



# 2016 Annual Report

Special  
Olympics  
Alberta



## Mission

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

## Vision

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

## Values

### Empowerment

We create opportunities to pursue full potential.

### Excellence

We elevate standards and performance.

### Respect

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

### Diversity

We honour what is unique in each individual.

### Inclusion

We foster inclusive communities.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS



1968 – 2018

You are the stars and the world is watching you. By your presence you send a message to every village, every city, every nation. A message of hope. A message of victory: The right to play on any playing field? **You have earned it.** The right to study in any school? **You have earned it.** The right to hold a job? **You have earned it.** The right to be anyone's neighbor? **You have earned it.** The days of segregation and separation are over!"

*- Eunice Kennedy Shriver*

In 1968 Eunice Kennedy took a rebellious stand against the injustice faced by individuals with intellectual disabilities by hosting the first Special Olympics Games at Soldier Field in Chicago. Through the power and joy of sport, Special Olympics is ushering in a new world of unity, tolerance, and respect. Join us in creating a new generation of inclusion for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Choose to include!

# Affiliates and Community Programs



Communities  
Represented:

158

Number of Affiliate and  
Community programs:

30

## South Central

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

Sports Offered: **21**

Young Athletes in Active Start and FUNdamentals: **22**

Affiliates/Community Programs: **6**

No. of Athletes: **1132**

## South

*Brooks, Crownsnest Pass, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat*

Sports Offered: **14**

Affiliates/Community Programs: **4**

No. of Athletes: **247**

## North West

*Grande Prairie*

Sports Offered: **13**

Young Athletes in Active Start and FUNdamentals: **19**

Affiliates/Community Programs: **1**

No. of Athletes: **145**

## North East

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

Sports Offered: **7**

Affiliates/Community Programs: **5**

No. of Athletes: **175**

## North Central

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

Sports Offered: **20**

Young Athletes in Active Start and FUNdamentals: **42**

Affiliates/Community Programs: **9**

No. of Athletes: **969**

## Central

*Camrose, Lacombe, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House, Wetaskiwin*

Sports Offered: **16**

Young Athletes in Active Start and FUNdamentals: **33**

Affiliates/Community Programs: **5**

No. of Athletes: **539**

## Message from our Leadership

On behalf of Special Olympics Alberta, we want to thank you for being part of and supporting our movement. Each dollar you give, hour you volunteer, games you participate in, you "choose to include" and champion individuals with intellectual disabilities.

This past year saw our organization and athletes reach new heights. In July, over 900 athletes competed in 11 summer sports at our 2018 Special Olympics Alberta Summer Games in Medicine Hat. Athletes received the best quality sports, facilities, and hospitality from Medicine Hat and had over 2,000 cheering fans at opening ceremonies. Our athletes' outstanding performance left a lasting legacy in the city and region.

In November, Special Olympics Team Canada members received a heroes' welcome in the House of Commons receiving a standing ovation from parliament members. The celebration started with Unified basketball games at Notre Dame High School and ended with the warm reception with Right Honourable, Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada and past Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Honourable Kent Hehr. This was a very proud moment for our organization as Team Canada members (including 12 Albertans) received the same recognition from the Government of Canada as Canada's Olympians and Paralympians who represent our nation.

Thanks to our partnership with the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association the reach and growth of Unified Sports in high schools continue to astound and amaze us. The number of students participating in Unified Sports has increased over 100 students from the previous year and more and more high schools have integrated Unified Sports into their athletic programming and school culture.

We had two major milestone moments in the past year in our Unified Program. Bert Church High School was selected to be the first Unified team to represent Alberta at an out of province competition. The team's and schools dedication to provide quality training and support allowed the team to earn a gold medal and a school banner as Unified bocce champions at the 2018 Special Olympics Ontario School Championships. Another big step for Unified Sports in Alberta was the Metro Edmonton High School Athletic Association hosting the first multi-sport Unified Jamboree in Alberta. 18 schools and 236 athletes and partners represented their schools and competed in a full day of basketball, bean bag toss, and bocce competitions.

In gyms, fields, and at home, 148 Team Alberta members displayed strength, dedication, and resilience. They committed to healthy diets,

went above and beyond their regular training and supported their teammates to be better. Cultivating success and high performance was only achievable through key partners like the Alberta Sport Development Centre which provided expertise in nutrition, sport psychology and injury prevention all year round through workshops and sessions at training camps and Propel Performance Institute which donated gym space for athletes to train and resources and expertise during the full training camp before Nationals. The support from communities, coaches and sponsors paid off on the bowling lanes of Charlottetown and Tyne Valley in P.E.I with our Team Alberta bowling athletes taking home 40 medals from the 2018 Special Canada Bowling Championships.

We are now embarking on a celebration of Special Olympics 50th Anniversary, marking 50 years of changing lives and creating inclusion through the transformative power of sport. In a time where it has become clear that we are living amidst a global crisis of intolerance and fear of difference, our community knows bullying and misunderstanding well and we are reminded that our work of overcoming it is more urgent than ever. Our 50th Anniversary comes at the perfect time to unite and remind us of the beauty of inclusion. Our social fabric is stronger when acceptance and inclusion is the thread that binds us all. We are seeing our partners rise to the challenge to spread the movement and our athletes' voices pierce discrimination with "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." With a year of victories in our province, nation and around the globe, we know the world is ready to accept the challenge.

Thank you for everything you've done to help us make a difference. Together we take on the challenge to continue to run the race, join the team, give and get, and bring inclusion to all our communities. We declare in Alberta, "Challenge Accepted."



A blue ink signature of Wilma Shim.

**Wilma Shim**  
Board of Directors Chair  
Special Olympics Alberta



A blue ink signature of Johnny Byrne.

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

Sport	No. of Athletes	Communities
Active Start	70	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Red Deer, West Central
Athletics	197	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Edmonton, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Albert, Strathcona County, Vegreville, West Central
Basketball	338	Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Olds & District, Rocky Mountain House, St. Albert, Strathcona County, St. Paul, Wetaskiwin, Whitecourt
Bocce Ball	336	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Camrose, Crowsnest Pass, Edmonton, Lacombe, Lakeland, Leduc, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House, St. Paul, Strathcona County, West Central, Wetaskiwin, Whitecourt
10-Pin Bowling	277	Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Albert, Strathcona County, West Central, Wetaskiwin
5-Pin Bowling	1825	Airdrie & District, Barrhead, Calgary, Camrose, Drayton Valley, Drumheller, Edmonton, Edson, Foothills, Grande Prairie, Lac La Biche, Lacombe, Lakeland, Leduc, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, Medicine Hat, Olds & District, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House, Strathcona County, St. Albert, St. Paul, Vegreville, West Central, Wetaskiwin
Curling	194	Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Leduc, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Albert, Wetaskiwin
Fitness	73	Calgary, Camrose, Lloydminster
Floor Hockey	603	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Edmonton, Foothills, Grande Prairie, Leduc, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Albert, Strathcona County, Vegreville, West Central, Wetaskiwin
FUNdamentals	44	Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Red Deer, West Central
Golf	349	Airdrie & District, Barrhead, Calgary, Camrose, Crowsnest Pass, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Paul, Strathcona County, West Central, Vegreville
Powerlifting	71	Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, West Central
Rythmic Gymnastics	123	Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Olds & District, Red Deer, West Central
Figure Skating	49	Calgary, Edmonton
Speed Skating	27	Calgary, West Central
Alpine Skiing	59	Calgary, Crowsnest Pass, Drumheller, Lethbridge, Olds & District, Strathcona County
Cross Country Skiing	32	Bow Valley, Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton
Snowshoeing	68	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Edmonton, Edson, Grande Prairie, Olds & District, West Central
Soccer	333	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Leduc, Lethbridge, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Albert, Strathcona County, West Central, Wetaskiwin
Softball	406	Airdrie & District, Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Foothills, Grande Prairie, Lacombe, Leduc, Lethbridge, Olds & District, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House, St. Albert, St. Paul, Vegreville
Swimming	590	Airdrie & District, Brooks, Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Edson, Foothills, Grande Prairie, Lacombe, Leduc, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Olds & District, Red Deer, St. Albert, West Central, Whitecourt

## Impact

Special Olympics Alberta uses sport to reveal the full potential of individuals with intellectual disabilities. The transformation and empowerment of our athletes is a catalyst for social change making healthier, stronger, and more inclusive schools, cultures and communities.

Total Athletes:

3,207

Total Athlete Participation:

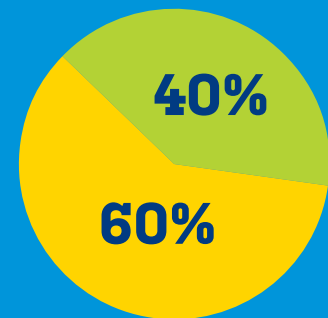
6,072

No. of Athletes (21 and Under):

866

Average age of Athlete:

32



- Female (1,282 Athletes)
- Male (1,925 Athletes)

Unified Athletes and Partners:

565

Unified Events:

9

- Sports:
- Basketball
  - Bean Bag Toss
  - Bocce
  - Track and Field

Total Schools in  
Unified Sports:

43



Total  
Coaches:

501

New Trained  
Coaches:

72

Total Volunteers  
(Including Coaches):

1,210

Competitions  
Sanctioned  
by Special  
Olympics  
Alberta:

42

Games Impact:

2017



Special Olympics  
**ALBERTA  
SUMMER GAMES**  
Medicine Hat 2017



July 7-9, 2017

Total  
Athletes:

904

Total Alberta  
Affiliates & NWT:

24

Total Coaches  
and Volunteers:

356

Games  
Volunteers:

+800

Spectators:

2,000

## Athlete Excellence



**Achieving excellence in sport is no easy task. Chantal Payne is the definition of an athlete who doesn't take the easy path and continues to push their game to the next level.**

Chantal Payne has been involved with Special Olympics for 15 years competing in both curling and athletics. She has committed to these two sports because of the family environment they provide and the ability to meet new friends.

Special Olympics Alberta offers 18 sports and allows athletes to compete in both summer and winter events. 3207 athletes from across the province are given the opportunity to participate in programs at a level that suits their individual needs. Each program allows athletes to develop their skills and grow into more advanced levels that allow them to compete locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally. Chantal is one of the athletes that has developed in both summer and winter sport and achieved success at every level of competition.

She is one of the 194 athletes who curl with Special Olympics Alberta and one of the 197 athletics competitors who participate in track and field events across the province. Chantal represents her community, Red Deer, which currently has 25 curlers and 9 track athletes.

Since starting with Special Olympics in 2003, she has always been an athlete who is willing to work hard and learn in order to grow as an athlete. She is motivated by her teammates and coaches, but most

importantly her twin sister, Thomasina, who also competes with Special Olympics.

**"I think Special Olympics has helped me be able to make friends and be able to try my best in sports," said Chantal. "It has helped my maturity level by meeting people and traveling to events."**

For Chantal, playing sports with Special Olympics is a way to remain active, play with friends, and feel the thrill of racing, which she advocated is an incredible feeling. One of the ways that she has grown to compete at the highest level is her commitment to mental training. As a member of Team Alberta, she received a mental training session with Canadian curler, Mick Lizmore, which she claimed was super informative and helped build on practices she had already implemented.

"I do a lot of mental training, so I take a deep breath and visualize the sport – I see myself passing by others and finishing strong," said Chantal.

Visualization combined with a formidable training regimen allows Chantal to compete to the best of her ability. She stated that she tries to run on the treadmill at the gym or jog around her neighbourhood to stay in shape. Chantal trains every week with Special Olympics Alberta and her athletics coach Kristen Mackenzie, who works with her to improve her overall fitness levels. As part of her training schedule,



Chantal vastly improved her speed, jump length, and general fitness through exercises and routines that focused on her track times and broad jump.

"I feel that what Special Olympics is offering is great – I have great coaches and a great trainer and I wouldn't do anything differently. My training is always good for me."

Special Olympics offers athletes the opportunity to compete at all levels and Chantal's dedication has allowed her to gain insight at each level.

Chantal stood on the podium not once, but twice, earning silver medals in the 4x100m relay and 200m. Reaching the podium at the World Games is an incredible feat and the pinnacle for sport within Special Olympics and she continues to prove she is capable of improving through the help of coaches and teammates.

"[My teammates] are really motivating and they help you push yourself. They help me and cheer me on."

She is a decorated athlete having competed at the 2008 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games in Quebec City and is a member of Team Alberta for the 2018 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games in Antigonish.

Chantal is now a seasoned veteran when it comes to Special Olympics competition having competed for the past 15 years, which culminated in an appearance at the 2007 Special Olympics World Games in Shanghai, China. Her future goals include returning to Worlds – a journey that starts with the 2019 Special Olympics Alberta Winter Games in Calgary.

This year we are celebrating our 50th Anniversary with our hopes in making inclusion for all a reality. Chantal Payne is one of the athletes at the forefront of this movement challenging people to #ChooseToInclude and end discrimination for those with intellectual disabilities.

"Choosing to include means being respected and feeling like you belong somewhere. No one should ever have to feel differently."



**Total Athletes: 3,207**

**Competitions Sanctioned by Special Olympics Alberta: 42**

Year	Competitions
2017/18	42
2016/17	31
2015/16	45

## Inspiring Athletes One Spare at a Time



"A good coach can change a game. A great coach can change a life."

– John Wooden

Special Olympics Alberta has been blessed with incredible coaches since our inception in 1980 and like the great John Wooden once proclaimed a great coach can change a life – Pat Enns is the epitome of this statement. For the past 26 years Medicine Hat's Pat Enns has been helping Special Olympics bowlers strike their potential.

Pat started coaching 5-pin bowling in 1992 after being asked to help cover for a coach at an SOA-Calgary event. She then took over as the 10-pin head coach in 1999, a position she has held since, and began helping out with the powerlifting program six years ago. Her efforts continue to improve the lives of athletes at Special Olympics Alberta and she was recognized this year with the 2018 Volunteer Leadership Award for her commitment to multiple sports, the mentorship she provides to new volunteers, and her overall passion for Special Olympics.

"I have been able to be involved for so long and be part of the athletes' lives - it is defining in its own right," said Pat. "Experiencing failures and triumphs or accomplishments. I don't know how you define or measure moments like that."

There are not many coaches with a resume like Pat, who has coached at the National level for every Summer Games since 1998 – acting as the 10-pin head coach for the last four Nationals. In 2003, she was selected as a coach for Team Canada to attend the World Games in Ireland. It was a spectacular year for Pat who was recognized as the Special Olympics Alberta Coach of the Year.

What makes Pat special as a coach, however, isn't just her impressive resume, but her impact on each athlete she has worked with. Pat believes that understanding how to reach each athlete on a personal level is what is most important. Establishing a bond where you can act as not only a coach, but also as a friend is something that can help each athlete flourish.

**"I learned how to teach each athlete as an individual and help each athlete use their specific technique to the best of their ability,"**

Special Olympics coaches are incredible advocates for inclusion and continue to act as inspirational leaders on and off the field. They are able to provide athletes with the tools they need to succeed in sport through helping them improve their natural abilities and teaching them new techniques.

"As we grow in our understanding of rehabilitation for people with intellectual disabilities and as Special Olympics pushed forward to show that people with intellectual disabilities have the same rights, we really do show that it is okay to accept everyone," said Pat.



While she has had many unforgettable experiences during her time with Special Olympics there is one that stands out:

"The one that really still tugs at my heartstrings is the time we were in Barrhead for Provincials and we had an athlete in swimming who won the gold. At the medal ceremony the other two athletes were lower on their podiums and the athlete pulled up the teammates onto their level to share in the glory. It was defining moment for me and Medicine Hat because caring is something we try to instill within our program."

Special Olympics has developed resources and programs to help coaches improve their teaching abilities from the introductory course to our upcoming Coach Development Program in conjunction with Alberta Sport Development Centres in 2018/2019.

Pat has been a cornerstone for Special Olympics Alberta-Medicine Hat, helping the affiliate blossom into what it is today. The program has expanded to seven sports and new athletes are joining every year.

Over the next five years, she wants to see her bowling club grow and is determined to find the individuals who will be committed to instilling these values in Medicine Hat and continuing the legacy she has built there.

"I think [Special Olympics] is life changing," said Pat. "It really is. I think that people coming in need to know that they will be rewarded somehow through enriching the lives of individuals."



### Did you know?

5-pin bowling is most popular sport in Alberta with more than 1,800 athletes choosing to compete in the sport. The highest competition athletes are able to compete in is National Games as 10-pin bowling is able to compete in World Games. In 2020, 5-pin bowling will be recognized as a winter sport.

**Total  
Coaches:**

**501**

**New  
Coaches:**

**72**

## Volunteers Driving the Movement



Justin Lee is a jack of all trades or “volunteer at large” when it comes to supporting Special Olympics programs.

He first started volunteering with Special Olympics Alberta in 2006 with Fort McMurray community program. As a small program he helped out wherever he could, working with multiple sports including athletics, basketball, bowling, and floor hockey.

In 2012, Justin moved to Calgary and immediately got involved with the soccer program where he currently volunteers as a soccer program coordinator and assists with curling in the winter. Beyond sport, he assists with the Athlete Leadership Committee as an athlete leadership support.

“I think it is a very positive organization in the sense that everyone is upbeat and I love sports, so it worked even better for me,” said Justin. “You can see tangible benefits with the athletes long term and sometimes even within a season.”

He stated that one of the things that makes volunteering with Special Olympics so appealing is that there are many different types of volunteer roles and different sports you can get involved with to help the athletes.

His experience with Special Olympics has been extremely positive and the evolution of sports programs is something he sees as the biggest benefit for the athletes.

“There is a much stronger push for quality programs over quantity, which I think is good in the long run,” said Justin. “What I would like to see is just more ongoing consistency in volunteers, being able to provide good facilities, equipment, and good coaches.”

For Justin, volunteering with Special Olympics has been a rewarding and fulfilling experience. He has had the good fortune of working with many different athletes and learn why it is important to volunteer, but one lesson stands out: Appreciation.

**“We should all be grateful. Everyone has their issues, but sometimes it takes a practice or an encounter with an athlete to realize that we all have our own struggles and we always have our own ways to contribute or find success.”**

There has been a lot of lessons for Justin who has been able to participate in many different events from a local level to a national level. This year he acted as Mission Staff for Team Alberta basketball at the 2018 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games. He advocated that each competition experience brings new challenges, but allows volunteers to learn, grow, and find inspiration in these moments.

“It really is eye opening the sheer diversity and depth of athletic ability that some athletes have,” said Justin. “You may not always see that locally, but to see it at a national level - you can see some amazing performances and ability and it inspires me to bring back ideas to improve our program.”

Justin believes that volunteering with Special Olympics is important because of the inclusive nature of the organization and the overall athlete experience it delivers.

“It provides an active lifestyle that may not be available to the athletes and it provides an opportunity for the larger society to understand that despite having an intellectual disability has as much upside as anyone else and should have as many opportunities – it is a very positive environment.”

Family and opportunity define Justin’s experience with Special Olympics and he recommends that anyone wanting to experience that should do so immediately.

"In the last 12 years that I have been involved I have moved, I have changed jobs, and my life has changed in many ways," said Justin. "Life has been busy and dynamic for me, but one of the few consistencies was the organization. It is one of the most consistent things in my life and I hope that it will continue to be part of my life in the future. Some of the people in the organization have been in my life longer than others in my personal life, so it really speaks to the family nature of SO."

Volunteers are the catalysts for Special Olympics and their ability to provide support for our athletes and programs is what drives the movement. They continue to push our message of inclusion and raise awareness for our athletes with the ultimate goal of ending discrimination. The 1210 volunteers in Alberta have helped advance each sports program and their commitment and dedication to improving the athlete experience is invaluable.

**Special Olympics Alberta would like to celebrate the milestones reached by our volunteers across Alberta during 2017-18.**

## 35 Years

Heather Roberts, Red Deer

## 30 Years

Connie Biro, Red Deer

## 25 Years

Lyndon Chubbs, Airdrie  
Marsha Bredeson, Red Deer

## 20 Years

Deborah Herman, Leduc  
Mark Mengersen, Olds  
Mitchell Lyle, St. Albert  
Dave Adams, Strathcona

## 15 Years

Daniel Mullen, Crowsnest Pass  
Sandra Mullen, Crowsnest Pass  
Marie Payne, Red Deer  
Deborah Foster, St. Albert  
Evelyn Yaceyko, West Central

## 10 Years

Heather Frame, Airdrie  
Kayla Bekolay, Brooks  
Preston Wideman, Camrose  
Marlene Chorny, Olds  
Wendy Davies, Olds  
Daniel Fisher, Olds  
Brenda Fisher, Olds  
Joanne Hudson, Red Deer  
Dave Biro, Red Deer

## 5 Years

Luiz Veronese, Airdrie  
Alyssa Rolfson, Airdrie  
Ann Marie Urdal, Airdrie  
Nancy Madsen, Barrhead  
Jennifer Trenerry, Brooks  
Christopher Nielsen, Lloydminster  
Lauren McLean, Medicine Hat  
Vince Higdon, Medicine Hat  
Shannon Higdon, Medicine Hat  
Gary Dunlop, Olds  
Lesley Moberly, Olds  
Joanne Nickerson, Olds  
Audrey Buist, Olds  
Mary Wile, Olds  
McKenzie Robbie, Olds  
Michael Rooks, Olds  
Else de Groot, Red Deer  
Jeffrey Findlay, Red Deer

Cale Kooyman, Red Deer  
Alayne McDade, Red Deer  
Kerry Tronnes, Red Deer  
Wendy Wallis, Red Deer  
Alison Rudge, St. Albert  
Blair Johnson, St. Albert  
Mandy Fisher, St. Albert  
Taylor Garstad, St. Albert  
Stacy Bodnar, St. Paul  
Jocelyn Speirs, West Central  
Gordon Montgomery, West Central  
Donald Roth, West Central  
Kaitilyn Brawn, Lacombe  
Alina Maagwick, Lacombe  
Jeff Johnson, Strathcona  
Sara McConnell-Johnson, Strathcona

### Did you know?

Our volunteers are in over 150 communities that stretch as far as Paddle Prairie to Raymond.

**Total Volunteers  
(Including Coaches):**

# 1,210

## Unified Sports Fosters Inclusion



Special Olympics Unified Sports was introduced in Alberta in partnership with the Alberta Schools' Athletics Association (ASAA) just three years ago, but it has already blossomed into a catalyst for inclusion across Alberta.

Unified Sports joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding. The program was introduced in Alberta during the 2015/2016 season with high school students participating in basketball, bean bag toss, bocce, and track. Numbers continue to grow exponentially every year and high schools across the province are quickly adopting the play unified mentality.

Winston Churchill High School (WCHS) in Lethbridge is one of the schools that is carrying the flag for Unified Sports in Southern Alberta. The WCHS Unified program, like others in the province, is in its infancy with 10 students actively participating. They currently offer Unified bocce, but their Athletic Director, Jonathan Dick hopes to introduce basketball as the program grows in the school. He was drawn to Unified Sports due to its inclusive nature and the opportunity it provides to students with and without intellectual disabilities to get involved.

**"Being a member of a school sports team or sports event is a very valuable opportunity in which so many positive things can be gained and I feel it is important for all students to have a chance to participate in such a great experience," said Jonathan.**

WCHS hosts an annual Unified Bocce Festival and this year's event featured 20 athletes and partners from WCHS, Immanuel Christian Secondary School, and Magrath Junior Senior High School. Jonathan said that the event was a success with current and past students helping out, as well as local law enforcement officers attending to cheer on the participants.

"I think just watching all of the students participate, work together and interact with one another towards a common goal was a real highlight," said Jonathan.

WCHS plans to host the festival for the third straight year in 2019 and Jonathan's goal is to increase the number of participants. Unified Sports in Southern Alberta is beginning to grow and events are being suggested. Jonathan has high expectations for Unified Sports in the region and hopes to see more events and schools involved in the future.

"I would like to see at least two events held in Lethbridge each year - one in the fall and one in the spring," said Jonathan. "It would be great to see every school in our region put together a Unified program in which they would have at least one team that could participate in events. It would also be nice to see teams from Southern Alberta start to attend events in other regions of Alberta and vice versa."

The growth of Unified Sports in Alberta continues to be outstanding and this year in Alberta 565 students (280 athletes and 285 partners) participated across the province. This has almost double the number of students and is paralleled by the growth in participating schools to 43.

For the first time, the Metro Edmonton High School Athletic Association hosted the 2018 Unified Sport Edmonton Jamboree with 236 students representing 18 high schools, creating the first multi-sport Unified event in Alberta.

Alberta hit another milestone by sending its first Unified team representing Alberta to an out-of-province tournament. Bert Church Chargers bocce team consisting of athletes: Noah Van Dewark and Ami Schaan, partners: Kendra Van Dewark and Emma Rockwell, and coaches: Ian Ferguson and Cynthia Dahl became the first Unified Sports team from Alberta to compete at the Special Olympics Ontario School Championships. The team had an incredible experience and walked away as Champions in the Unified Bocce tournament.

Individuals with an intellectual disability can register with Special Olympics as early as two-years-old and Unified Sports provides more opportunities for youth to belong to an inclusive community through sport. He believes that Unified Sports can help eliminate discrimination for people with intellectual disabilities.

"I definitely see Unified Sports as a catalyst for inclusion in sports. A number of things, including sport involvement starts in the school years and at the school for many. Having the opportunity to participate in Unified Sports through schools gives students the opportunity to be involved in the school community in which they can take great pride in."

Having students with and without intellectual disabilities playing together on the same team has transformed the culture within the hallways according to Jonathan.

"I think as a Unified program builds within a school it will help to build school spirit in a way that maybe wasn't previously there," said Jonathan. "The involvement of all students and the inclusion of everyone can become infectious and create a very fun and positive environment for everyone."

The partnership with the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association (ASAA) is showing a bright future of Unified Sports as it continues to break barriers of isolation and uniting students.

## Thank you to the amazing schools for playing Unified and hosting events. And special thanks to Metro Edmonton High School Athletics for hosting the first multi-sport Unified Sports Jamboree.

Ecole Alexandre Tache-Tache, Archbishop O'Leary Catholic High School, Assumption Junior Senior High School, Bellerose Composite High School, Bert Church High School, Bishop McNally High School, Blessed Oscar Romero Catholic High School, Bonnyville Centralized High School, Breton High School, Chestermere High School, Cochrane High School, Cold Lake High School, Delia School, E.H. Walter School, Eastglen High School, Edwin Parr Composite High School, Father Scollen Catholic School, Frank Maddock High School, Fort Saskatchewan Senior High School, Glendon School, Harry Ainlay High School, Lester B. Pearson High School, Lord Beaverbrook High School, Louis St. Laurent Junior Senior High School, L.Y. Cairns School, Ecole Maurice-Lavallee, Mayerthorpe Junior Senior High School, Medicine Hat High School, Memorial Composite High School, M.E. LaZerte High School, Notre Dame High School, Onaway Junior Senior High School, Ross Sheppard High School, St. John Paul II Catholic Secondary School, St. Joseph High School, St. Joseph School, St. Martin de Porres School, St. Paul Regional High School, St. Peter the Apostle High School, Strathcona High School, Sturgeon Composite High School, Queen Elizabeth Composite High School, Winston Churchill High School.

### Unified Athletes and Partners:

# 565

Year	Total Unified Athletes and Partners
2017/18	565 (280 Athletes, 285 Partners)
2016/17	441 (228 Athletes, 213 Partners)
2015/16	86 (43 Athletes, 43 Partners)

### Unified Events Sports:

- Basketball,
- Bean Bag Toss,
- Bocce,
- Track & Field

# 9

### Schools in Unified Sports

Year	Total Schools
2017/18	43
2016/17	36
2015/16	8

## Our Global Footprint

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

### 1 Team Canada honoured at Parliament Hill

On November 29, 2017 members of Team Canada were honoured by the Government of Canada in the first ever Special Olympics House of Commons Recognition Ceremony.

104 athletes and 35 mission staff and coaches were recognized on Parliament Hill by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and then, Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Kent Hehr for their accomplishments and performances at the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria!



**"On behalf of Special Olympics Team Canada, and my fellow athletes in grassroots programs across the country, thank you to the Government of Canada for its generous and ongoing support. Special Olympics has given me the chance to grow as an athlete and an individual, allowing me to make friends with my fellow athletes as well as volunteers and coaches, contribute to my community and beyond, and pursue a healthier lifestyle."**

**—Evan James, speed skater,  
Special Olympics Team Canada**

It was an incredible display of support from Canadian leaders who organized a pep rally at Notre Dame High School, which was followed by a Unified basketball game between Special Olympics athletes and students from the high school.

"These Special Olympics Team Canada athletes are a true inspiration," said Minister Hehr. "It is a privilege to honour them for their performance at the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games. I would like to congratulate them and thank them for representing Canada on the world stage."

# 2



Special Olympics  
**ALBERTA  
SUMMER GAMES**  
Medicine Hat 2017

Medicine Hat played host to the 2017 Special Olympics Alberta Summer Games with over 900 athletes and 300 coaches and mission staff from over 60 Alberta communities and N.W.T. competing in 11 summer sports: 5-pin bowling, 10-pin bowling, athletics, basketball, bocce, golf, powerlifting, rhythmic gymnastics, soccer, softball and swimming. The athletes weren't the only thing heating up as temperatures soared at mid-30 degrees in Medicine "Hot." This didn't deter the athletes from enjoying the festivities with the Opening Ceremonies at the Medicine Hat Exhibition & Stampede Fieldhouse.

Dignitaries including Her Honour, the Honourable Lois E. Mitchell, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Medicine Hat's Member of Parliament Glen Motz, Medicine Hat's Mayor, Ted Clugston, and Olympic medalist, Catriona Le May Doan spoke to the over 2,000 spectators supporting our athletes.

**"This is my first time in Medicine Hat and it's a beautiful city and just to come out to be with my team, my coaches, and being around my fellow athletes is a blast. It's something I always look forward to every time," said Darren Pedersen, Special Olympics Alberta-Grande Prairie soccer player.**

It was an extraordinary event with athletes taking away over 1,000 medals for their stellar performances. Although the memories of the celebration of victory and gracious defeat are all part of the games experience, our athletes took more away from achieving personal bests, lasting friendships and the undisputable knowledge that they have limitless abilities. The Games left a lasting legacy and Special Olympics Alberta was presented with a cheque for \$52,852 from the Games Organizing Committee.

"We had a solid Games Organizing Committee with the hundreds of volunteers that pulled it off together with their hard work and fantastic coordination. Even the hot sunny weather couldn't stop the enthusiasm and spirit of our Games volunteers who made sure that our athletes were well hydrated, had shade and options for cooling off for all our outdoor sports."- Johnny Byrne, president and CEO, Special Olympics Alberta.



## 3 50th Anniversary- Light Up Red and ChallengeAcceptedSOC

On July 21, the Global Day of Inclusion took place to mark the beginning of Special Olympics' 50th anniversary. Iconic landmarks, stadia, and monuments across the globe including the High Level Bridge in Edmonton and Calgary Tower were lit up RED as part of a global demonstration of inclusion. The shining beacons echoed throughout the world that the world is ready for full inclusion.

In Canada, we launched a national awareness campaign, #ChallengeAcceptedSOC, to celebrate inclusion and answer the world that we are ready to accept the challenge of inclusion and eliminate discrimination for people with intellectual disabilities. The Special Olympics 50th anniversary campaign highlights the transformative power of sport through relatable, human challenges our athletes face everyday - in sport and in life. The campaign demonstrates our athletes' the ability to stare down any challenge and respond: Challenge Accepted.

From thousands of athletes across the country, Special Olympics Alberta athlete, Connor Bisset was selected as one of the faces of the campaign. His piece featured him facing challenges in and outside of the pool – specifically his personal challenge to ask a girl to prom.

Alberta reached a new height of recognition with a showcase on display at the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame & Museum. The display celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Special Olympics movement, Canada's heroes and the growth in future of Special Olympics in Alberta. Patrons are able to view the display from July to December 2017.

**"Fifty years ago, Special Olympics began its mission to break down barriers and create a more inclusive world at the first ever International Summer Games," said Johnny Byrne, Special Olympics Alberta president and CEO.**

"As we charge into the next 50 years with a renewed purpose of ending discrimination, we are seeing more and more partners and supporters spreading and growing our movement across our province. Alberta has accepted this challenge of inclusion for all and will carry this vision for the next 50 years."

## 4 2018 SOC Bowling Championships – May 16 to 19, 2018

47 Team Alberta bowlers hit the lanes in P.E.I. to compete at the 2018 Special Olympics Canada Bowling Championships against over 300 athletes from across the country.

5-pin bowlers made their mark at the Murphy's Community Centre Bowling Lanes in Charlottetown and the 10-pin squad bowled at the Tyne Valley Bowling Centre in Tyne Valley and Credit Union Place in Summerside.

Team Alberta was on fire bowling turkeys, striking personals bests, and making memories on the lanes. Bowler, James Starewski, even hit five strikes in a row at one point. 10-pin bowlers competed in singles, doubles, and team play – and were also awarded medals in the all-event, while 5-pin bowlers competed in individual and team play. Overall, our bowlers walked away with 40 medals - Team Alberta's best Nationals to date.

These impressive performances will earn some of Team Alberta a spot on Team Canada, to be selected later this year, and the chance to compete at the 2019 Special Olympics Summer Games in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



Special Olympics Canada  
Bowling Championships  
Championnats de quilles  
d'Olympiques spéciaux Canada

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND 2018 ÎLE-DU-PRINCE-ÉDOUARD



"The Championships were good and so was the food," said 10-pin bowler Mark Mengersen. "I enjoyed the Opening Ceremonies. I had a lot of strikes and spares and bowled my best score. I came home with Team Silver, Doubles Silver, Singles Gold and Gold over-all."

### Team Alberta Medal Count:

**13 Gold 13 Silver 14 Bronze**

# Carrying the Flame of Hope to an Inclusive Tomorrow



**The Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR)<sup>®</sup> is the largest public awareness vehicle and grassroots fundraiser for Special Olympics.**

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

Annually, more than 97,000 dedicated and passionate law enforcement members carry the “Flame of Hope,” symbolizing courage and celebration of diversity uniting communities around the globe. In Alberta, over 717 officers from 14 communities champion for acceptance and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities and have secured funds to ensure we are providing quality sports programs and competitions.

This was another year filled with memories as Alberta LETR officers raised \$627,636 through 39 incredible events. Officers braved the weather and camped on rooftops, they plunged into freezing water, cycled across the province, and carried the Flame of Hope into Special Olympics National and Provincial Games. Law enforcement officers in Alberta continue to be pillars of support for Special Olympics athletes and catalysts for ending discrimination.

LETR members take their role as Guardians of the Flame very seriously and continue protect the Flame of Hope as it shines a light on those with intellectual disabilities.

For Blaine Stodolka, a retired Lethbridge Police Service officer, the benefit to the athletes continues to be what drives him to stay involved with Special Olympics and LETR. Plunging into freezing water and camping on the roof with minimal sleep is a small price to pay to provide funding and raise awareness for Special Olympics athletes to achieve their dreams. This mentality is something he aims to protect, acting as a Guardian of the Flame.

**“I was very honored to receive that privilege,” said Blaine. “It was a beautiful event and it was awesome to meet others from other provinces.”**

The fire burned brightly as Blaine clutched the Flame of Hope on his journey across P.E.I. alongside 12 other LETR officers and two Special Olympics athletes. They traveled from tip-to-tip of the island to share hope and light throughout the province and to raise awareness for the National Games. He became heavily involved with LETR after becoming LPS community liaison in 2007.

"Once I got involved with my first event with Special Olympics, it was a no-brainer from there on in. I was sold when I saw the athletes thrive and just the love and the appreciation that they had for what we did."

He has worked as the lead on every LETR event at least once including the first ever Polar Plunge in 2012. Even in his retirement Blaine continues to serve as a co-lead or sit on the committee to help organize events including the Torch Run, Cycle for a Cause, Free our Finest, and the Polar Plunge. While he enjoys every event he stated that his favourite is the 500km ride, as he is an avid cyclist. In 2014, he completed the entire 500km ride – a goal he had since starting in 2007.

"The first time I rode into Foote Field and saw all the athletes go wild and come to give me a hug - the appreciation, love, and kindness just blew me away," said Blaine. "It is something that will never be forgotten and touched my heart deeply. I just rode my butt off literally and it was worth it."

"It is amazing how far we have come," said Stodolka. "We have a long way to go for total inclusion and for people to really understand the magnitude of what needs to be accomplished and what is being accomplished for these athletes."

Blaine believes that sport provides athletes the opportunity to be themselves and compete in an environment that allows them to showcase their ability. Moving forward, he has a few goals for the Alberta LETR over the next five years. He hopes that more young law enforcement officers get involved and that they break the million dollar mark for fundraising in a year.

"Whether I am retired or not I am in for life."



*Law enforcement member participation increased by 91 percent in 2017.*



*Events: Free our Finest, Cops, Pops & Pizza, Polar Plunge, Cops & Crepes, LETR Torch runs, Truck Convoy for Special Olympics, Flame of Hope Raffle, Provincial Bike Ride, Cycle for a Cause, Black Tie Gala and Cars, Cops, & Kidz.*



*Red Deer hosted its first Polar Plunge in 2018 raising over \$4,000*

## Healthy Athletes



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

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

Health promotion has become more available with the support of national partner, Sobeys, who have offered nutrition workshops to athletes and families all year round in communities across Alberta. With the help of Sobeys and other companies in the Calgary area, athletes took part in the the second annual Athlete Conference on April 14 providing essential education on healthy living.

The theme for the Athlete Conference was health and safety with an emphasis on three key topics: personal safety, physical activity, and nutrition.

"The goal of the conference was to educate our athletes on living a healthier and safer lifestyle," said Nadine Scotland, communications and special events organizer of SOA-Calgary. "We wanted to provide them with information, tools and tips to make healthier decisions in their food choices and activities. We believe that we achieved this goal by

having outstanding presenters that introduced valuable information in a fun and interactive way that made it memorable for our participants." 86 athletes and 39 caregivers were in attendance for the sessions available throughout the day.

"Safe 4 Life presented knowledge and tips on how to protect yourself and stay safe, including how to react in crisis situations. Dubasov Dance & Wellness guided participants in dance, movement, and yoga sessions to share insight on staying active. Sobeys provided everyone with nutritional advice through education about common food myths. Athletes received healthy recipes and had the chance to make their own tasty snacks – along with offering a healthy lunch. Even Calgary linebacker, Alex Singleton, shared tips on healthy eating habits and training."

The success of the Athlete Conference shows the strong need and want of athletes and families to gain proper education on nutrition and healthy choices. Special Olympics Alberta hopes to grow the partnership with Sobeys to reach more athletes and communities across the province. The potential to unlock health care and services for all people with intellectual disabilities allows more than 3,000 athletes in Alberta the to reach full participation in their communities.

**Total Athletes in  
Fitness Programs: 73**

## Cultivating community and inclusiveness through motionball



"It is the best day ever," said Karen Unger, Event Director for motionball Edmonton. motionball is a not-for-profit organization that builds awareness and raises funds for the Special Olympics Canada Foundation, targeting a "next generation" of supporters – Canada's professional crowd who are not defined by their age, but rather their mindset. It started in 2002 and has grown across the country with 20 cities hosting 33 motionball events last year and raising 1.5 million dollars for Special Olympics programs.

In Alberta, Calgary hosts an annual Gala and Marathon of Sport and this past year Edmonton hosted its first Marathon of Sport.

It raised over \$35,000, the most ever for an inaugural Marathon of Sport. In total, nearly \$400,000 was raised last year across the province to support Special Olympics.

Marathon of Sport is a motionball event that has teams of young professionals and athletes competing together in a day filled with various sports. Karen Unger was overwhelmed by the success of Edmonton's first Marathon of Sport, which took place on September 30, 2017.

"It was beyond my wildest dreams and we raised over \$35,000, which is a record for a new city hosting a Marathon of Sport," said Karen. "One of the highlights was Joey Moss coming out and in my mind in this city he represents the values that come with inclusion and sport." For Karen, the long term goal is to build a culture and community for motionball in Edmonton. With Special Olympics celebrating its 50th Anniversary the ultimate goal is to end discrimination through choosing to include and Unger believes this aligns with her vision of an inclusive community developed through motionball.

"I think it is the whole premise – creating a space for inclusion, where people can learn how to include," said Karen. "Our motto is 'educate, integrate, celebrate,' so inclusion is built into our mission. The goal is

always to create a space where it is okay to have any level of experience and play together." This vision has quickly become a reality with young professionals connecting with athletes outside of events. "There is one team captain that has stayed in touch with the athlete from their team," said Karen. "They invited the athlete to meet their newborn. Seeing those kinds of connections - I didn't anticipate that stuff like that would happen within the first couple of years, but it's a great thing."

Marathon of Sport in Edmonton was a massive success with 14 teams competing in a variety of sports ranging from bocce, soccer, and basketball to bench ball and iron curtain volleyball. This year Karen is planning for 20 teams with nine returning and will have new sports like inflatable foosball. Moving forward she has a few goals for motionball in Edmonton. She is hoping that the second annual event will raise 50 thousand and remain an engaging event that teams will be immediately excited to return for, as well as hosting a university event in Edmonton, similar to the one in Calgary.

Emma Wolowski, the President of the University of Alberta Special Olympics Student Group, along with members of the club attended Motionball YYC in June and they are already planning to host a Motionball event at the University of Alberta. "Participating in Marathon of Sport was such an amazing experience and something we want to continue to be a part of," said Emma. "We have members volunteering at the Edmonton event and we have plans underway for hosting a Marathon of Sport at the U of A which will hopefully happen in the winter term. A big part of our mission as a group is to promote inclusion on campus and Marathon of Sport is an amazing opportunity for students to actually interact with the athletes and create memories with them. Once you've formed those relationships you can't help but want to continue to be involved."

Karen believes that those looking to get involved should do so immediately because not only is it an unbelievably fun experience, but the outcome is so beneficial. "From a volunteering / charity perspective one of the biggest benefits is that you're not just giving money, but you are face-to-face with the person who it goes towards helping," said Karen.

motionball exists in almost every province across the country and the goal is to raise two million dollars in 2020 for Special Olympics Canada. Our ardent and dedicated partners continue to generate awareness and raise funds through the exciting events that motionball offers. The next generation have become advocates for inclusion and Special Olympics Alberta is proud to work together to end discrimination.

## Awards 2017-18



### Male Athlete of the Year: Steven Thackray

**Affiliate: Lethbridge, Sports: 5-pin Bowling, 10-pin Bowling, Powerlifting, Swimming, Floor hockey**

61-year-old Lethbridge swimmer, Steven Thackray continues to define what it means to be an exceptional athlete. For 42 years Steven has been involved in multiple sports and his dedication has never wavered. Steven is the epitome of sportsmanship, as he is always supporting his teammates and assisting them in any way he can. He was selected for three of the last four Team Alberta squads for Summer Games and has attended Worlds twice for floor hockey. Retirement is not in his vocabulary and last year at Provincials in Medicine Hat he achieved personal bests in each of his swim events and medaled in almost all of them. Steven is a shining example of positivity and a leader who continues to motivate athletes to do their best and have fun.



### Female Athlete of the Year: Carissa Burch

**Affiliate: Lethbridge, Sport: 10-pin Bowling**

Carissa Burch has excelled in the lanes during her seven years with Special Olympics as a 10-pin bowler. She had an incredible year sweeping golds at the 2017 Summer Games in Medicine Hat, which earned her a spot on Team Alberta. At the 2018 National Bowling Championships she won gold in the team event, doubles, singles, and a bronze in the all event category. Over the past two years she has improved her average by over 15 pins and become a leader on her Lethbridge bowling team. Carissa has blossomed into a player who offers advice to less experienced teammates and cheers them on at every event. She has no quit in her and will try her best every time.



### Male Coach of the Year: Jim Ofrim

**Affiliate: Camrose, Sports: Head Coach of Bocce, Cross Country Skiing, Golf, Soccer, and Softball Program Coordinator**

Jim Ofrim is one of the most engaged coaches in Special Olympics Alberta and has championed many of the coaching opportunities for the Camrose affiliate. During his six years with SOA, Jim has assisted with many programs and is currently the head coach for five sports in Camrose. As the Program Coordinator, Jim is actively involved in planning events and recruiting new volunteers. He is an amazing coach who promotes inclusion and improvement in every team he supports. He works closely with coaches to provide positive feedback and assist wherever he is needed. What separates Jim is his commitment to getting to know each athlete and willingness to support them in sport and in their personal endeavors. Jim is punctual, encouraging, dedicated, and leads by example for all coaches, athletes, and volunteers.



### Female Coach of the Year: Rochelle Chamczuk

**Affiliate: West Central, Sports: Head Coach of Athletics, Floor Hockey, Speed Skating, and Soccer**

Rochelle Chamczuk has been busy during her 14 years with Special Olympics developing the athletics, floor hockey, speed skating, and soccer programs for the West Central affiliate. She is an incredibly passionate coach who works tirelessly to put together practices and schedule events for her athletes including the annual Spring Classic Floor Hockey tournament hosted by West Central. Rochelle sees the limitless potential in every athlete and her enthusiasm for Special Olympics is contagious. Getting to know every athlete and making sure they are a valued part of the team is a key component of Rochelle's coaching technique and it has allowed athletes to thrive from local competitions to the World Games.



### Team of the Year: Camrose Cardinals

**Affiliate:** Camrose, **Head Coach:** Roland Richard

**Athletes:** Jon Gurr, Sawyer Kendall, Noah Lehman, Chris Sutter, Chad Rombough, Kyle Atkinson, Mitchell Banks, Corey Boettger, George Hagel, Chris Hoecherl, Brian Keller, Justin Sitler, Preston Wideman, Bryce Ames

The Camrose Cardinals softball team are ambassadors for their community who frequently volunteer for Special Olympics and LETR events. Each player is proud to be a Cardinal and they are dedicated to upholding their sportsmanlike reputation. At every tournament the Cardinals cheer on opposing players and quickly line up to shake hands after a game. The Cardinals are dedicated to practicing and improving, but what makes them special is their comradery. When teammates make mistakes they rally around that player to build them up and let them know the team has their back. Their hard work has paid dividends, winning gold at the 2017 Summer Games in Medicine Hat.



### Volunteer Leadership Award: Pat Enns

**Affiliate:** Medicine Hat

**Roles:** Head Coach of 10-pin Bowling, Powerlifting Team Alberta 10-pin Bowling Head Coach

For the past 28 years, Pat Enns has been instrumental in developing and evolving the Special Olympics program in Medicine Hat. Her experience at the local, provincial, national, and international level has been key for athlete development, but what makes Pat special is her ability to connect with the athletes. She has such a positive impact on each athlete she coaches and the joy she brings to them is visible. Pat is committed to recruiting volunteers and setting them up for success by offering advice, guidance, or assisting wherever she is needed. Her efforts and passion are inspiring and she has created an environment where athletes, coaches, and volunteers can thrive and achieve their potential.



### Rising Star Volunteer Award: Jaelynn Funk

**Affiliate:** Medicine Hat

**Roles:** Affiliate Management Committee Chair

Jaelynn has been part of Special Olympics since 2015 starting as a bocce assistant coach. In her short time with the organization, she has embraced new roles and responsibilities and in 2017 took over as Medicine Hat's management committee chair. She and her committee have capitalized on the energy and awareness from the 2017 Special Olympics Alberta Summer Games hosted by Medicine Hat. Jaelynn has also spearheaded new initiatives to bring basketball and Young Athletes programs to her community.



### Athlete Spirit Award: Francene Scott

**Affiliate:** Grande Prairie, **Sports:** 5-pin Bowling, Snowshoe, Swimming

An incident that put her in intensive care for six months was not enough to break the spirit of Grande Prairie's Francene Scott. Having to relearn how to walk and talk were stepping stones for Scott on her way back to the pool. Her journey to the 2017 Summer Games in Medicine Hat was inspiring for her teammates who watched Francene swim in four events – even earning personal bests. Even through her rehabilitation, Francene was always positive and supportive towards her teammates, encouraging them to try their best. She is motivated to overcome this obstacle and continue to play the sports she loves all while being a role model to her peers.



### **LETR Outstanding Contribution Award: Kevin Duval**

**Affiliate:** Red Deer

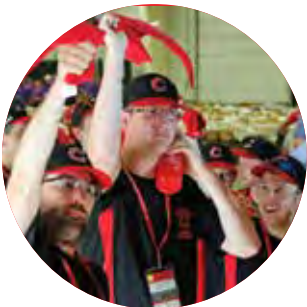
**Roles:** LETR Chair (Central), Vice Chair LETR Operations Committee, LETR Volunteer

Kevin has been involved with Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Alberta for the last 8 years. During this time he has increased his involvement from volunteering at events to chairing his region and sitting on the Provincial Operations Committee as Vice Chair. Kevin's dedication to Special Olympics is evident in his commitment to supporting all the events within his region and going out to other regions to support their events as well. From leading events to participating in events throughout Alberta, Special Olympics can always count on Kevin to be there!



### **LETR Community Spirit Award: Wetaskiwin**

For the last several years the Wetaskiwin affiliate has been a strong supporter of LETR events within their community. In 2015 they partnered with LETR to host their first Free Our Finest event and it has grown stronger every year since. In 2018, Wetaskiwin partnered with LETR to hold the first ever Battle of the Badges tournament, that saw RCMP and Firefighters take to the ice to support Special Olympics. The relationship that has been built between the Wetaskiwin affiliate and law enforcement members in the community has been key to the success of these events. Wetaskiwin has consistently reached out to LETR members to attend athlete events. We are so fortunate to have an affiliate that is so supportive of our law enforcement partners.



### **Murray Koch Youth Development Award: Camrose**

Camrose has consistently offered a great Active Start program for the last three years. The program coordinators have gone above and beyond to provide the best program possible by ensuring that their volunteers are trained in Young Athlete Coaching Courses. They are always ahead of the curve, utilizing any new materials or resources available, which has allowed the program to evolve at a rapid pace. Their commitment to Young Athletes is helping the athletes to develop their physical literacy skills quickly and will allow them to transition to Special Olympics programs available in Camrose. As a smaller affiliate, Camrose has always strived to improve their Young Athletes programming, resulting in it being a staple of our Active Start programs across the province.



### **MDA Community Leadership Award: Edmonton**

Edmonton continues to be a leader and support system for other affiliates across the province. Edmonton was the first affiliate to implement the online registration system and database and they have hosted information sessions to help other affiliates with inquiries. They are working with local organizations to improve the athlete experience including a partnership with the Edmonton Croatia Soccer Club and continued support from Propel Institute for Team Alberta softball. Major events include Metro Athletics hosting the first multi-sport Unified Jamboree, another successful track and field meet, Motionball Marathon of Sport, and in 2017 Edmonton sent an all-female soccer team to compete at the first SO Ontario Women's Soccer Festival. Edmonton is a huge support for LETR fundraising events and consistently supports Provincial and National fundraising.





### Unified School Award: Cochrane High School

Cochrane High School was selected as the recipient of the Unified School Award for the 2017/18 school year for their sportsmanship, school spirit, and dedication to taking Unified Sports to the next level in Alberta. Whether it's an abundance of high-fives or the Cochrane Cobra mascot teaching the athletes new dance moves, the Cochrane students never fail to create a positive atmosphere at every Unified event they take part in. Unified Sports is regularly included in other areas of high school sport and Cochrane is the only school that has competed in all four Unified Sports currently offered in Alberta. In March 2018, Cochrane was the first in the province to include a Unified Basketball demo game when they hosted the ASAA 3A High School Basketball Provincial Championships.

“Today I will do what others won't, so tomorrow I can accomplish what others can't.”

– Jerry Rice

## Athlete Leadership: Andrew Chamczuk and Mark Evans



Mark Evans (left) with fellow athlete golfer, Shane Stewart, (right) at 2017 Medicine Hat Games.

**Special Olympics athletes are at the forefront of the movement to make global inclusion a reality and leaders like Andrew Chamczuk and Mark Evans are making athlete's voices heard.**

Andrew Chamczuk has been an acting member of the Athlete Leadership Committee (ALC) for the past few years and is using his skills as a public speaker to communicate on behalf of his fellow athletes. Since 2005, he has been involved with Special Olympics competing in golf, speed skating, floor hockey, soccer, and athletics.

"The ALC was something I was interested in that I knew I could help with," said Andrew. "I know most of the other athletes the athletes in our affiliate, so I figured I would be a good representative for them."

As a member at large, Andrew is responsible for speaking with athletes in his affiliate to address any concerns they have and to bring them to the council for solutions. He advocated that his biggest strength as an athlete leader is his ability to speak well in public. He has delivered speeches at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for Special Olympics Alberta and spoke on behalf of Special Olympics athletes at Progress Club's AGM. Overall, Chamczuk believes that the ALC has helped him improve as an athlete, leader, and mentor.

"I have learned to respect other people's opinions a lot more and properly socialize in a professional environment," said Andrew. He said he has become a mentor on the West Central Lightning floor hockey team helping new athletes with drills and giving them advice including tips on how to develop into an athlete leader.

"I would say listen a lot and try to be as polite as you can. Enjoy it as much as you can because it helps everyone a lot."

The Athlete Leadership Committee was formed in Alberta in 2013 and includes nine athletes from all regions of the province who are elected by their peers to represent them and bring forward their ideas, suggestions, questions, and concerns. Each year Special Olympics Alberta hosts an Athlete Leadership Conference which provides new tools and resources for athlete leaders. This year, the event focused on identifying new athlete leaders through two different conferences – the first focused on athlete safety, health, and nutrition and the second on governance and how to be an athlete leader.

For nearly 30 years Mark Evans has been part of Special Olympics competing in downhill skiing and golf. He currently represents his fellow athletes as the Calgary representative on the ALC and he is also the athlete representative on the Affiliate Management Committee for Special Olympics Alberta – Calgary.

"Being on the leadership board helps to get things done for the athletes," said Mark. "I wanted to help and make sure people are comfortable."

Mark has embraced his role as a mentor and utilized the resources that Special Olympics provides to improve his leadership abilities. Last year he completed the mentorship program with SOA-Calgary and is now the program assistant for downhill skiing. "I have learned a lot from my coaches and now I am passing it on to the next generation," said Mark.



*Andre Chamczuk (left) at step of Alberta legislative building.*

His goals for the committee echoed the goals of the Athlete Leadership Conference, stating that he wanted to get new athletes involved to have new voices and ideas on the board. He is hoping that he can attend more practices to get a strong sense of what the athletes need and how he can help.

Being an athlete leader gives Andrew the opportunity to share his wisdom with athletes. He believes working as a program assistant has also helped refine his skills by teaching basic techniques and maneuvers to new skiers and helps keep him on top of his game.

Speaking from experience his best advice to new athletes is to just get out there and get involved because it is an inclusive environment where you can meet great people.

“Special Olympics has taught me to be myself and be who I am,” said Andrew. “Come have fun, meet new people, and be a teammate.”

Athlete leaders are inspiring the next generation of athletes to embrace who they are and help make inclusion a global reality. Athlete leaders continue to provide a voice for the many athletes who compete in Special Olympics and share their vision for a world without discrimination. Their voice is powerful and their message is bold. People with intellectual disabilities are done being left behind. We’re ready to show the world the power of inclusion. Our athletes are up for the challenge. Are you?

### Communities with Athlete Leadership programs:

12

Calgary

6

Edmonton

9

Grande Prairie

8

St. Albert

**Fun Fact: Airdrie and Lethbridge have athlete representatives sit on their committees.**

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

35

**Number of Provincial Athlete Leadership Committee members:**

9

### Provincial Athlete Leadership Committee Members

**North:** Hector Jean

**Edmonton:** Jessica McLean

**Central:** Matthew Mundorf

**Calgary:** Mark Evans

**South:** Vacant

**Athlete Board Representative:** Dallas Sorken

**Member at Large:** Doug Hutt

**Member at Large:** Andrew Chamczuk

**Member at Large:** Warren Pattison

**Member at Large:** Rodger Gratton

## Young Athletes: Active Start and FUNdamentals



What does every child want? The chance to kick a ball, to throw it well, to share that success with family members. What does every child with intellectual disabilities want? The exact same thing.

Making inclusion a reality for all starts with inspiring the next generation to understand that everyone deserves to belong without question. Special Olympics Alberta is committed to enriching the lives of athletes through sport and instilling these values of inclusion starts with our youth.

Special Olympics Young Athletes is a sport and play program for children from two to 12 years old. Our two programs: Active Start and FUNdamentals offers families, teachers, caregivers, and people from the community the chance to share the joy of sports with all children. Children are introduced to the world of sport by program leaders who help develop fundamental movement skills like walking, running, jumping, and balancing through fun activities and sport specific exercises. These skills provide support for everyday activities as well as a base for Special Olympics sports training and competition as athletes grow older.

Currently in Alberta there are seven communities offering Active Start programs and five communities offering the FUNdamentals program. Young Athletes program continues to thrive in the province due to the incredible leadership and efforts of program coordinators like Melody Willier. As the Program Coordinator for the Special Olympics Alberta – West Central Young Athletes program, Melody Willier was quintessential in establishing the program in Spruce Grove.

"I started with Special Olympics four years ago and I wanted something for my kids to do without having to travel to the city," said Melody. "Someone mentioned that Edmonton had an active start program, so we brought it out to the West Central affiliate."

There were 16 active participants in the West Central Young Athletes program last year, which allows Melody to run the Active Start and FUNdamentals programs in conjunction. It is done in two eight-week sessions – in the fall and the spring – with Melody following the fundamentals of the Young Athletes guidebook, but also adapting the sessions to suit the needs of each unique group.

"Depending on the age and the kids that we get I try to shape it to benefit the group like if the kids have been to multiple sessions we try to do different things or a different structure," said Melody. "We are learning how to throw or kick - the basics. We then try to implement it to a specific sport and learn how to play as teammates."

One of the most successful adaptations for Melody has been having a local sports team come in once per session to buddy up with an athlete to teach them drills and play a game with them. She advocated that it promotes inclusion and independence while giving the kids who attend multiple sessions a chance to try something new.

For Melody, Special Olympics is a family endeavor as she currently acts as the Secretary for SOA-West Central, her kids participate in the Young Athletes program, and her husband coaches snowshoe and golf. She is hoping to increase awareness about the Young Athletes program in her area as she believes there are many kids who could benefit from participating.

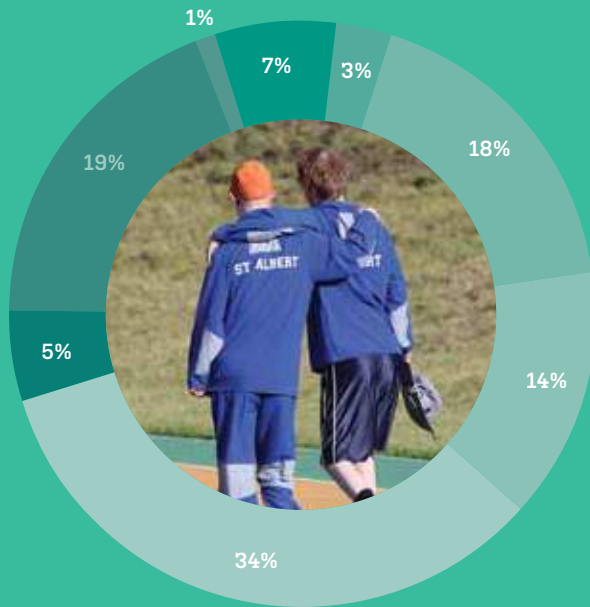
"I think it really is important to be able to teach kids the basics – like how to throw and kick or be part of a team. We will set them up for success."

The Active Start and FUNdamentals programs give children a chance to experience the inclusive environment of Special Olympics at an early age. Our programs provide a platform for children to develop self-esteem and participate in a safe and welcoming community.

Young Athletes opens the door for athletes to transition into other Special Olympics programs and continue a lifelong love of sport. Young Athletes helps lead children into a bright new world of sports and social skills, pride and possibility.

**Young Athletes  
in Active Start  
and FUNdamentals: 114**

## Where does your money go?



- 7% **Sport Programs and Events:** \$141,722
- 3% **Unified Sports Programs:** \$55,036
- 18% **Provincial Games:** \$387,285
- 14% **Team Alberta (National Games):** \$310,705
- 34% **Affiliate Services:** \$715,539
- 5% **Communications:** \$111,436
- 19% **Fund Development:** \$399,295
- 1% **Administration:** \$27,922

**Total Expenses: \$2,148,940**

## Sources of Funding



- 9% **National Sponsors:** \$188,749
- 22% **General Donations:** \$477,170
- 18% **Government Funding:** \$386,180
- 6% **Events:** \$133,619
- 30% **Alberta Gaming:** \$637,019
- 12% **Foundations:** \$263,567
- 2% **Investment income:** \$47,359
- 1% **Other Revenue:** \$16,667

**Total Revenue: \$2,150,330**

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

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

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

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

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

# Provincial Partners

On behalf of over 3,200 athletes with intellectual disabilities who participate in Special Olympics programs throughout the province, we would like to thank our incredible partners for strengthening our movement.

## Platinum



## Gold



Eat better.  
Feel better.  
Do better.



## Silver



## Bronze



## National Partners

### Platinum



### Gold



### Silver



### Bronze



### Friends



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 Johnny Byrne- President & CEO of Special Olympics Alberta, Ex-officio

## Provincial Sport Council

Michelle Deering  
 Jodi Flanagan  
 Sallie Szanik

## Athlete Leadership Committee

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



[specialolympics.ca/alberta](http://specialolympics.ca/alberta)

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