

HOWARD COUNTY

SPECIAL OLYMPICS
MARYLAND



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February Newsletter

Issue #2015-01

Registration for Spring Sports Open



Registration for spring sports (aquatics, beginner aquatics, athletics, bocce, cheerleading, equestrian, and softball) is now open. Complete the registration by [clicking here](#). If you do not receive an email confirming your registration, please contact Janet in the SOHO office.

Athletes must have a current medical form on file before the sport season begins. These forms must be updated every three years. If you are not sure when a medical expires, you can send an email to info@somdhc.org or call the SOHO office. Try to schedule your doctor's

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Outback Steakhouse Fundraiser

Come out and join us for a family fundraiser on March 3rd from 4:00 - 10:00. Dine in or Carry Out. You must bring the flyer for us to receive a 10% credit. [Click here for flyer.](#)

appointment in plenty of time so not to jeopardize an athlete's participation.

Support the 14th Annual Inspiration Walk

The annual



Inspiration Walk is our primary fundraiser and critical to our raising the funds needed to provide sports training and competitions for over 650 athletes. On average, it costs approximately \$275 per athlete for each sport. Individuals can begin their fundraising efforts by creating their own page . [Click here](#). Athletes may also link their individual pages to a team in which they participate to see which sport raises the most funds. The volleyball team raised the most funds in the 2014 Inspiration Walk (\$17,610) and won a pizza party at the end of the season. In addition, general donations can also be made by [clicking here](#).

We are also looking for corporate and business sponsors. Sponsors levels are:

- Legacy Sponsor - \$5,000.00
- Team Sponsor - \$2,500.00
- Gold Medal Sponsor - \$1,000.00
- Silver Medal Sponsor - \$ 500.00
- Bronze Medal Sponsor - \$ 250.00

Team and Gold Medal sponsors will have their logo on the Walk t-shirt and Silver Medal sponsors will be listed on the walk T-shirt if received by March 1st.

Must see Plunge Video!!

[Click here](#) to see

Super Plungers,
County Executive
Allan Kittleman and
SOHO Management

Team member
Wayne

Luoma. Fantastic job
guys!!

We are on Twitter!

You can now follow
us on Twitter.

@SOMD_HoCo.

Support our Inspiration Walk Sponsors

2015 Inspiration Walk
sponsors to date:

Presenting Sponsors
Corridor Mortgage and
Lisa Higgins Hussman
Foundation

Legacy Sponsors
Dwight & Diane Mikulis,
Allan Homes

Gold Medal Sponsors
Darcars Toyota, Polakoff
LLC, Manekin LLC,
Wayne & Gena Luoma

Silver Medal Sponsors
Diamond Graphics,
Environmental Systems
Associates

Bronze Medal Sponsors
Nightmare Graphics

If you have any leads for sponsors or are interested in being a sponsor yourself, please send an email to info@somdhc.org.

Watch your mail in early March for the Inspiration Walk brochures.

Coordinator and Coaching "Retirements"

Sports coordinators are the core of our program and help us to provide training and competition in 19 sports programs. This model that we developed has been a model for other Special Olympics Maryland county programs. This year, we are saying goodbye to several coordinators who have been in their positions for many years.

With the close of the bowling season, we bid a fond adieu to bowling



coordinator **Sandy Schoenbrodt** (20 years) and assistant coordinator **Sheila Dwyer** (14 years). They have been responsible for the sport with the most athletes (128) at any single location. Replacing them next year will be **Connie Landeros**, **Franco Frande** and **Janet Zahn**.

Karen Thiem is stepping down as the Bocce Coordinator. Karen and Coach Abby Penenburgh have built the bocce program from its infancy, and we are grateful for her hard work and dedication since becoming a volunteer in 2001! This coordinator position is OPEN.

Finally, **Clyde Wrathall** is leaving the softball program. Clyde is a very special part of the SOHO history. He

Transition Symposium Conference Feb 21

The Autism Society of Howard County is sponsoring a Transition Symposium on February 21st from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at Cedar Lane School. [Click here](#) for more details.

Team Sports Participation Reminder

Please review the policy related to participating in team sports by [clicking here](#). If an athlete violates the policy, he/she will be prohibited from participating in that sport the next season.

2015 SOHO Calendars for Sale

SOHO 2015 calendars are still available for purchase (\$10.00) at the office.

Refinance and Raise Funds for SOHO

[Corridor Mortgage Group](#), who sponsors the fall golf fundraiser for Special Olympics Howard County is offering our organization \$250 for anyone who refinances their mortgage or borrows for a new mortgage through Corridor. Mention that you heard of the offer through the SOHO newsletter. For more details, call Chris Sittig at 443.539.1596 or email at



was one of the four parents that set the goals and strategy to build the program in 1998. As part of the original Executive Management Team, he helped shape the direction and growth of our organization. He coached soccer and then softball where he served as both the coordinator and the coach, and was an integral part in building the annual Softball Invitational at Kiwanis Wallas Park which brings over 400 athletes and volunteers for a great day of competition in our county. We will miss his leadership but know that we will see him about as Matt continues to participate in other sports programs.

Our heartfelt thanks to these individuals who have given so generously of their time and talent to make our program what it is today. This head coaching position is now OPEN.

Individuals interested in either of these two positions can email Bob Baker (bobbaker@somdhc.org) or info@somdhc.org.

Special Olympics Maryland News

Congratulations to SOHO athlete **Munir Vohra** who has been selected one of the 11 athletes highlighted in 2015 as the "Athlete of the Month". Munir will be honored in March.

[Click here](#) to read the SOMD December "IMPACT" Newsletter which contains an article about SOHO athlete **Thomas Smith** about his experience as a Special Olympics Global Messenger.

[Click here](#) to read the SOMD January "IMPACT" Newsletter which has a lot of information about this year's Maryland State Police Polar Bear Plunge and the many sponsors who supported it. Our thanks to the many Howard County plungers, especially Super Plungers **County Executive Allan Kittleman** and SOHO Finance Director and parent **Wayne Luoma** (who both raised over \$13,000) -- check out this [youtube video](#) of Allan and Wayne -- **Police Chief Gary Gardner** and all the **Howard County Law Enforcement officers** who plunged. **Mike Waschak's** (who was plunging for the 10th year) plunge team raised over \$25,000. Thanks to everyone for supporting Special Olympics Maryland.

csittig@corridormtg.com

Coaches Resources

Special Olympics Howard County encourages all of our coaches to stay abreast of the latest training. SOHO will reimburse any coach that wishes to take the online training courses offered

below.



Coaches Training



Coaches Guidelines

Sports Rules

Office Hours

Monday, Wednesday and
Thursday: 8:00 - 1:00
Tuesday: 1:30 - 6:30

Student Scholarship Applications Now Being Accepted

Through the generosity of three families, Special Olympics Howard County will again award three scholarships to outstanding student volunteers who have been committed to the Special Olympics Howard County program as a volunteer and advocate of the athletes. High school seniors and college students are eligible to apply.

Interested students must complete an application, provide at least one recommendation from a Special Olympics Howard County coach, management team member or sports coordinator, and write a 500 word essay about their experiences as a volunteer. Details about the scholarships and the applications can be found by [clicking here](#).

Completed applications can be emailed to info@somdhc.org or mailed to Special Olympics Howard County, 8970 Route 108, Suite A-1, Columbia, MD 21045, ATTN: Scholarship Committee. Applications must be received by March 30, 2015. Questions should be addressed to info@somdhc.org or by calling the SOHO office at 410-740-0500.

Coaches Certification Update

Starting with the 2015 basketball season, there are new regulations for coaches certification. For coaches to obtain a new sport certification, they must:

- complete and maintain Class A volunteer status (general orientation, Class A screening (i.e., background check), Protective Behaviors Course),
- complete a course on coaching Special Olympics athletes, and
- complete sport specific training.

Existing coaches must renew their sport certification once every three years and must:

- maintain Class A volunteer status (new background check)
- complete an approved course or development experience which advances the coach's knowledge, skills and abilities in either aspects of the sport or coaching in general.

See the side panel Coaches Resources for training opportunities. As other training opportunities become available, emails will be sent to all sports coordinators for distribution to their coaches.

Volunteer, Coach, and Family of the Year Nominations Now Being Accepted

Nominations for Volunteer, Coach and Family of the Year to be announced at this year's Inspiration Walk are now being accepted. If you are interested in nominating someone(s) for any of these awards, please provide a short write-up that includes years of service, sport(s)/activity involved with, and exemplary attributes. All nominations should be mailed to info@somdhc.org no later than March 21, 2015. Past winners include: Volunteer of the Year: Diane Mikulis (2012), Abby Penenburgh (2013) and Gena Luoma (2014). Coach of the Year: Al Mineart (2012), Nancy Van Winter (2013), and Bill Parlock (2014). Our newest award, Family of the Year honoring families who have contributed to the success of our program, was presented for the first time last year to the Pinos Family. (Napoleon, Linda, Napoleon III, Marcos and Chris.

Inclement Weather Policy

We have already had some practices that had to be cancelled due to inclement weather. Remember that if Howard County Public Schools are closed, we will not have practice. We will post cancellations on our web page under Practice Announcements and on the calendar, on our Facebook page, on Twitter (see sidebar about following us on Twitter), and on the office message system. Coordinators may also send out an email to their sport's alias. We will do our best to give everyone plenty of notice, but sometimes the weather conditions may change rapidly. Since everyone lives all over the county and weather conditions may vary, always use your best judgement keeping safety in mind. If practices are not cancelled but you can't make it, be sure to contact your coordinator to let him/her know that you will not be at practice due to the weather.

Volunteer Orientation Dates and Form

The next Volunteer Orientations will be held on February 5th and March 19th from 7:00-8:30 pm at the SOHO office. Anyone interested in volunteering must attend a volunteer orientation, complete a volunteer application and an on-

line Protective Behaviors Course. Parents are highly encouraged to attend an orientation.

For more information, contact Volunteer Coordinator Janet Larrimore. (JanetandWalter@comcast.net). The next orientation is scheduled for April 8th.

Volunteers must update their volunteer application every three years. There is no need to attend another orientation, but the application must be updated.



SOHO Office, 8970 Route 108 Suite A1, Columbia, MD 21045
Hours: Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 8:00 - 1:00, Tuesday 1:30 - 6:30
Phone (410) 740-0500 | Fax (410) 740-2388 | www.somdhc.org | info@somdhc.org
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