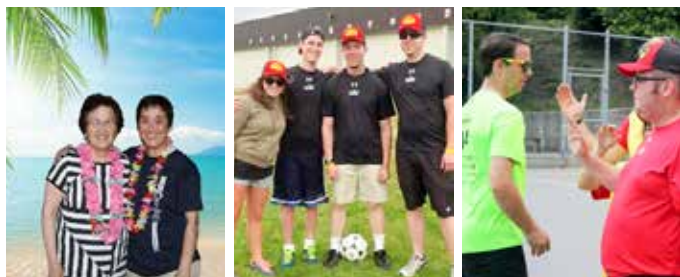
years ago and announced this year he was stepping down as co-event director but will continue to join in as a team player.

Marathon of Sport brings together teams of young professionals to participate in a fun-filled day of multi-sport action alongside Special Olympics athletes.

Now in its third year, the **Kelowna Marathon of Sport** was bigger and more successful than ever, with 219 participants, 29 Special Olympics athletes and 10 coaches, and \$61,345 raised.

The Okanagan Young Professionals (OYP) Collective once again partnered with the inspiring event.

"The synergy and outstanding relationship between *motionball*, the OYP, and Special Olympics allowed for such exceptional growth," said Donnie Ungaro, who heads OYP and serves as its Young Professionals/Culture Development Officer. Ungaro is co-event director of the Kelowna Marathon of Sport and is a member of the SOBC – Kelowna Executive Committee. "We had a Special Olympics info booth and had people sign up to be coaches, they were so enamored with the day and the athletes."



FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS POUR OLYMPIQUES SPÉCIAUX

July saw a grand gathering of young professionals come together to support Special Olympics at *motionball*'s **Port & Starboard 2.0**. The Keg Yaletown played host to the Hamptons-style brunch with SONiC 104.9's Kid Carson providing the entertainment along with performances from Amanda Wood, the Carlo Rossi Gang, and DJ Bazz.

Special Olympics BC athletes helped with the event and its fundraising. The prize balloons they sold were snapped up in record time!

motionball is a not-for-profit organization that builds awareness and raises funds for Special Olympics in Canada, targeting a "next generation" of supporters—Canada's professional crowd who are not defined by their age but rather their mind-set.

This year *motionball* also kicked off their YELLOWCARD campaign, calling on Canadians to pledge to stop using the R-word and raise a proverbial yellow card when others use it.

In soccer, a yellow card is shown to offending players as a warning that they have crossed a line; in the same way, the YELLOWCARD campaign aims to inform Canadians that the R-word is offensive and hurtful even if used in a way that seems harmless. *motionball* hopes to inform and engage in order to inspire change in support of Special Olympics athletes and the nearly one million Canadians with intellectual disabilities.

Learn more and take the pledge:
motionball.com/yellowcard ○

CrossFit pumps up support for Special Olympics

CrossFit athletes came out in droves to flex their muscles for Special Olympics once again this year, with 19 gyms in seven provinces taking part in the 2014 **CF24** challenge and raising \$130,000 for Special Olympics.

CF24 brings together CrossFit athletes from across the country to raise funds for Special Olympics, with teams of three performing 10-minute high-intensity workouts every hour for 24 consecutive hours.

CrossFit support grew in British Columbia this year, with Raincity Athletics and CrossFit West10 in Vancouver and Kelowna CrossFit getting on board. CrossFit Burnaby took part in the event for their second year. Special Olympics athletes joined in part of the workouts and mixed it up with CrossFit athletes.

"Everyone had a blast with the Special Olympics athletes in the first workout and again later when some returned for the barbecue and spectating," said Kelowna CrossFit organizer Jay Borden. "The overnight crew was exhausted to say the least but remained smiley, playful, and hardworking." ○



SOBC – Vancouver and CrossFit West10 athletes getting pumped for CF24!

Wonderful experiences at BC Winter and Summer Games

The opportunity to participate in the **Mission 2014 BC Winter Games** in February made Special Olympics BC – Vernon athlete Corey Sturgeon happy.

"I really wanted to be part of it. I really wanted to do the best that I can," said Sturgeon, who competed as a member of the Thompson-Okanagan Zone 2 basketball team that dribbled to a fifth-place finish.

"It's wonderful. It's good to be here," Sturgeon said. "The games are really awesome."

Sturgeon joined SOBC athletes and coaches from around the province in debuting Special Olympics basketball as a BC Games event. Seven teams of athletes ranging in age from 14 to 45 represented their home zones and competed with pride.

"Special Olympics athletes have been part of the BC Summer Games for many years competing in athletics and swimming," said Kelly Mann, President and CEO of the BC Games Society. "We are lucky to work with great organizations like Special Olympics British Columbia who proposed including basketball for the first time at the 2014 BC Winter Games, and we agreed that it would be

SOBC athletes Michael Savage, Daniel Batson, and Jay Prentice on the 2014 BC Games podium.



a great addition to the sport lineup.

After two days of great games at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford, the Vancouver-Squamish Zone 5 and the Fraser River-Delta Zone 4 squad played a nail-biting match on February 23, with the Zone 5 crew emerging victorious by a narrow score of 36-31 to give them gold, and silver for Zone 4.

In the bronze-medal match, the Fraser Valley Zone 3 team defeated the hardworking Vancouver Island-Central Coast Zone 6 squad.

The BC Games experience included great support from fellow athletes, with generic basketball players dropping in to watch the Special Olympics games and meet SOBC athletes.

Racing at the **Nanaimo 2014 BC Summer Games** was "super stupendous and marvellous" for SOBC – Langley athlete Michael Savage. Appropriate sentiments for a winner of four gold medals in the Special Olympics track events!

Savage was one of 35 SOBC athletes who headed to Nanaimo to compete in the BC

Games aquatics and athletics events from July 17 to 20. The group of 14 athletics competitors and 21 swimmers were supported by 10 dedicated SOBC coaches who generously gave their time to help the Special Olympics athletes show their skills.

The SOBC athletes competed alongside nearly 3,000 young athletes from around the province taking part in 19 sporting events.

On the track, Savage impressed with his four gold-medal runs in the 100m, 200m, 400m, and 800m events, including his stellar 100m time of 12.18 seconds.

Reaching the podium at the BC Games "made me joyous," Savage said. "The podium was super awesome and it's a great experience too."

Another stellar competitor was SOBC – Richmond athlete Cullen Yee who swam to the top of the podium six times in his seven events,



SOBC aquatics team members

Photo courtesy of the BC Games



SOBC – Campbell River athlete Michelle Forberg at BC Winter Games.

winning six gold medals and one silver, racing in all four strokes at 50m and 100m distances.

Other leading track and field medal winners were April Armstrong of SOBC – Burnaby, winner of gold in 100m and 200m events and long jump, and earning silver in shot put; fellow SOBC – Burnaby athlete Daniel Batson, winner of two silver and two bronze medals; double gold- and bronze-medal winner Kellie Robertson of SOBC – Surrey; and SOBC – Langley’s Melissa Semke who captured silver in each of the four running events.

In the pool, Aly White of SOBC – Victoria won three gold medals, four silver, and one bronze while SOBC – Cowichan Valley’s Clara Kodweiss won three gold and three bronze and Amanda Schleppe of SOBC – Penticton captured gold, silver, and two bronze.

Another skillful performer in the BC Games pool was SOBC – Delta athlete Courtenay Rekis, fresh off her outstanding swimming at the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games, where she won two silver and three bronze medals. At BC Games Rekis added to her collection by earning two gold medals, three silver, and one fourth-place result.

“I came out to get my best times, have fun and meet great people,” Rekis said, adding that those goals were met. “Everything was just awesome, such friendly people.”

Thirteen of the SOBC athletes at BC Games were also members of Team BC 2014.

On the track, the SOBC athletics competitors had a special experience when generic pentathlete Josh Mitchell from Zone 6 laced up as the third runner for one of the SOBC relay groups, subbing for injured SOBC athlete Jake Hooper, and was declared an honorary team member.

Congrats and thanks to all the SOBC athletes and coaches and to BC Games organizers and volunteers! ○

SOBC Leadership Council update

Special Olympics BC’s **Leadership Council** provides vital guidance for our organization and movement. We salute the significant contributions of its members and were thrilled this year to welcome **Donna Bilous** as the new Region 3 Coordinator, while bidding a grateful farewell to **Jo Osborne** and **Glen Wyse**.

During her 11 years with Special Olympics, Bilous has served as SOBC – Abbotsford Local Coordinator and speed skating and soccer coach. She coached athletes at three Special Olympics Canada Games and three Special Olympics World Games, and served as the medical mission staff member for Team BC 2014 at the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games. Bilous’s daughter Paige Norton is an accomplished SOBC – Abbotsford athlete and her husband Tom Norton is an SOBC – Abbotsford coach and a champion of the BC Law Enforcement Torch Run.

In the spring of 2014, Region 6 Coordinator Osborne retired from SOBC and the Leadership Council after nearly three decades of dedicated volunteer efforts. Osborne has given her time to Special Olympics through many positions over the years, ranging from Local Coordinator and a number of other roles with SOBC – Victoria, to her Leadership Council role as Regional Coordinator for Vancouver Island.

Osborne has also served as Chair of the Provincial Program Council and BC Leadership Council, and held a position with the SOBC Board of Directors. Over Osborne’s many years in SOBC leadership roles, we have benefitted greatly from her efforts in helping shape policy, procedures, and strategic goals. In addition to her valued leadership perspective, Osborne served as a regional team Chef de Mission for more Provincial Games than any other Chef de Mission in the province, and also

supported provincial teams at National Games as both a mission staff member and liaison for Team BC families and friends.

Longtime Special Olympics volunteer, coach, and family member Glen Wyse also stepped down from the Leadership Council in 2014 after providing outstanding guidance and support through his years of service. Wyse has been a valued voice on the Leadership Council and has shared his extensive sport expertise with SOBC in numerous roles, including support of Provincial Games events, provincial teams for National Games, and development of floor hockey coaching and officiating.

Comprised of the Regional Coordinators representing the eight SOBC Regions and respected leaders in the SOBC sport world, the council serves as the link between community and regional programs and the Board of Directors of Special Olympics BC. This group plays an important role in helping chart the course of SOBC sport program development, strategic plans, policies, and resources. ○

SOBC Leadership Council

Leadership Chair: Patty Wheeldon

Regional Coordinators:

Sheila Hawton (Region 1)
Sue Foisy (Region 2)
Donna Bilous (Region 3)
Barb Tull (Region 4)
Darren Inouye (Region 5)
Tina Readman (Region 7)
Sandra Galletti (Region 8)

Members:

Deanna Eckstein
James Sutherland
Matthew Williams

Thank you!

Grants, foundations, and donor update

Special Olympics BC thanks the following foundations, corporations, and individuals for their generous grants to assist us in supporting B.C.’s Special Olympics athletes.

- Agnico Eagle
- George Weston Ltd.
- RBC Foundation
- Westminster Savings Foundation
- Ali Pejman
- Hamber Foundation
- Ted Hirst
- Yamana Gold
- B2Gold
- Michael Campbell
- ViaSport

In-kind gifts

Special Olympics BC would like to thank the following companies for their in-kind gifts:

- Deal II Productions Inc. for donating furniture to the SOBC office.
- Park’N Fly for helping us with airport parking needs.

If you would like to donate to Special Olympics BC, please contact the Provincial Office at **604-737-3078** or by email at **info@specialolympics.bc.ca**.

Athlete Leadership and youth conferences empower

Special Olympics BC athletes benefitted from two great **Athlete Leadership** program opportunities in 2014, with the first Western Canada Athlete Leadership University hosted in Vancouver in January and the second event of the year bringing together athletes and SOBC's **Youth Activation Council**.

While athletes already gain great confidence and empowerment through sport, Special Olympics Athlete Leadership programs offer another avenue for athletes to build their speaking and leadership skills and become leaders and spokespeople respected in their communities.

Thanks to great participation from 45 athletes, mentors, and trainers, the first-ever **Western Canada Athlete Leadership University** in January 2014 was an outstanding experience.

Hosted by Special Olympics Canada and Special Olympics BC in Vancouver, the event involved participants from all over Alberta, B.C., Manitoba, the Northwest Territories, and Saskatchewan. The opportunity was made possible with vital support from the Christmas Records Trust, Special Olympics Canada, and Special Olympics International.

SOBC – Comox Valley athlete Jake Hooper participated in the event's Governance and



Western Canada Athlete Leadership University



Athlete Leadership and YAC participants

Social Media/Media track, and found the whole experience to be valuable and fun.

"I've liked it all. I've enjoyed meeting everyone, learning all these new things. It's all been really fun," he said.

Athlete Leadership conferences include workshops in governance, public speaking, and social media.

The **SOBC Athlete Leadership & YAC Conference** in Richmond in November 2014 brought together both SOBC Athlete

Leadership and YAC participants for the first time for a weekend of skill-development, idea-sharing, and inspiration.

The vision of YAC is to create a network of youth leaders who come together to share their ideas and inspiration and then return to their communities energized to champion Special Olympics and ready to take on new projects with help and resources from SOBC and other youth.

In the past, SOBC's AL and YAC sessions have been held separately. This year the 26 Athlete Leadership and 19 YAC participants from across B.C. and several from Alberta got to meet and mingle, learn from each other, and participate in a shared video workshop together. They also took part in separate training and discussion sessions.

"This has helped my confidence a lot," said SOBC – Fort St. John athlete Sheryl Jakubowski, who completed the Athlete Governance course. "There were a lot of things I wasn't aware of and now I know how to deal with issues better and can take this back to my community."

YAC participant Olivia Typusiak, who is also an SOBC – Kelowna basketball coach, came away from the conference feeling empowered to advocate for Special Olympics.

"It's been really awesome!" Typusiak said. "I liked all the presentations and learning that I can take something like Special Olympics and make it bigger in my community—going into schools, making videos, and raising awareness." ○

SOBC flies high with Pacific Coastal Airlines

For staff, volunteers, and athletes of Special Olympics BC, the cost of flying to an event or function could be prohibitive. Fortunately for us, we have the generous support of **Pacific Coastal Airlines**.

Throughout the year, Pacific Coastal Airlines provides air travel for our athletes and coaches to attend events all over the province, including the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games in Vancouver, and Performance

Project camps and Athlete Leadership conferences.

Quentin Smith, President and CEO of Pacific Coastal Airlines, has supported SOBC for many years. He has attended our fundraising events and provided significant support by donating highly valued travel packages as auction items.

SOBC is honoured, proud, and grateful to be supported by Quentin and Pacific Coastal Airlines.



Pacific Coastal Airlines has operated for over 30 years and flies to 15 communities in B.C. Make sure to check out their schedule if you're flying to a community they service. ○

2015 SOBC Winter Games coming to Kamloops in February



The **2015 Special Olympics BC Winter Games** will bring together more than 600 athletes from all over the province to compete with determination and pride in Kamloops February 19 to 21, 2015.

The Games will feature athletes going for gold in the seven SOBC winter sports: alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, curling, figure skating, floor hockey, snowshoeing, and speed skating.

SOBC athletes around the province competed in the 2014 Regional Qualifiers in these sports to earn coveted Provincial Games

berths. In Kamloops, athletes will compete for the chance to advance to the 2016 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, where the participants will seek to advance to the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria.

The curling, figure skating, and speed skating events will be hosted at McArthur Island Sport and Event Centre, and floor hockey events will be held in School District #73 schools. The alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing events will be hosted at Sun Peaks Resort. The Games will kick off

with the Opening Ceremony on the evening of February 19 at the Tournament Capital Centre, where all the teams will get to march in proudly and be welcomed to Kamloops.

There has been a long history of support for Special Olympics in Kamloops, as it was one of the first communities in B.C. to start offering Special Olympics programs, beginning in 1983. SOBC athletes are training hard and excited about the prospect of competing in Kamloops.

"At Provincial Games, I meet lots of new friends, and I feel proud because I worked so hard for it. It's a different and great experience," says Games-bound SOBC – Kamloops curler Megan Gourley. "It's so exciting to compete in Provincial Games here in my hometown. I've never done that before. I hope lots of people will come out to volunteer with the events and cheer us on!"

The generous support of local and provincial sponsors will help ensure SOBC's 2015 Provincial Games will be a huge success as the event returns to Kamloops for the first time in 12 years.

"Special Olympics really focuses on the athlete experience, and we are fortunate that some incredible local sponsors have stepped forward to help us provide an outstanding event for the athletes and their coaches who will compete here in Kamloops," says Pat Davis, 2015 SOBC Winter Games Chair.

Learn more: <http://sobcgameskamloops.ca> ○



SOBC – Kamloops curler Megan Gourley and 2015 SOBC Games Chair Pat Davis (right) present Kamloops Mayor Peter Milobar with an SOBC flag to fly at the Tournament Capital Centre until the Games.

Successful Progress Club summer events support SOBC

The **Canadian Progress Club of Greater Vancouver** is a long-standing supporter of Special Olympics BC, and we're so grateful for their annual summer fundraisers. The **Plywood Cup** set sail on the waters of Vancouver's False Creek on June 14, with teams raising funds and competing to build floatable vessels, using little more than plywood and nails, to race. The event was a great time for all and raised \$6,500 for SOBC.

The **19th Annual Slo-Pitch Tournament** held in North Vancouver in July was a unique



event that once again emphasized overall participation, sportsmanship, and fun. The tournament raised \$13,000 thanks to the 10 teams who took part. The top individual fundraiser brought in more than \$2,000 for SOBC and the top team raised more than \$4,000.

Our thanks to the Progress Club and all the generous Plywood Cup and softball teams and donors! And thanks again to the Progress Club for providing additional financial and volunteer support throughout the year. ○





SPORTS CELEBRITIES FESTIVAL

PRESENTED BY

SILVER WHEATON™



Making a difference with the Sports Celebrities Festival

In the words of Special Olympics BC – Surrey athlete Kristina Ettema, the **2014 Sports Celebrities Festival presented by Silver Wheaton** was “the awesomest night ever.”

Ettema, an international champion in alpine skiing and national medallist in swimming and curling, served as the event’s keynote speaker alongside Vancouver Canucks forward Chris Higgins, whose sister is a longtime Special Olympics athlete. She was thrilled to have the opportunity to share her perspective on Special Olympics and spend time with the gala supporters and celebrities.

“When people see people with disabilities

competing at Special Olympics Games, they understand more. They understand we can do the things other people can do too,” Ettema said in her inspiring speech. “We’re all equal. Everyone does what they can, and everyone has their own individual talents.”

After Ettema spoke, one of the event guests took the time to tell her that her words “made a big difference.”

Over the last 16 years, the Sports Celebrities Festival presented by Silver Wheaton has had a significant impact for its charitable causes. The event has raised more than \$3.2 million to support the life-changing work of the Canucks

for Kids Fund and Special Olympics BC. The funds help empower athletes with intellectual disabilities to gain confidence, acceptance, and pride through sport, and also provide vital opportunities, resources and much-needed care to children and families throughout B.C.

In addition to the important financial support, this event creates many inspiring and empowering moments like those created and experienced by Ettema. Bringing together B.C.’s leading sports celebrities, significant sponsors, and more than 600 generous attendees, the Sports Celebrities Festival forms a powerful demonstration of respect





and inclusion for Special Olympics athletes with intellectual disabilities, and of the power of sport to make a difference as the Canucks for Kids Fund does day in and day out. When these important people come together in support of these two causes, it makes a stirring statement.

This year's gala saw the entire Vancouver Canucks roster come out in style along with alumni, coaches, and management; members of the BC Lions gave their time to the event with the playoffs fast approaching; Vancouver Whitecaps FC icons represented their club after its record-breaking season; Olympic ski cross champion Ashleigh DeMerit and fitness expert and BC Lions alumnus Tommy Europe brought added star power. And the roster of SOBC athletes who took part in the SCF also included several members of Special Olympics Team Canada who are gearing up for the 2015

Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles.

Amid all the star power, Ettema stood out with her heartfelt words.

"Special Olympics makes me so happy. You get huge confidence with Special Olympics, and I feel like I am part of a team, part of a family. I'm so grateful for all the things I've been able to do and all the people I've met," she said. "Thank you all so much for coming tonight and helping make all of this possible."

Higgins too knows the impact of Special Olympics, having seen his sister Jeanne grow so much as an athlete and a person through her years as a Special Olympics athlete in New York, their hometown.

"It's inspiring, personally from watching my sister, I know about their competitiveness and passion for their sports, it's something that it rarely matched in pro hockey," said Higgins. "I

take inspiration from these athletes, it means everything to me."

The event also featured CTV Vancouver's Tamara Taggart and Canucks play-caller John Shorthouse as MCs, Brent Butt entertaining with his standup set, and Cody Karey impressing with his vocal talents. Throughout the night, guests also bid on auctions and enjoyed games and activities while mingling with the celebrities, and CTV and TSN Radio conducted live broadcasting from the event. ○

Thank you to the supporters of the 2014 Sports Celebrities Festival

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Knights of Columbus run sweet campaign for Special Olympics

Members of the **Knights of Columbus** do a great deal to assist people with intellectual disabilities, and one of their major initiatives in B.C. in 2013-14 was the Campaign for People with Intellectual Disabilities in support of Special Olympics BC.

Throughout this campaign, the Knights distributed specially marked Tootsie Rolls in exchange for donations to support SOBC programs and help improve the quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities.

This year BC/Yukon Knights of Columbus have donated more than \$18,000 to SOBC provincially and in local communities. They also recently welcomed SOBC – Richmond Athlete Representative Salaudin and coach Derrick to speak about Special Olympics in front of the significant gathering of Knights in the 103rd BC & Yukon State Council Meeting.

The Knights of Columbus are a valued Special Olympics International partner and we appreciate their support here in B.C. ○



Salaudin and Derrick of SOBC – Richmond with SOBC staff Charlotte and Knights of Columbus BC & Yukon State Director John Sokolowski.

Lacing up for Special Olympics with the Scotiabank Vancouver Half-Marathon & 5K

Congratulations and thanks to the 22 runners who pounded the pavement to support Special Olympics BC through the **Scotiabank Vancouver Half-Marathon & 5k** in June 2014! These participants ran the half-marathon or five-kilometre distances and raised funds and awareness for Special Olympics at the popular event.

SOBC – Coquitlam athlete Mandy Manzardo originally signed up for the SVHM five-km run

as another opportunity to practice for the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games, where she competed in athletics. But her aim to raise \$150 for her Local quickly became another great reason to take part.

An accomplished athlete who qualified to advance to the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games, Manzardo gives her time to many fundraising events for Special Olympics and she smashed her target for the

SVHM. She raised more than \$500 for SOBC – Coquitlam.

"I've found fundraising quite easy and have mainly asked my family and neighbours for donations," she says. "I ask people for donations by just simply saying what I am doing and if they would like to support this awesome cause."

Thank you to all the runners and donors who took part in support of SOBC! ○



Growing provincial sport opportunities

Special Olympics BC is fortunate to have fantastic support from fellow provincial sport organizations, helping create and expand opportunities for athletes in their training and competing all over B.C.

Basketball BC helps SOBC create many opportunities in this fast-growing sport. They support our athletes competing at events such as the BC Winter Games, look for opportunities to include SOBC athletes in their events such as the Steve Nash Youth Basketball Challenge, and generously keep SOBC top of mind for new opportunities, such as staging a Special Olympics basketball Try It Day around Sports Day in Canada this year.

BC Soccer gives significant support to SOBC athletes and programs, helping open doors and always looking for extra opportunities for our athletes to compete. This year they invited the Team BC soccer squad from SOBC – Mission and a talented SOBC – Abbotsford team to play a showcase match at their Adult Provincial Cup Finals in Burnaby, and they regularly seek to involve SOBC teams in their provincial championships. They have also helped connect SOBC with other organizations and opportunities in the sport.

Like basketball, Special Olympics golf made its debut at the National Games level at the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games in Vancouver, and continues to grow around the province. SOBC is fortunate to have great support from **British Columbia Golf** in building and promoting programs and growth around the province. In Region 1 alone, there are golf programs now in Golden, Elk Valley, Kimberley/Cranbrook, Trail, Castlegar, Nakusp, and Invermere, and both Creston and Nelson are planning to start up programs in the next year.

In Region 2, SOBC – Vernon has a fantastic golf program with a popular annual tournament, SOBC – Kelowna is now offering two levels in its golf program, and Kamloops is continuing its program. Region 8 is also showing its love for the game—both Fort St. John and Quesnel have huge golf programs now, having doubled in size over the last year.

SOBC is fortunate to work with champions such as Mario Lam of the **BC Rhythmic Gymnastics Federation** and Bob Hindley and Joe Oliveira of the **British Columbia Powerlifting Association**. Lam is a huge supporter of Special Olympics athletes and



Mario Lam of the BCRGF (second from right) with the Team BC 2014 rhythmic gymnastics athletes, coaches, and mission staff.

programs, providing both hands-on and consultative support. Lam worked extensively with Team BC 2014 athletes and coaches at training camps and throughout the training process. He also served as the sport official for the 2014 National Games, and continues to work with SOBC to develop the sport. The BCRGF also assists with officials for SOBC events.

Oliveira, Hindley, and the BCPA are very supportive of Special Olympics athletes and competitive opportunities. Oliveira and Hindley served as the powerlifting technical directors for the 2014 National Games, and helped Team BC athletes and coaches train for the competition. They always seek to include SOBC athletes in their own competitions.

2014 also saw them host a key workshop to support SOBC powerlifting coaches in their development.

Other provincial sport organizations generously help SOBC by sharing communications with their members and supporting SOBC athletes and coaches in opportunities with their organizations, such as Curl BC, BC Alpine, the BC Speed Skating Association, and Skate Canada British Columbia/Yukon. These attitudes and opportunities play a critical part in giving Special Olympics athletes the chance to grow in their sports, health, confidence, and pride. We are so grateful for all the support and look forward to further growth in 2015. ○

Team BC athlete Ethan Mountain's star turn

On the journey to the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games, Team BC track and field athlete Ethan Mountain of SOBC – Surrey was selected to be featured on TSN SportsCentre as a Powerade 24 athlete who has powered through so many obstacles. Mountain, his coach Deborah Carter, and his mother Natasha and stepfather Ryan spoke movingly in the inspirational segment: <http://www.tsn.ca/video/powerade-24-ethan-mountain-1.31929>

Coca-Cola Canada has become a new national partner of Special Olympics Canada. Coca-Cola brands include Powerade, Dasani, Fruitopia, and much more.



Ryan, Ethan, and Natasha Mountain receiving a standing ovation from the 720 guests at Special Olympics Canada's LIMITLESS gala in November 2014.

In November 2014, Nat Mountain inspired a large star-studded crowd as the keynote speaker at the Special Olympics Canada 2014 LIMITLESS gala. The below is excerpted from her moving speech:

"Ethan began track and field with Special Olympics a few months post-surgery and, as they say, 'The rest is history.' Our connection with the SOBC – Surrey chapter has been the catalyst for Ethan's independence. ...

"We are so thankful, so grateful that Ethan was able to stand on the very top of a podium at National Games this past summer and bask in his hard-earned success, but as big a highlight as that was for all the Go Ethan fans out there, our true joy came from watching Ethan reach down to his competitor, tap him and take his hand so that all three medalists could share one unified celebration of achievement.

"This was our defining moment- every second after that is a time where our son has made a connection, has experienced success wholeheartedly, has been justified in his determination and cheered on by people who celebrate and share in his success. THIS is what Special Olympics means to us." ○

Deborah Carter

Universities going to bat for SOBC

Post-secondary institutions are seeking out ways to support Special Olympics BC in sport, fundraising, and awareness initiatives, making a difference for athletes with intellectual disabilities and helping build a more respectful, inclusive world.

SOBC is fortunate to have support from the **University of British Columbia** and many members of its community in a wide variety of ways, including the efforts of UBC students playing a significant role in our Healthy Athletes Screening Days in Vancouver and Kelowna as well as other Healthy Athletes initiatives.

UBC was a remarkable host venue for the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games, providing high-quality, compact facilities and a warm welcome for the athletes and coaches from across the country. They worked hard to make sure the UBC community had a chance to be a part of the experience, involving numerous departments in Special Olympics-related projects and research and spreading the word widely so many UBC volunteers could get involved.

Several of the students who got involved with the 2014 Games also plan on continuing to support individuals with intellectual disabilities, founding a club called BUILD (Building Understanding of Intellectual Disabilities) to undertake awareness and engagement initiatives.

Students at the **UBC Okanagan campus** in Kelowna are also sharing their skills with SOBC and gaining valuable experience along the way.

With the help of staff and faculty, students from disciplines such as Medicine, Nursing, and Human Kinetics, and from the UBC Okanagan Heat athletic teams have enthusiastically worked with local SOBC athletes at the Healthy Athletes Screening Day in Kelowna, in the Team BC training and functional testing, and in nutrition sessions. They find they are getting out of it as much as they give.

"You can show up tired, sick, stressed out, or annoyed, and the positive energy from these

athletes spreads to you, and before you know it you are happily motivating an athlete to hold their plank position for five more seconds, or to do one more lunge," says Trish Metro, captain of the UBCO Heat cross-country team. "We benefit from their success, their pride, and their achievements. We benefit from their infectious laughter and banter and lightheartedness. We benefit every time we walk through the doors."

Simon Fraser University has opened its doors to serve as a venue for many SOBC sport events, and experts from the SFU Clan's Strength & Conditioning department, led by speed coach and sports performance consultant Derek Hansen, now give their time to help in a number of Performance Program camps, helping enhance the training and opportunities for SOBC athletes and coaches. Other student groups such as SFU Team Up and the Kappa Beta Gamma sorority are generously getting involved with Special Olympics by raising funds and supporting awareness initiatives such as the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign.

More opportunities are growing around the province, such as the **Trinity Western University** Spartans basketball teams who have gotten extensively involved with helping local basketball athletes and coaches. Women's Head Coach Cheryl-Jean-Paul has been a huge help in offering hands-on training and led Team BC 2014 training camp sessions; she also went above and beyond by serving as the basketball sport manager at the 2014 National Games. In November, the TWU Spartans basketball teams featured great Special Olympics squads from Langley and Surrey in halftime scrimmaging during their games. They recognized the athletes who medalled at the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games, and gave the teams a great platform to show their skills.

SOBC appreciates the generous support and looks forward to building more relationships and opportunities to benefit athletes and programs province-wide. ○

Staff update

2014 has been a year of exciting changes for the Special Olympics BC staff team!

By now many of you are familiar with Office Administrator **Lauren Openshaw**, a wonderful addition who joined SOBC in January. The fundraising team was thrilled to welcome two Managers, Fund Development, in February with **Carolyn McCarthy**, new Law Enforcement Torch Run Liaison, and **Charlotte Taylor**. Charlotte took on the portfolios of **Jasmine Allen** and **Courtenay Wood** while they were on maternity leave, and she will stay on as Jasmine has moved into a new opportunity.

We also welcomed several new staff members in September. With **Cyra Frisk** on maternity leave, we were pleased to welcome **Jill Harris** as Manager, Community Development, for Region 1. Jill recently completed her degree at the University of Victoria and became Program Coordinator for SOBC – Nelson in her hometown, so she is already familiar with the wonderful world of Special Olympics!

We bid a fond farewell to **Joanna Verweel** after the 2014 National Games as she moved back to Ontario with her fiancé—now husband! We are fortunate to have **Morgan Hunter** taking on the Manager, Health and Sport Science position. While completing her bachelor's degree in human kinetics at UBC Okanagan, Morgan hosted popular nutrition sessions for SOBC athletes and helped with functional testing for athletes in the area.

With **Bobby Debrone** pursuing a new opportunity on Vancouver Island, we are excited to have **Michelle Cruickshank** taking on the Region 6 Manager, Community Development position. Michelle has a degree in therapeutic recreation and recreation management, and worked for eight years providing therapeutic recreation to seniors. ○



Team BC 2014 and UBC Thunderbirds athletes made an amazing team at UBC's popular annual Storm the Wall event.

Young athletes blossom in growing SOBC youth programs

 **GOLDCORP**

Canada 



Special Olympics **youth programs** continue to grow in B.C., giving children and youth with intellectual disabilities the chance to learn vital skills, become more active, and have a whole lot of fun.

Since 2011, the number of Special Olympics BC youth programs around the province has more than doubled, growing from 30 to 78. In 2014, almost 900 children with intellectual disabilities were taking part in the 23 **Active Start**, 30 **FUNDamentals**, and 25 **Sport Start** programs offered by SOBC Locals.

Active Start teaches kids ages two to six vital motor skills, and FUNDamentals helps youth ages seven to 11 transition to basic sport skills in a fun and supportive environment. Sport Start is for youth with intellectual disabilities ages 12 to 18 and focuses on sport-specific development.

Children with intellectual disabilities often get left on the sidelines in traditional sport

programs. With Special Olympics, they thrive.

In SOBC – Smithers, program volunteer Anita Clegg said that youth programming fills a need for the community’s children with intellectual disabilities.

“I worked as a Supported Child Development consultant with a group of children who really needed exposure to movement and music, and integration into the community at large,” Clegg said. “These were four- and five-year-olds with a variety of needs.”

She said they’ve seen wonderful development in the young participants in the SOBC – Smithers program, describing how a four-year-old boy who was almost non-verbal came to life.


“He was an amazing dancer, moved to music, and even though he was extremely shy, was able to be the leader one day in the group,” Clegg said. His parents were amazed and thrilled at how their son was blossoming.



SOBC is reaching out to more children with intellectual disabilities and their families and caregivers through events such as the annual **SOBC Youth Sports Day**, which was hosted in May 2014 once again at EA Sports in Burnaby. The event was a great success, with more than 55 children with intellectual disabilities participating.

Youth programming is part of SOBC’s Long Term Athlete Development plan for young people with intellectual disabilities, aiming to get kids involved at a young age and inspire them to stay active their whole lives.

SOBC – Langley athletes Josh and Jaykob Low are two of a growing number of athletes who have come up through youth programming to find success in traditional SOBC programs and competitions and live a healthy lifestyle.

Josh Low endured multiple heart surgeries and survived cancer as a child. He started participating in SOBC youth programs and has gone to qualify for Special Olympics Team Canada in swimming. Jaykob Low followed his brother into Special Olympics as a child and went on to help his Langley team win silver in softball at the 2014 National Games. 

Cheering on SOBC athletes bound for 2015 Canada Games

The Canada Games are coming to Prince George next February, and four Special Olympics BC figure skaters are preparing to be part of the action.

From February 13 until March 1, the **2015 Canada Winter Games** will bring together thousands of athletes, coaches, volunteers, media, and visitors in what is the largest and most prestigious multi-sport competition for young Canadian athletes.

Please join us in congratulating SOBC – Surrey athlete Stephanie Divin, SOBC – Richmond athlete Matthew Lai, SOBC – Vancouver athlete Eric Pahima, and SOBC – Victoria athlete Emily Walzak for being

selected to compete at the Canada Games based on their qualifications and their performances over the 2013-14 sport season. We wish them the best of luck!

“The Canada Games are an amazing opportunity for our athletes to showcase their abilities and dedication to sport to the rest of the sport world,” says Shawn Fevens, SOBC Manager, Sport. “The 2015 Canada Winter Games will be extra special in that they are being hosted in our province, which will hopefully give our athletes a bit of home-field advantage!”

The figure skating competitions will take place February 23 to 26.



Prince George will be the first city in British Columbia to host a winter edition of the Canada Games. Together with the Official Host First Nation, the Lheidli T’enneh, they will extend a heartfelt welcome to athletes competing to become Canada’s next champions.

Learn more at www.canadagames2015.ca

Spreading the word to end the word

Special Olympics BC joins the **Spread the Word to End the Word** campaign in calling on everyone to stop saying the R-word, “retard(ed).”

Language affects attitudes and attitudes affect actions, so this is a strong starting point toward creating more accepting attitudes and communities for all people. Check out r-word.org and pledge today to use respectful, people-first language.

On March 5, 2014, the sixth annual Spread the Word to End the Word awareness day saw a huge wave of support calling attention to the campaign to end the use of the R-word and promote respect and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities.

Thanks to the powerful, positive posts and events by supporters, the campaign exceeded its goal of attaining 50,000 new pledges to end the r-word. The awareness day action resulted in more than 90 million Twitter impressions on the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign handles, 11,500 new Facebook followers on End the Word, nearly 9,000 Instagram posts with the #SpreadTheWordToEndTheWord hashtag, more than 150 new stories shared on r-word.org, and hundreds of events staged in support of the cause.

SOBC reached out to several of the outstanding celebrities and champions of our cause to ask for their help in raising



awareness about the campaign, and we were so grateful for their responses. The Canucks for Kids Fund, Vancouver Canucks, Jay DeMerit, Vancouver Whitecaps FC, Marco Iannuzzi of the BC Lions, and CTV Vancouver anchor Tamara Taggart all took the time to share calls to end the R-word on their social media accounts, as did our friends at the BC Rhythmic Gymnastics Federation, SOBC – Kelowna volunteer Greg Mather and his colleagues in the UBC Okanagan Campus Life office, and members of the Kappa Beta Gamma sorority at Simon Fraser University.

We're grateful to all of these supporters, and to everyone who took the time to share this call for respect and dignity!

In fall 2014, our friends at **motionball** launched their **YELLOWCARD** campaign to call on Canadians to pledge to stop using the R-word and raise a proverbial yellow card when others use it.

On October 1, **motionball** hosted the first annual YELLOWCARD Day with a star-studded party in Toronto to kick off the campaign and inspire thousands of Canadians to pledge to end the R-word. Learn more and take the pledge: r-word.org and motionball.com/yellowcard.

2014 anniversary celebrations for SOBC Locals

Special Olympics BC is so fortunate to have incredible athletes and volunteers in 57 communities around the province. While we continue to grow, and have some very exciting new developments coming up on the horizon, we are continually grateful for the long-standing volunteer dedication that makes programs possible all over B.C.

Each year, SOBC recognizes the Locals who are marking anniversary seasons, testament to their inspiring ongoing dedication to helping athletes and being part of this incredible movement. We would like to share these anniversary celebrations so everyone can join in recognizing the achievements of these Locals!

In 2014, the following Locals marked anniversary years:

Happy 30th anniversary – established in 1984

- SOBC – Campbell River
- SOBC – Coquitlam
- SOBC – Delta
- SOBC – Nelson
- SOBC – North Shore
- SOBC – Port Alberni
- SOBC – Surrey
- SOBC – Terrace
- SOBC – Vancouver
- SOBC – Vernon
- SOBC – Victoria

Happy 25th anniversary – established in 1989

- SOBC – Grand Forks
- SOBC – Mission

Happy 20th anniversary – established in 1994

- SOBC – Cowichan Valley
- SOBC – Kitimat
- SOBC – Sunshine Coast

Happy 15th anniversary – established in 1999

- SOBC – Burns Lake

Happy 10th anniversary – established in 2004

- SOBC – Golden

Happy 5th anniversary – established in 2009

- SOBC – Nakusp

Thank you to all the athletes and volunteers who continue to make SOBC and their local programs so inspiring, heartwarming, and fun—so truly remarkable. Check out SOBC's website for the 2015 celebrations. ○

Signature Authentics seals their support for Special Olympics

Signature Authentics supports Special Olympics across the country and right here in British Columbia. Originally a Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games sponsor, Signature Authentics raises funds through sealed-bid auctions in multiple locations, and support generated in this province now goes to Special Olympics BC initiatives.

Signature Authentics started in 1993, primarily as an art publisher and distributor. With the success of the Toronto sports franchises at that time, SA created and distributed limited editions of authentically autographed Blue Jays and Maple Leafs art prints. Now, with nearly 19 years in the industry and having had the privilege to



Easel Auction Partners

work with sports icons like Wayne Gretzky, Maurice Richard, Gordie Howe, and many more, Signature Authentics has become one of the most respected names in the sports memorabilia and marketing business.

Our thanks to Signature Authentics for their support, and to all those who bid in their sealed auctions. ○

Great progress made with Performance Program

Special Olympics BC's innovative **Performance Program** is producing great results among the athletes and coaches who have participated in the aquatics, athletics, and speed skating camps to date, as well as the members of the Team BC 2014 and competitors at the 2014 Snow Sports Festival Regional Qualifiers who have worked with Performance Program tools and techniques.

The March 2014 speed skating camp with world-class expert Jacques Thibault was another hit. Thibault took the time to work with the athletes and coaches from Abbotsford, Coquitlam, Mission, Vancouver, and Victoria on critical fundamental skills and technique. The session also helped develop a plan to target the athletes and coaches in tiers to give them more specific, focused work one-on-one with experts that will help see great changes over the next two years.

Thibault, who is giving a great deal of time to the Performance Program along with the Allinger Consulting International team, is a significant figure in the speed skating world as a former national team coach and Olympian, former Olympic Oval General Manager, and member of the Speed Skating Canada Hall of Fame. He is choosing to help SOBC athletes and coaches because he loves empowering athletes to be their very best.

"I'm involved in the Performance Program because I am always amazed at how good athletes can be when placed in the right environment," Thibault said.

Team BC 2014 athletes and coaches excelled at the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games in Vancouver after being supported

by Performance Program tools, techniques, resources, and experts throughout their training. Functional testing showed the team members made significant improvements in skills, strength, and health through the training process; the athletes collectively lost 489 pounds in their first five months of training. Team BC went on to win 288 medals in the 11 National Games sports.

Dedicated Team BC 2014 track and field athlete Kellie Robertson of SOBC – Surrey made huge strides during her training, losing more than 30 pounds while sticking to a strict exercise and eating schedule that included training six days a week and working on Team BC strengthening and corrective exercises at home. In other specialized tests of her fitness and functional ability, Robertson showed equally impressive improvements in key areas for athletics competitors, including her core and lower body strength and her balance.

2014 wrapped up with three more Performance Program camps in November and December. At the November camp, alpine and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing coaches picked up more tools and techniques to help their athletes with dryland and sport-specific training, mental performance, and nutrition. In December, 31 of the SOBC snow sports athletes who will compete at the 2015 Provincial Games headed to Kamloops for a camp at Sun Peaks Resort, taking part in on-snow sport-specific training and sessions in key performance areas such as mental training, nutrition, and creation of



SOBC powerlifting coaches training with Joe Oliveira and Bob Hindley of the British Columbia Powerlifting Association.

training plans. And powerlifting coaches from around the province came together for a day of training at the Richmond Oval where they worked with experts from the British Columbia Powerlifting Association, developing their skills and learning to lead training for the squat event.

Check out SOBC's website for Performance Program resources and stories from upcoming initiatives.

The Performance Program aims to give SOBC athletes and coaches a richer experience in a high-performance sport environment, growing together with more tools and techniques to help them be at their best.

Working with the world-class sport experts on the Allinger Consulting International team, SOBC athletes and coaches in the Performance Program are making use of elite sport science and sport medicine expertise and valuable new technological tools. Those who participate in Performance Program events bring home the important new lessons and technology to share with local athletes and coaches so that everyone can benefit from these ideas and resources. ○



SOBC – Vernon cross-country skiing coach Dudley Coulter tuning up skills on wheels at the November Performance Program training camp.



Participants in the March 2014 Performance Program speed skating camp.

SOBC athletes, volunteers, and supporters honoured locally and nationally

We're very pleased to congratulate and celebrate Special Olympics members and supporters who were recognized in 2014 with awards for their significant contributions to Special Olympics, sport, and community!

- Heartfelt congratulations to all the winners of the Special Olympics Canada 2014 National Awards, including **Glen Ellison** of Special Olympics BC – Richmond, winner of the national Male Coach of the Year award, and Harry “Red” Foster Award winner **Bob Nicholson** of the Wizard Foundation, who helped bring the NFL Fantasy Football Charity Dinner and Draft to Vancouver this year!
- Several fantastic Special Olympics BC volunteers deservedly received Sport BC Community Sport Hero Awards in their

communities. SOBC – Kelowna coach **Ken Saunders** was recognized for his dedication to his athletes and local programming. SOBC – Kelowna coaches **Wulf and Joan Gerhardt** were honoured in West Kelowna for their outstanding work in cross-country skiing.


- SOBC – Nelson volunteers **Bill and Joan Woikin** received the Nelson Regional Sports Council Community Sport Hero Award for their long-



Glen Ellison (left) receiving the national Male Coach of the Year Award.

Julie Heather

- term efforts on behalf of Special Olympics.
- Hardworking SOBC – Richmond athlete **Matthew Lai** was named winner of the Special Olympics athlete award at the Richmond Sports Awards.
- Dedicated young SOBC – North Shore coach and volunteer **Emma Clark** won the District of North Vancouver Youth Community Enhancement Award.
- SOBC – Castlegar Registration Coordinator **Kris Stanbra** earned the Coast Mental Health Courage to Come Back Award in the physical rehabilitation category.
- **Jordynn Denness**, an inspirational 17-year-old SOBC – Surrey basketball coach, won the Overcoming Adversity Award at Surrey's SASSY Awards recognizing local youth.

Congratulations to these deserving winners, and to all of the members of the SOBC family who have been recognized in their own communities this year whom we may have missed! We love to hear about and celebrate your achievements—please forward stories to: megan@specialolympics.bc.ca 

NFL fans support Special Olympics BC in Fantasy Draft

The first-ever **NFL Fantasy Football Charity Dinner & Draft** in Vancouver was a huge hit in support of Special Olympics BC, raising \$40,000 and proving to be exciting and fun for all participants.

This joint initiative between **NFL Canada** and the **Wizard Foundation** was held in September, the night after the Seahawks celebrated the NFL kickoff and was led by Honorary Chair Greg Keith of the Dueck Auto Group.

The evening included great fun for all teams, exciting appearances by the legendary Joe Montana and Marshall Faulk, and SOBC – Langley athlete and Global Messenger Matthew Williams earning a standing ovation from all the participants and stars in attendance. The event also featured a silent auction with plenty of great collector items.

NFL Canada and the Wizard Foundation have worked together since 2003 to raise \$675,000 For Special Olympics. We are so grateful for the generous support from Bob Nicholson and the Wizard Foundation, NFL Canada, the Seattle Seahawks, and Honorary Chair Greg Keith in successfully bringing this event to Vancouver to help Special Olympics.

Plans have already started for next year's exciting fundraising events. Stay tuned to our website for details:

www.specialolympics.bc.ca 



BC Law Enforcement Torch Run

Torch Run, National Final Leg runners spread message of inclusion



The torch was heavy but hearts were light as members of the **Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg** team took to the streets of the Lower Mainland for an exhilarating four days of running toward the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games, raising funds and awareness for Special Olympics.

"It was fantastic. The community support was amazing," said Final Leg runner Jordon Prokuda, a Border Services Officer with the Canada Border Services Agency who works at the Peace Arch border crossing in Surrey.

The July 5 to 8 event was the first national Final Leg run in B.C. in 24 years, with runners carrying the Flame of Hope that would light the cauldron at the Opening Ceremony of the National Games in Vancouver. This very special Torch Run brought together 25 law enforcement members and two Special Olympics athletes from across the country to run 45 kilometres through 15 communities, spreading an inspiring message of inclusion and respect.

On the team were 14 B.C. runners from

municipal police departments, the RCMP, CBSA, Correctional Service of Canada, and Military Flight Police. Also part of the team was Special Olympics BC – Delta athlete Kim Davies.

As the Final Leg team ran through the Lower Mainland, more than 400 law enforcement members came out to join in the run in their communities along with SOBC athletes.

"I love when we clear a space for the athletes in the middle, and they're so proud to be there and so excited," said Final Leg runner Rogine Battel, a Support Services Supervisor with the Mission RCMP. "And I love chatting with them along the way to find out what sports they're doing. They're always so proud of their sport and it's just infectious."

Participating agencies included the Abbotsford, Delta, New Westminster, Port Moody, and Vancouver police departments, RCMP detachments throughout the Lower Mainland, Metro Vancouver Transit Police, CBSA, Military Police, CSC, and the Justice Institute of British Columbia.

Law enforcement agencies on Vancouver

Island hosted terrific Torch Run events in June 2014. In Greater Victoria, 75 runners from the Saanich, Victoria, and Oak Bay police departments and the Military Police Unit in Esquimalt laced up along with Special Olympics BC athletes to run the Galloping Goose Trail in support of SOBC. And more than 100 supporters participated in the five-kilometre Nanaimo run, which was organized by the Nanaimo RCMP and involved members of the Military Police and Sheriff's Office.

In October 2015 the Kamloops RCMP hosted their second annual Bridging the Gap Run in support of SOBC. More than 30 runners came out to participate in the three run options at this great community event, many in costumes for the two-km Zombie Shuffle.

In 2015, Final Leg runners will help kick off the 2015 SOBC Winter Games to be held February 19 to 21 in Kamloops. Other Torch Run events will take place June 2 to 5 around the province. ○





Richmond



Peace Arch



Vancouver



Kamloops



Delta



Coquitlam



Abbotsford



Victoria



Burnaby

SOBC greatly appreciates the efforts of the 2014 Final Leg Organizing Committee:

Co-chairs:

- S/Sgt. Joanne Wild – Vancouver Police Department
- S/Sgt. Dave Savoy – RCMP E Division

Committee members:

- Retired Supt. Dean Robinson – Vancouver PD
- Sgt. Dave Colton – Vancouver PD
- S/Sgt. Tom Norton – RCMP E Division
- S/Sgt. Debbie McLeod – Delta Police Department
- Corp. Mike Dunn – Surrey RCMP Detachment
- John Randle – Correctional Service of Canada

We would like to thank the generous sponsors of the 2014 LETR Final Leg:

- Vancouver Police Foundation
- Canadian Pacific Police Service
- Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police
- Versaterm
- Canadian Direct Insurance
- UCCO-SACC-CSN



Athlete Courtenay Rekis and Delta PD Deputy Chief Lyle Beaudoin

Draft an Athlete and 2014 National Games

This year, BC Law Enforcement Torch Run members from across the province came together to support Team BC by Drafting athletes to the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games. Agencies and LETR partners raised more than \$80,000 to help 80 athletes experience the National Games.

Many LETR members volunteered their time to help with the Opening Ceremony, Games security, and medal ceremonies. Spectators had the privilege of being welcomed to the Opening Ceremony by RCMP and Vancouver Police Department mounted

units and witnessing Emergency Response Team members rappel from the rafters of Thunderbird Stadium when the Flame of Hope was carried into the arena.

As well, 20 police chiefs from across the province formed an honour guard as the flame was passed to Vancouver Police Chief Jim Chu and Special Olympics BC – Surrey athlete Kellie Robertson who lit the cauldron to signal the start of Games.

We are so grateful to our law enforcement partners who supported the National Games and helped create an amazing experience! ○

2015 BC LETR Regional Workshops

In 2015 the BC Law Enforcement Torch Run will host regional workshops across the province to engage new and current LETR supporters. The first workshop will be held in Kamloops on February 19 for the Interior Region and will finish with a Final Leg run through Kamloops and into the Opening Ceremony of the 2015 Special Olympics BC Winter Games.

Workshop participants will have the opportunity to learn about fundraising initiatives, network with other law enforcement members in their area, meet local Special Olympics athletes, and volunteer at the Provincial Games.

To register for this free workshop or for more information, please contact



LETR Liaison
Carolyn McCarthy
at cmccarthy@specialolympics.bc.ca
/ 604-737-3056, or toll free at 1-888-854-2276.

Please visit www.specialolympics.bc.ca/letr for updates on other regional workshops in the new year. ○

More LETR fundraising successes

2014 was another strong year for LETR fundraising in support of Special Olympics BC.

The Delta Police Department hosted their successful annual 50/50 draw at Vancouver Giants' games in February and December, selling hundreds of tickets and seeking out 50/50 draw ticket buyers to support SOBC. The Delta Police and SOBC – Delta athletes work hard to raise both awareness and funds about Special Olympics in this great opportunity.

The Victoria Police Department faced off against the Saanich Police Department before a full crowd for their annual Battle of the Badges hockey game in March to benefit Special Olympics. The Victoria Capitals were victorious—but look out next year when the Saanich Watchdogs gear up for a re-match!

New in 2014 were the Transit Police Golf Tournament and Cycle for a Cause, which were



a great success raising funds and awareness for SOBC.

In May, the Surrey RCMP teamed up with RCMP E Division Headquarters to host a barbecue fundraiser in the NCO Mess Hall attended by many people.

The Coquitlam RCMP worked with RONA to host a barbecue in June and arranged to have popcorn sale proceeds for the month of August donated to the LETR.

In June, the Comox Valley RCMP hosted a dinner and silent auction at Prime Restaurant where proceeds from meals went towards Special Olympics.

We cannot forget the many agencies who sold T-shirts this year to raise funds for SOBC. Burnaby RCMP took the top spot for the most T-shirts sold, with Transit Police coming in a close second. ○

BC LETR Executive Council update

In August 2014, BC Law Enforcement Torch Run Executive Council member Superintendent Dean Robinson retired from the Vancouver Police Department after 34 years of service. We are pleased to announce that Supt. Robinson will continue his membership on the Executive Council and carry on his unwavering support of Special Olympics BC and the LETR.

This year RCMP E Division Assistant Commissioner Norm Lipinski concluded his term on the Executive Council after three years of dedicated service. We are so grateful for the

time he has committed to growing the LETR in B.C. and supporting RCMP-led initiatives. Assistant Commissioner Lipinski has been an avid supporter of SOBC and has made a huge impact during his time on the Executive.

The BC LETR is pleased to welcome the newest Executive member, Superintendent Warren Brown of the Prince George RCMP Detachment. Supt. Brown will be an excellent resource for the BC LETR and will contribute greatly to the growth of the program in Northern B.C. ○



Executive Council members

Thank you to the many agencies for supporting SOBC this year:

- Abbotsford Police Department
- Burnaby RCMP
- Burns Lake RCMP
- Canada Border Services Agency
- Central Saanich Police Service
- CN Police
- Comox Valley RCMP
- Correctional Service of Canada
- Coquitlam RCMP
- Cranbrook RCMP
- Chilliwack RCMP
- Delta Police Department
- Justice Institute of British Columbia
- Kamloops RCMP
- Langley RCMP
- Metro Vancouver Transit Police
- Military Police
- Mission RCMP
- Nanaimo RCMP
- New Westminster Police Department
- North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP
- North Vancouver RCMP
- Oak Bay Police Department
- Port Moody Police Department
- Prince George RCMP
- Quesnel RCMP
- RCMP E Division Headquarters
- RCMP Pacific Region Training Centre
- Richmond RCMP
- Ridge Meadows RCMP
- Saanich Police Department
- Surrey RCMP
- Vancouver Police Department
- Victoria Police Department

International Conference

This year the Law Enforcement Torch Run International Conference in New Orleans brought together more than 1,000 law enforcement members from agencies around the world, including five BC LETR members. It was a great opportunity for participants to share ideas and learn from other successful programs in order to continue growing this international movement.

The theme of the conference, Celebrate Our Passion, was reflected in the inspiring ideas and stories shared and the announcement of record-breaking fundraising numbers. The LETR raised \$50,394,633 US for local Special Olympics programs worldwide in 2013, bringing the total raised since the LETR's

inception to more than \$500 million.

Participants had the privilege of meeting many inspiring Louisiana Special Olympics athletes who exceeded the sessions, sharing their experiences in Special Olympics and speaking of how the LETR has supported them.

Representing B.C. were Deputy Chief Del Manak of the Victoria Police Department, Sergeant Dave Colton of the Vancouver Police Department, Sergeant Tom James of the Langley RCMP, Constable Jenni Teixeira of the Metro Vancouver Transit Police, and Constable Grayson Smith of the Delta Police Department. In recognition of his many years of support, Sgt. Colton was selected as one of the Guardians of the Flame Miner's Lamp escorts, responsible for keeping the Flame of Hope safe and bringing it to and from sessions.

Next year the International Conference will be held in Nassau, The Bahamas, from October 1 to 3. ○



BC LETR representatives

New Car Dealers mark 30 years of generosity with SOBC

In 2014, Special Olympics BC was honoured to celebrate the 30-year relationship between our movement and the **New Car Dealers of B.C.**, a much-appreciated partnership that has played such a critical part in SOBC's significant growth over the last three decades.

The annual **New Car Dealers Foundation / Special Olympics BC Auction** has raised more than \$4.2 million for SOBC, and this year saw significant growth, with the largest number of items yet donated to the event and the most New Car Dealers ever to register to bid.

Five cars were generously donated by The Chevrolet Dealers of BC, BC Honda Dealers Association, BC Ford Dealers and Ford Canada, BC Jeep Dealers, and Toyota BC Dealers.

The New Car Dealers also stepped up to support the Special Olympics Canada 2014

Summer Games, with eight Dealers donating the use of 35 vehicles and Dealers and the association generously spreading the word about the amazing event.

The longtime annual auction is open to New Car Dealers members who bid generously in support of Special Olympics and the New Car Dealers Foundation. Auction items were solicited or donated by New Car Dealers from communities throughout British Columbia—from Northern B.C. to Greater Vancouver, from Vancouver Island to the Kootenay-Rockies.

In addition to providing vital support to SOBC, the auction also enables the New Car Dealers Foundation of B.C. to support a wide range of community initiatives, including local charities, sports teams, community events, and scholarships for young people entering the automotive industry.

We are so grateful for the ongoing support of the New Car Dealers who make the auction happen and who bid for the betterment of the charities.

In addition to the auction, dealers continue to support SOBC in a number of different ways including hosting fundraising events, making donations, generating awareness, and soliciting volunteers. It was Howard Carter's dream to have the automotive community involved with SOBC, and now, 30 years later, his dream lives stronger than ever.

The New Car Dealers Association has generously offered SOBC the chance to share news about Special Olympics and profiles of

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The Chevrolet Dealers of BC



2015 Honda Fit DX



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2014 Jeep Cherokee Sport 4x2



DONATED BY
BC Jeep Dealers



2014 Toyota Corolla CE Automatic



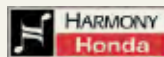
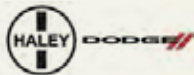
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THANKS TO THOSE DEALERS WHO SUPPORTED THE AUCTION WITH A CASH PLEDGE OR BY DONATING AUCTION ITEMS



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Brian Jessel



supportive Dealers in their Signals publication. They have shared thoughtful comments about why they choose to support Special Olympics.

John Chesman, former General Manager of MCL Motor Cars: Having seen SOBC athletes speak at events and impress significant crowds, Chesman has been impressed by their courage and notes the confidence and pride they gain with Special Olympics. "It's huge. You give [the athletes] an opportunity, No. 1, and through sports you can get an awful lot of confidence and camaraderie and they start to feel good about themselves."

Ken and Dianne Griffith, owners of Richport Ford and Signature Mazda: "With our involvement over the years, we really do have an appreciation of what Special Olympics represents to these committed athletes. We've been to a number of functions over the years, and when you see the appreciation from these athletes toward the whole Special Olympics process, it's just unbelievable," Ken Griffith says.

"It's been a very big part of our lives, being part of Special Olympics BC," Dianne Griffith said.

Tom Harris, President of the Tom Harris Group: "What I see is an organization that is totally devoted to what they do, to providing a fun, competitive, meaningful set of activities for people with intellectual disabilities. The joy that I see on the athletes' faces when they get to compete, and the joy I see on the faces of the people helping them make this all possible, gives me a great feeling."

Dick Lau, Dealer Principal of Cam Clark Ford Lincoln Ltd.: "We believe in the work [Special Olympics] does, and the athletes are the stars, always reminding us why we are doing this. You can see how excited they are. It's very tangible."

Joachim Neumann, founder and President of Auto West BMW and the Auto West Group: "It's a part of the community that needs special support so these individuals are not forgotten." ○

Special thanks to the Auction Committee:

Manse Binkley, *Harmony Honda & Harmony Acura*

Doug Bower, *Vancouver Sun & The Province*

Marnie Carter, *Carter Auto Group*

John Chesman, *MCL Motor Cars*

Christina Hadley, *Special Olympics BC*

Tom Harris, *Harris Auto Group*

Dan Howe, *Special Olympics BC*

Pam Keith, *Dueck Auto Group*

Dave Meyerink, *Harris Victoria Chrysler*

Joe Mitchell, *Carter Auto Group*

Blair Qualey, *New Car Dealers Association of BC*

John Wynia, *Harbourview Volkswagen*

and to all the other dealers who made cash pledges, solicited auction items and bid on items.

Mining industry big backers of SOBC

B.C.'s leading mining companies have gotten behind Special Olympics BC and are making a difference in the lives of SOBC athletes.

In 2014 Goldcorp announced a gift of \$1-million over four years to SOBC that will provide meaningful, life-changing opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities, and doubling the company's previous gift of \$1 million, which was announced in 2011.

Goldcorp is also Presenting Sponsor of the prestigious Goldcorp Invitational Golf Tournament, which provides vital support for SOBC. Fellow B.C. mining companies also step

forward to support Special Olympics through the tournament, with Silver Wheaton serving as Greens Sponsor, and New Gold and Silver Standard Resources stepping up as Event Sponsors.

The annual Sports Celebrities Festival presented by Silver Wheaton benefits SOBC and the Canucks for Kids Fund. In addition to the important financial support, this event creates many inspiring and empowering moments with SOBC athletes taking part in the festivities.

The mining industry was the single largest supporter by industry of the Special Olympics

Canada 2014 Summer Games in Vancouver, giving athletes the opportunity to experience the competition, friendship, joy, and inspiration of the Games.

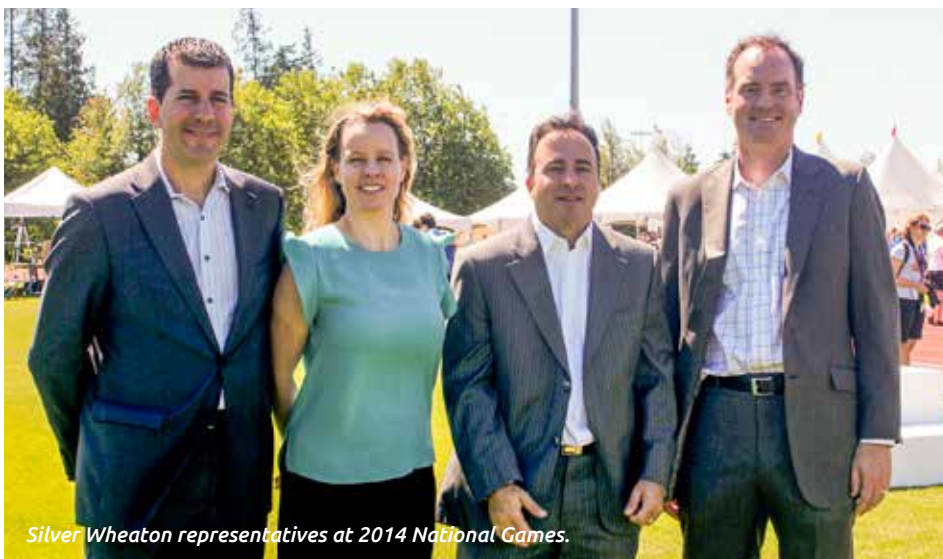
Goldcorp served as a Gold Sponsor, Silver Wheaton and Teck were Silver Sponsors, and Eldorado Gold sponsored soccer. Not only did the financial support of these companies contribute greatly to the success of the National Games, but many mining company employees enthusiastically volunteered to help out at the Games.

Mining companies have also encouraged other companies and professionals whom they do business with, such as lawyers and accountants, to lend their support to SOBC and Special Olympics Games.

The mining industry is providing vital support for the 2015 Special Olympics BC Winter Games to be held in February in Kamloops, with the New Gold New Afton Mine and the KGHM Ajax Mine sponsoring the Provincial Games. These companies rallied around the Games Organizing Committee to get potential supporters involved in the Games and are encouraging their staff to do the same; the mining companies' first aid experts have offered to provide support at the Games.

The mining industry has also been a valuable supporter with Yamana Gold, B2 Gold, and Agnico Eagle generously donating to SOBC.

SOBC would like to express heartfelt appreciation for the mining industry's crucial support. ○



Silver Wheaton representatives at 2014 National Games.

Stories from Special Olympics BC Locals

News from SOBC – Sunshine Coast

By Micheal Oswald, SOBC – Sunshine Coast Athlete Reporter

Here we are on the cusp of a New Year and believe me we in Special Olympics BC – Sunshine Coast just keep on rocking. 2014 has shown some strong developments within our organization along with a record number of athletes and volunteers.

First off, our softball team received new uniforms and a new name. Then they went on to win the trophy for their division at the Coquitlam tourney! Way to go Ravens!

It was also a big year for swimming as Team BC 2014 athlete Christel Jensen travelled to UBC for the big Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games. She came away with gold in the 25-metre backstroke and was part of a silver-medal team in the 100-metre relay. SOBC –Sunshine Coast swimming Head Coach Marie Telder was also there as part of Team BC.

Another contribution to Team BC from the Coast was Chuck Bertrand, who was the golf Head Coach. Bertrand reported that they "dominated."

Athletics Head Coach Tania Flynn took Amber Maher, Bruce Stuart, and Micheal Oswald to the SOBC track meet at UBC, where they brought home first-place results and personal bests.

Curling as usual has been cool (pun intended). The highlight of EVERY year is the social bonspiel in Abbotsford with dinner at the Spaghetti Factory and celebrating January birthdays.

The interest in basketball this year has been huge. There are now three teams on the

Coast—two in Sechelt and one in Gibsons. Coach Samantha Mills is excited to work with our new volunteers Callum Fallis and Kyle Stanley.

Floor hockey has seen the SOBC – Sunshine Coast Bears having a record number of athletes join in. In 2015 they hope to repeat the fantastic game they had alongside local members of the RCMP last January.

Rhythmic gymnastics athletes enjoyed getting their new uniforms and performing at our banquet. We are sorry that Head Coach Margaret (Maggie) Casey is leaving. However, Assistant Coach Jessica Davey will be taking the head position. We shall miss you Maggie!

Soccer saw new faces this year, with new coaches in Sechelt and new players for both the Gibsons and Sechelt teams. The teams competed at two tournaments, taking a team of combined players to each. Soccer 2015 starts on April 6; until then the athletes and coaches are busy with other sports.

Finally, bocce continues to be a hit and coach Jeannie Barwise says her personal highlight was the windup game where the athletes practiced their aiming skills by flying paper airplanes through a hoop—a.k.a. the airport. She enjoyed seeing how many 'ace pilots' were able to make a perfect landing.

On a sad note, 2014 saw the passing of one our own. John McAra passed away at the age of 49. All of us will remember John for his tireless dedication to bocce and for his service at The Sunshine Shack that always came with a smile.

Well that about sums up 2014 for all of us here in our slice of paradise called the Sunshine Coast. Looking forward to 2015. ○



Michael Maveety (top right) fundraising with SOBC – Kamloops athletes and local Staples staff during the 2014 Staples campaign for Special Olympics.

SOBC – Kamloops: Putting the FUN in fundraising

By Marilyn McLean, Local Coordinator

Special Olympics BC – Kamloops is very lucky to have Michael Maveety as our Fundraising Coordinator. He comes up with some amazing ideas to raise funds and involve the community.

For the last three years, one night in November finds community members, SOBC volunteers, and athletes each enjoying two games of bowling and a pound of wings for just \$20. There is always a 50/50 draw, a silent auction, Maveety's fantastic baking, and draw prizes galore. It is our annual Pin Party, a fundraising idea of Maveety's that yields lots of fun and laughter while raising over \$2,000 for SOBC – Kamloops. The support that our Local gets in donated raffle items and money from the community of Kamloops for this event is second to none. The Pin Party sells out early and is an eagerly anticipated event.

In addition to this unique fundraiser, Maveety works tirelessly to help produce an annual dinner theatre event. For the past two years, SOBC – Kamloops and the Thompson Rivers University theatre department have joined forces to mount a made-in-Kamloops rendition of Tony n' Tina's Wedding; we call it Joey and Julie Get Hitched. This interactive production is complete with a wedding, tacky decorations, fighting in-laws, and a bride who gives away her wedding presents as draw prizes at the reception.

SOBC – Kamloops wants to give Michael Maveety a standing ovation for the great fundraising ideas he comes up with. If you are interested in talking to him about either of these ideas, or about fundraising in general, please contact him through our website www.sobckamloops.org. ○



John McAra (second from left) and the SOBC – Sunshine Coast bocce group.



Alan Prough

Teams in the 2014 Ryan Woikin Memorial Bocce Tournament.



SOBC – 100 Mile House athlete Brett Tassell with Team BC golf teammates heading to the Opening Ceremony of the 2014 National Games.

News from SOBC – 100 Mile House

By Denise Barker, Local Coordinator

2014 saw one of our athletes, Brett Tassell, go to the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games for golf and come in fifth overall.

We attended a golf tournament in Quesnel with five athletes in September and had a great time. We also had a short golf program this summer and started our bowling program in the fall.

We held a raffle in late fall that was going fairly well. All our athletes are well and healthy and excited about the holidays coming up! ○

SOBC – Nelson bocce tournament remembers Ryan Woikin

When Special Olympics BC – Nelson set out to host their first competition in a number of years, the local athletes decided the new bocce tournament’s name would honour one of their much-loved friends.

The athletes decided the June 2014 event should be called the **Ryan Woikin Memorial Bocce Tournament**, recognizing dedicated and decorated SOBC – Nelson athlete Ryan Woikin who passed away the previous spring.

Woikin was a Special Olympics athlete for 20 years, participating in numerous sports, which he loved, and excelling in swimming. He was a friend to so many in the SOBC community and throughout his town, a smiling presence who maintained his wonderful spirit throughout his battles with leukemia and brain tumours.

“Ryan loved every sport. He had so many friends. He was such a lovely person,” said Betty Burk Kooznetsoff, SOBC – Nelson Local Coordinator and tournament organizer.

Woikin swam his way to the 2010 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games in London, Ontario. He had just been through a bout with cancer that year, so he wasn’t expecting to win—but he raced to two gold medals and one bronze.

Woikin’s spirit and accomplishments are a huge source of pride to his parents Bill and Joan, amazing Special Olympics volunteers who have given immense amounts of time and caring to SOBC – Nelson throughout the last two decades.

“Ryan encouraged a lot of the athletes to come out. He enjoyed his Special Olympics

sports—he loved his swimming, he had just gotten into soccer and he loved it—he just wanted to get out there and run!” Joan Woikin said. “Everybody knew Ryan. He had so much company at the hospital, even including the mayor of Nelson.”

The inaugural Ryan Woikin Memorial Bocce Tournament was a great success, with 36 athletes from Nelson, Castlegar, Nakusp, and Trail taking part. The teams delivered terrific performances throughout the fun event, and enjoyed a lovely dinner and dance afterward. SOBC – Nelson athletes did a lot to help with the event, and Nick Toner, Ryan Woikin’s fellow National Games gold medallist, opened the day with the Athlete’s Oath.

Woikin’s spirit was felt throughout the day. “So many of the athletes said ‘Ryan’s here,’” Burk Kooznetsoff said. “That’s the kind of person he was.”

Characteristically, Bill and Joan Woikin were there to help throughout the event; even though Joan was on dialysis, these nominees for the 2014 SOBC President’s Award were there all day helping out and glad the athletes were having fun. Joan and Bill Woikin have given so much time to Special Olympics over the years, serving with the SOBC – Nelson Executive Committee, helping with so many events and programs, and running their annual summer music fundraiser for 27 years.

“We like to see the athletes getting enjoyment out of Special Olympics,” Joan Woikin said.

At the inaugural Ryan Woikin tournament, many of the athletes voiced their desire to have the event be a full-fledged competition, Burk Kooznetsoff said, so they plan to do so in 2015. ○

Great experiences for SOBC groups with Jim Pattison Hyundai, Lulay and BC Lions

Big thanks to **Jeff Rae** and **Jim Pattison Hyundai** as well as **Travis Lulay** and the **BC Lions** for providing amazing Lions game experiences again for our athletes and coaches this season!

Rae and Jim Pattison Hyundai generously donated six tickets to every Lions home game for SOBC athletes and volunteers, and the groups have had a terrific time cheering on Lulay and the Lions in person. ○



Staples campaign reaches new heights in support of Special Olympics

It has been another record-breaking year for **Staples Canada's** annual **Give A Toonie. Share A Dream.** campaign in support of Special Olympics athletes across Canada.

Staples raised \$629,000 across the country, and stores in B.C. (along with one Yukon store) raised \$114,705. Staples in Campbell River ranked first in their District and the Western Region, and an impressive second nationally for raising \$8,005.

During the campaign, which ran from May 3 to 25, Staples staff across Canada invited customers to donate at the till and this year introduced a new online donation option to help make dreams happen.

Thank you to Staples staff and customers, and to all the athletes and volunteers across the province who gave their time and energy to this significant campaign now in its 15th year.



Kimberley/Cranbrook

Along with the fundraising component, the campaign was also an opportunity for Staples staff and customers to visit with hometown athletes and learn about Special Olympics.

"We got so excited about the athletes coming in because they know us and we know them," said Sandy Herbert, a Campbell River Staples Supervisor who coordinated the campaign in her store. She said the athletes come in year after year and are treated like members of the staff.

In Williams Lake the Staples campaign attracted applause and personal support from MLA Donna Barnett, and at least 30 local businesses around town donated prizes to the store for gift basket raffles.

"Throughout the 18-year partnership, our Associates across the country passionately got behind the cause and truly became champions of the movement," Staples Canada President Steve Matyas said. "Our store teams are excited to be making a huge difference in the lives of Canadians living with intellectual disabilities, and it means a great deal to be a part of such an inspiring and important program that opens up so many new opportunities for these athletes."

This year's **Staples Canada/Special Olympics BC Softball Tournament** saw more than 20 SOBC athletes join Staples staff softball teams in a day of cooperation and fun in Burnaby on June 28. The Burnaby Loughheed Lions Club held a delicious hotdog barbecue and there were great raffle prizes. The event raised \$746 for SOBC.

Thank you, Staples! ○



Maple Ridge



Campbell River

Celebrities help champion awareness, support of SOBC athletes

Special Olympics is an inspiring movement of athletes, families, coaches, volunteers, sponsors, and celebrities coming together with the common goal of improving the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and inspiring everyone to open their hearts to a wider world of human talents and potential.

When high-profile supporters stand up as champions of our athletes and movement, it makes a difference. Special Olympics BC is fortunate to have many champions from the world of professional and amateur sports who give their time to support our movement and advocate our athletes and cause. They attend the Sports Celebrities Festival presented by Silver Wheaton to show their support for Special Olympics; they give their time to provincial and local events to interact with our athletes and community; they lend their voices to calls for awareness of Special Olympics and respect and support for athletes. They make a difference by setting an example for a more inclusive, respectful world.

In 2014, Special Olympics Canada announced the creation of the Champions Network of national celebrity supporters, co-chaired by Mark Tewksbury, Jamie Salé, and Catriona Le May Doan. SOBC is grateful to have an incredible network of provincial champions as well.

The **Vancouver Canucks** generously help SOBC with their significant full-team participation in the annual Sports Celebrities Festival in support of SOBC and the Canucks for Kids Fund. Their generosity towards Special Olympics continues year-round, as they provide



Vancouver Canucks Chris Higgins and SOBC – Langley athlete Matthew Williams at a launch for the 2014 National Games.

ticket donations so athletes and coaches get to attend games, offer assistance from their players and coaching staff for training and development events, and give SOBC access to autographed memorabilia that creates key fundraising opportunities for SOBC provincially and at the local level. They never hesitate to support Special Olympics athletes by raising awareness in their online channels.

Forward Chris Higgins has generously stepped forward to champion Special Olympics at fundraising events and awareness opportunities, sharing the impact Special Olympics has had on his sister, a longtime athlete in New York, and his family.

Vancouver Whitecaps FC helped put Special Olympics in the spotlight in 2014 with a feature night at their big July 5 match, where the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg for the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games carried the Flame of Hope onto the field to raise awareness about Special Olympics and the Games. The club also

donates unique autographed memorabilia for fundraising, raises awareness in their web and social media channels, and gets their players and icons involved in Special Olympics events. When Carl Valentine and Gershon Koffie came out to train with the Special Olympics Team BC soccer squad at their last training camp before the 2014 National Games, it left huge smiles on the faces of all involved.

The **BC Lions Football Club** is a long-standing supporter of Special Olympics and their players are great champions who attend events such as the Sports Celebrities Festival. Many players and leaders have enthusiastically gotten further involved, like quarterback Travis Lulay who gives significant support to Special Olympics through his participation in events, serving in key roles like Honorary Coach of Team BC 2012, and willingness to spread the word about Special Olympics and our athletes in interviews and social media.



BC Lions quarterback Travis Lulay (right) with Team BC 5-pin bowler Eldon Carter of SOBC – Quesnel readying for the 2014 National Games Opening Ceremony.

Provincial Champions:

- Wally Buono, *BC Lions General Manager*
- Ashleigh DeMerit (McIvor), *Olympic and world ski cross champion*
- Jay DeMerit, *retired Whitecaps FC defender*
- Chris Higgins, *Vancouver Canucks forward*
- Marco Iannuzzi, *BC Lions receiver*
- Trevor Linden, *Vancouver Canucks President of Hockey Operations*
- Travis Lulay, *BC Lions quarterback*
- Howie Meeker, *hockey legend*
- Cathy Priestner Allinger, *Olympic speed skating medallist, 2014 National Games Chair*
- Angus Reid, *retired BC Lions centre*
- Carl Valentine, *Whitecaps FC club ambassador*

In addition, many stars and sports organizations elsewhere in Vancouver and in communities around B.C. generously give their time and support to SOBC Locals. We are so grateful to these champions for raising awareness and support in their communities as well. ○



Whitecaps FC's Carl Valentine (left) and Gershon Koffie (middle) scrimmaging with Team BC players Tom Hanna (kicking ball) and Mitchell Hallman.

Raft of new tools and ideas at Region 1 and 2 conference

The **Special Olympics BC Regional Conference for Regions 1 and 2** was an inspirational weekend of interactive sessions and idea sharing in Grand Forks.

Held May 2 to 4, 2014, the conference brought together 29 enthusiastic participants from Creston, Elk Valley, Invermere, Golden, Grand Forks, and Nakusp in Region 1, and Keremeos, Merritt, Penticton, Salmon Arm, and Vernon in Region 2.

The weekend covered a broad range of topics and featured two streams, with four sessions for coaches and four for Executive Committee volunteers.

"The content of the conference was particularly interesting to me as we are still in startup mode and recruitment of both athletes and volunteers is something we are struggling with," said Aly Clifton, SOBC – Salmon Arm

Local Coordinator. "It was great to get all the information on where and who to contact."

Clifton was also excited about the fundraising ideas at the conference. "In fact, I have just met with our Fundraising Chair and she is all fired up to do something new," she said after her return home.

The conference also featured Paperwork 101 by SOBC Leadership Council Chair Patty Wheeldon; a hands-on session about using technology such as video to enhance coaching techniques by Darren Inouye, SOBC Regional Coordinator for Region 5; and a presentation on non-violent intervention techniques by Sue Foisy, Regional



Coordinator for Region 2 and a certified trainer for the Crisis Prevention Institute.

Organizers are excited about the **2015 Regional Conference for Regions 1 and 2** that will be held April 17 to 19 in West Kelowna. ○

JYSK gives championship support in record-breaking campaign

JYSK ran another record-breaking fundraiser this year as stores across Canada stepped up for the 2014 **Champions Start at Home** campaign that ran throughout September in support of Special Olympics.

We are so grateful to JYSK and all the staff, customers, volunteers, and athletes who made the campaign such a success in the 10th year of JYSK supporting Special Olympics! The JYSK campaign raised \$91,800 nationwide, an impressive 33 per cent increase over 2013.

Special Olympics BC supporters helped B.C. JYSK stores collectively achieve the ranking of Top District by raising \$19,000. Three of the top five stores in the country were B.C. stores, with Prince George and Surrey leading the way followed closely by Kamloops.

JYSK stores and customers in Coquitlam, Delta, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Pitt Meadows, and Richmond also got behind the campaign.



The Prince George JYSK store took the title of Top Donating Store in the country for the second year in a row. Nearly half their customers during the campaign donated and the store raised \$6,100. The JYSK Surrey store raised the second-highest amount of funds in Canada, their donations increasing over 100 per cent from 2013. The Kamloops JYSK store came from behind to raise the fifth-highest amount in the country, increasing their fundraising total 130 per cent from last year.

This year the Kamloops JYSK store collected donations from local businesses for a raffle and sold tickets at the till. The store also hosted a popcorn sale and bake sales, and SOBC – Kamloops athletes helped out with bagging and greeting customers. The staff were thrilled to be part of the campaign.

"It was really fulfilling to do it and every time we got a donation it made the athletes so happy," JYSK Kamloops Head Cashier Michaela Williamson said.

JYSK in Coquitlam achieved the most



improved fundraising total in B.C., with an increase of more than 200 per cent from 2013.

To celebrate JYSK's 10th anniversary of supporting Special Olympics, JYSK launched their campaign for the first time at their annual golf tournament for staff and suppliers in Pitt Meadows. Athletes Nellie-Jo Kurta, Chelsea Kaake, and Jim Richter, who all medalled in golf at the Special Olympic Canada 2014 Summer Games, showed their skills at the tournament and Kaake spoke at the gala dinner. ○

Williams and Special Olympics wow at the White House

When Special Olympics BC – Langley athlete and Global Messenger **Matthew Williams** took centre stage at the White House with fellow Special Olympics athlete leaders and youth activists, he felt honoured to have the genuine attention of the President and First Lady of the United States.

President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, Honorary Chairs of the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games, hosted a dinner at the White House on July 31, 2014, that powerfully celebrated the Special Olympics movement and its work for inclusion and unity, and built excitement with just under a year to go until the big World Games in Los Angeles.

"It was great to see how much [President Obama] cared. You could see his words were genuine. For a man so busy with so many things going on around the world, it meant a lot that he took time out of his schedule to speak at this event and take an interest in the people who were speaking. I was really happy to see that," Williams said.

Williams joined an inspiring group of Special Olympics athletes and youth activation supporters to share their stories with a star-studded audience that included the President and First Lady along with some of the world's leading social activists, business leaders, entertainers, members of Congress and sport

legends, such as Dikembe Mutumbo, Senator Tom Harkin, Stevie Wonder, Andy Roddick, and Brooklyn Decker.

"The fact that so many accomplished, wonderful people are here is a testament to the impact that Special Olympics has had on our nation, and has had on our world," said President Obama in his remarks at the White House. "This organization has touched so many lives, and tonight Michelle and I are thrilled that we get a chance to say 'thank you' to everyone who has been a part of it."

From Special Olympics International: "The event celebrated the work that Special Olympics, with the support of the Obama administration and others, has been doing to activate young people to fight inactivity, intolerance, and injustice in their schools and communities.

"Special Olympics plans to engage youth across the world in a new youth activation

The fact that so many accomplished, wonderful people are here is a testament to the impact that Special Olympics has had on our nation, and has had on our world.

**President Obama
Honorary Chair of the 2015 Special
Olympics World Summer Games**

campaign ... to create the first truly unified generation – a generation in which young people with and without intellectual disabilities create a future of respect and inclusion for everyone. The goal of the campaign is to mobilize youth to play and ultimately live unified, breaking down the barriers that exclude people with intellectual disabilities." Read more about the Play Unified campaign on page 12.

Williams is a member of the Special Olympics International Board of Directors, Chair of the Third Global Athlete Congress, and a Special Olympics Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger. He said he was glad to see so many influential people come together at the White House in support of Special Olympics. Many stars came out to hear from and talk with the true stars of the evening, the Special Olympics athletes.

"There was good representation from Special Olympics athletes. The athletes had a chance to tell their stories and be able to showcase the amazing talents and capabilities they have," Williams said.

The event aimed both to share the Special Olympics vision of inclusion and unity and build excitement and support for the movement and the upcoming World Games.

"I think we got the message across and we got people talking about it," Williams said. "With social media and so many things coming up, moving forward with the L.A. World Games, this is definitely going to boost awareness and really promote the Games. We had the people we needed to in the room that will help us get to what we wanted to accomplish for L.A. and with an inclusive generation. That was a big step in the right direction."

Williams told the White House audience how he faced seizures, brain surgery, and bullying when he was younger, but powered through with the help of the people who have believed in him. Now he is on his way to becoming a certified personal trainer and aims to help other individuals with intellectual disabilities.

In addition to his speaking and governance engagements in 2014, Williams also trained hard with his SOBC – Langley basketball team for the Special Olympics Canada 2014 Summer Games. They earned gold in Vancouver, and Williams and teammate Alastair Singh were picked up by the Special Olympics Team Canada 2015 basketball squad to go to the World Games in L.A. ○



Matt Williams and fellow athlete ambassadors taking centre stage at the White House.

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