



THE BITE OF OREGON

LIFE TASTES BETTER HERE



For Immediate Release
July 2011

Contact: Terry Amato 503.968.3400
Patty Brandts 503.248.0600 x17

Who Is Special Olympics Oregon and Who They Serve.

Special Olympics Oregon is a year-round program offering 15 different Olympics style sports to athletes with intellectual disabilities and related cognitive disabilities. More than 8,000 participants are involved from across Oregon. In the Special Olympics program, people with intellectual disabilities compete as true athletes. They gain self-confidence, social competency and other enhanced skills, both physical and social.

Special Olympics is not only the world's largest program of year-round sports training and competition for persons with intellectual disabilities, but is the world's largest amateur sports organization. More than 3.7 million athletes participate in Special Olympics in over 150 countries around the world.

Special Olympics Oregon is a statewide organization with active Local Programs in more than 30 communities across Oregon. Individuals must be at least eight years old to compete, but children between six and seven are eligible for training. There is no upper age limit on participation.

Volunteers are the lifeline of the Special Olympics program. More than 7,000 volunteers in Oregon and one million individuals worldwide currently dedicate their time to Special Olympics. These volunteers serve as Local Program Coordinators, coaches, officials, committee members, competition assistants and much more. Whether they participate for one day or for years, volunteers make a difference in the lives of Special Olympics athletes and in their communities.

The benefits of Special Olympics reach far beyond the field of competition as the movement builds self-esteem, promotes independence, strengthens families and facilitates social competence, while encouraging fitness. And these benefits touch not only the athletes but also the volunteers and sponsors, who through their involvement have the opportunity to touch lives and Inspire Greatness.

Competition

Special Olympics Oregon offers year-round sports training and competition programs with 15 Olympic-type sports including Regional Competitions. The sports seasons are as follows:

Summer: Track & Field, Bocce, Golf, Gymnastics and Softball

Fall: Aquatics, Bowling, Soccer and Volleyball

Winter: Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Snowboarding, Snowshoeing, Basketball and Power-lifting

Training

Special Olympics athletes train intensely for a minimum of eight weeks prior to each sports competition. Volunteer coaches are responsible for training the athletes. Volunteers must complete a certification program prior to becoming Special Olympics coaches and must attend training schools before each season.

Funding

Special Olympics Oregon is a registered 501 c(3), non-profit organization supported by private donations from individuals, corporations and organizations throughout the state. Special Olympics is "the most credible charity in America" according to a survey in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*.

For More Information

For more information about Special Olympics, please visit www.soor.org