

Special Olympics Louisiana

General Orientation

Special Olympics
Louisiana



Welcome!



Thank you for taking the time to learn about Special Olympics Louisiana (SOLA).

SOLA serves nearly 10,000 athletes with the help of over 1,500 coaches and over 7,500 volunteers

We hope you:

- Learn something new about Special Olympics Louisiana
- Get involved in your community through Special Olympics
- Help SOLA ensure an environment of equality, respect and acceptance

Special Olympics Mission



Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Components

- Year-round
- Sports training & competition
- Olympic-type sports
- Individuals with intellectual disabilities

Outcomes

- Physical fitness
- Courage & joy
- Sharing gifts & skills
- Friendship
 - Families
 - Athletes
 - Community

Philosophy & Vision



If individuals with intellectual disabilities can:

- Receive appropriate instruction and encouragement
- Receive constant training
- Compete among those with equal abilities

The results are:

- Personal growth
- Stronger families
- United communities
- An environment of equality, respect and acceptance



History



- Created by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1968
- First International Games held in July 1968 at Soldier Field in Chicago with 1,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities from 26 U.S. states and Canada competing in athletics, floor hockey and aquatics.
- In 1971 Special Olympics given official approval to use the name “Olympics” by the IOC; one of only three global organizations. (Junior Olympics, Paralympics, and SO).
- Special Olympics Louisiana (SOLA) was chartered in 1972
- Now, there are more than 4.7 million Special Olympics athletes in more than 169 countries

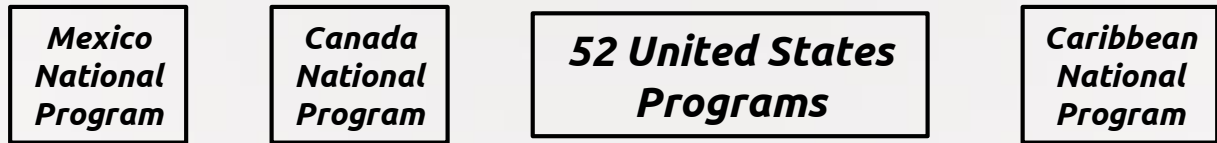
Special Olympics Overview



Local



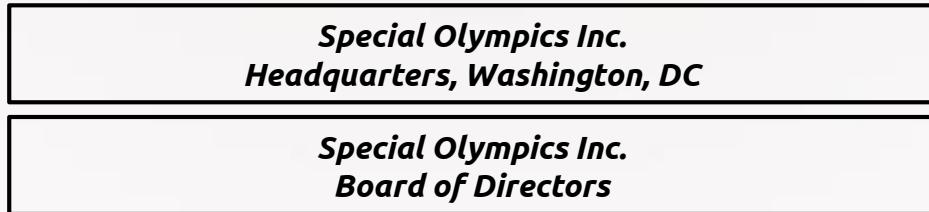
National



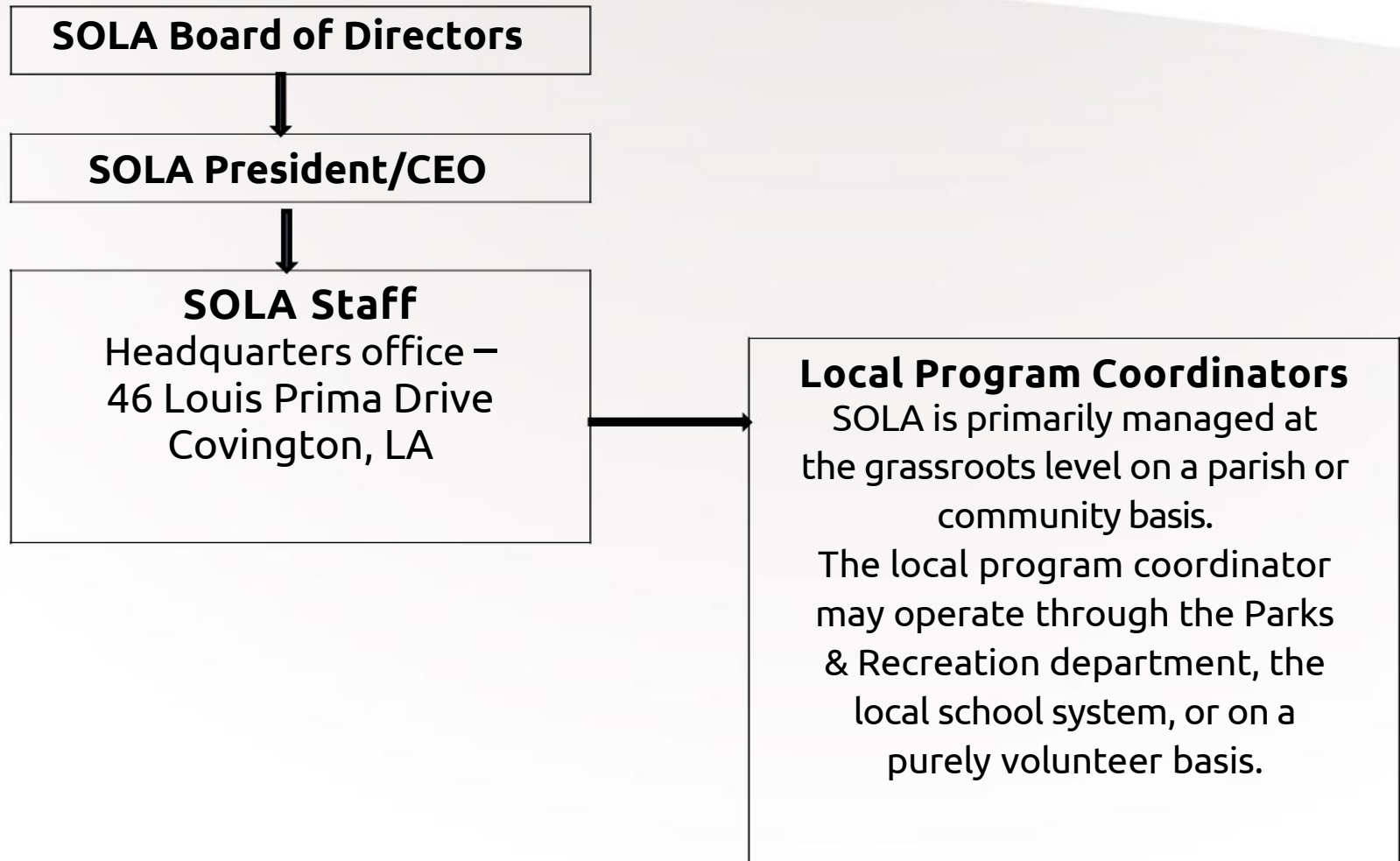
Regional



Global



SOLA Organization



Coach & Athlete Oaths



Athlete's Oath:

“Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”



Coach's Oath:

“In the name of all coaches and in the spirit of sportsmanship, I promise that we will act professionally, respect others, and ensure a positive experience for all. I promise to provide quality sports and training opportunities in a safe environment for all athletes.”

Special Olympics Athletes



Training and competition is open to

- Children and adults with an intellectual disability (for example: Autism Spectrum Disorder; Down Syndrome; Fragile X Syndrome, etc.)
- Athletes age 8 or older; there is no age maximum
- Athletes age 2-7 may train as part of the Young Athletes Program

Special Olympics refers to all of these participants as "athletes"

Special Olympics Unified Sports® Partners



- Special Olympics Louisiana offers Special Olympics Unified Sports®, an inclusive sports program where those with intellectual disabilities (Special Olympics athletes) and those without intellectual disabilities (called Unified partners) compete on a team for training and competition.
- Persons whose functional limitations are based solely on physical, behavioral, or emotional disability or a specific learning or sensory disability are not eligible to participate as Special Olympics athletes. However, these individuals may be eligible to be Special Olympics Unified Sports® partner.
- There are varying levels of Special Olympics Unified Sports®, from a competition model where athletes and Unified partners have similar abilities, to recreational models without training guidelines.
- Through Unified Sports®, athletes improve their physical fitness, sharpen their skills, challenge the competition and become further involved with their non-intellectually disabled peers.

How Special Olympics Is Unique



Special Olympics is more similar than different from other sports organizations. However, there are five areas that make Special Olympics unique.

- Does not charge a fee to athletes or their families to train or compete
- Offers sports opportunities for athletes of all ability levels
- Groups athletes based on ability for equitable competition; a process called divisioning. Age and gender are also considered for divisioning.
- All participants receive an award for their efforts.
- Advancement to higher levels of competition is based on order of finish for each division and random selection



SOLA Sports & Competitions



Special Olympics Louisiana currently offers 11 Olympic-type sports with competitions occurring at all levels and culminating state-level events throughout the year.

Single-Sport State-Level Events

- Flag Football (Winter)
- Bowling (Winter)
- Equestrian (Winter)
- Basketball (Spring)
- Softball (Fall)
- Swimming (Fall)
- Horseshoes (Fall)

Multi-Sport State-Level Events

State Games (Summer)

- Athletics
- Bocce
- Volleyball
- Powerlifting

Sports for All Ability Levels



For athletes who are not up for full team play in sports like softball and volleyball, Special Olympics offers Individual Skills Contests for that sport which allows athletes to score points through skills stations.

SOLA also offers two non-competitive sport experiences.



The Motor Activity Training Program (MATP) is designed For athletes with a severe or profound intellectual disability who are unable to participate in Official Special Olympics sport competitions because of their skill and/or Functional abilities.



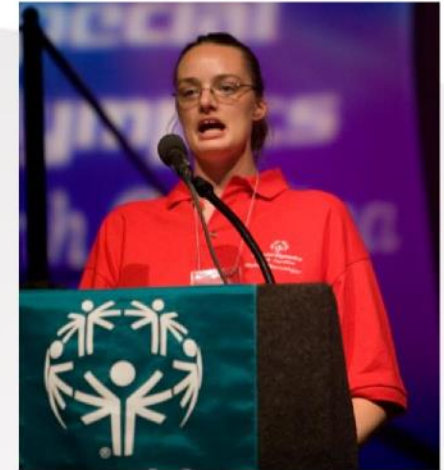
Special Olympics
Young Athletes™

The Special Olympics Young Athletes Program, an early childhood sports play program for children age 2 to seven years old, includes games, songs, and other fun physical activities to get future Special Olympics athletes moving •and ready For sport training!

Athlete Leadership Program



Special Olympics athletes are not only leaders on the Field For their Fellow athletes, but they are encouraged to be leaders in their community and For the Special Olympics movement.



Athlete Leadership Programs (called ALPs) allow athletes to explore opportunities for greater participation in our movement beyond sports training and competition. Athletes receive training in public speaking to become a Global Messenger, attend training schools to become a coach, or register and train as a sports official through the National Governing body of that sport.

Putting It All Together



- **TRAINING** is the key
- **COMPETITION** is the means
- Skill, confidence, courage & joy are the **OUTCOMES**
- Better preparation for life is the **GOAL**
- Lifelong skills & increased independence are the **RESULTS**



We Look Forward to Your Involvement!



We hope you learned something and are ready to get involved in Special Olympics Louisiana!

To find out more information on becoming a coach, go to our website <http://www.laso.org/coach>

To register as a day-of volunteer for a SOLA event, please visit www.laso.org for upcoming volunteer opportunities.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact SOLA at 800-345-6644 or laso@laso.org.

Please note that for the safety of all, if you volunteer in a leadership position with SOLA (local committee member, coach, games management team member, etc.), you must complete our Class-A Volunteer Screening process and go through a background check.

Thank You!