



**Special  
Olympics**  
Maryland



**50**  
YEARS  
1970-2020

## January 2023 Newsletter - Issue #1

### HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

Winter sports registration is now closed.

Spring sports registration opens February 1, 2023 on our [website!!](#)

#### SOHO Highlights from the Past Year

- Hosted our 21st Annual Inspiration Walk, this time at Centennial High School with carnival games, thanks to SWBC Mortgage, who was our Presenting Sponsor for the event for the first time. We raised over \$97,000!
- Hosted the 2nd annual Over the Edge fundraiser in the downtown Merriweather District. Special thanks to Howard Hughes Corporation and CEO Greg Fitchett for their support as our Presenting Sponsor. (see below for the additional corporate sponsors).
- Added Pickelball, our 23rd sport thanks to the drive and initiative of Bob Sans and full support from the Howard County Pickelball Association who provided expertise, volunteers, and funding!
- Added Spirit Club Fitness as our 24th sport with a successful trial in November and December and will continue this program into 2023.
- Hosted the 24th Annual Softball Invitational at Kiwannis Wallis Park with teams from around the state.
- Sent 8 athletes and one coach to Special Olympics National Games in Orlando, Florida. Held 5 restaurant fundraisers to support them.
- Hosted four league play competitions in soccer and flag football at Cedar Lane Park and Troy Hill Park.
- Hosted awesome competitions in bocce, golf, tennis, cycling and cross country running.
- Hosted 125 athletes from four counties at our first outdoor swim meet in early June at Stevens Forest Pool, thanks to the Columbia Association, the Clippers and our coordinator, Dave Donovan!
- Hosted the 6th annual Volleyball tournament with six teams from Pennsylvania and Virginia at the MD Junior Sports Club in Jessup.

#### Office Hours

Office hours are 8:30 - 1:30  
Monday and Thursday, 1:30 -  
6:30 on Tuesday.

#### 2023 Volunteer Orientations

Thursday, February 9, 2023  
Thursday, March 2, 2023  
Wednesday, April 12, 2023  
Monday, May 22, 2023

All begin at 7pm at the SOHO  
office.

Volunteers are needed for the  
spring sports of Bocce,  
Cheerleading, Softball, Swimming  
and Track & Field, Contact  
Megan Larson at  
[meganlarson@somdhc.org](mailto:meganlarson@somdhc.org) for  
more information. Parents and  
siblings of athletes as well as  
students looking for service hours  
are welcome to volunteer!

#### Discounted MinuteClinic Physicals/Medical Updates

- Hosted the regional bowling tournament at Bowlero Normandy Lanes.
- Brought on a new Volunteer Coordinator, Megan Larson.
- Thanks to our new Public Relations Director, Tracy O'Conner, who has made quite the impact on social media documenting and getting the news out about all the above activities to our families, volunteers, and the Howard County community.

All this was possible due to an extremely dedicated group of individuals, especially in a volunteer-run organization such as ours. SOHO is very lucky to have such a great group of enthusiastic and competent individuals involved in the management of SOHO. Thanks to everyone for your commitment to our athletes and this organization!



## Join the SOHO Plunge Team

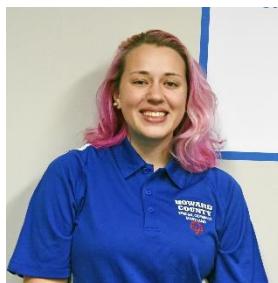
Have you seen our very own Thomas Smith

on WBAL-TV inviting people to join him at the MSP Polar Bear Plunge? Are you ready to join him BEAR the cold at the 2023 MSP Polar Bear Plunge? You can plunge your way, whether that's in-person at Sandy Point State Park or virtually! The Maryland Plunge will take place on February 4th, 2023. Not only is this a Maryland state tradition, but it is the largest Plunge in the world. Let's keep this tradition alive by either plunging at Sandy Point or do a virtual plunge like many did last year.

[Join the SOHO plunge team here](#) and get others to support you by donating to your efforts and those of your fellow Howard County plungers. Since we can't wait to see how you choose to Plunge, be sure to send videos of your virtual plunges to [info@somdhc.org](mailto:info@somdhc.org). SOHO receives 70% of the funds raised as part of the Howard County Team Page. Help us reach our goal of \$5,000.

## Welcome to our New Volunteer Coordinator

We welcome our new Volunteer Coordinator, Megan Larson to the Special Olympics Howard County family! Megan, a Colorado native, moved to Columbia in 2022. She is currently working at Special Olympics Maryland, while volunteering with various sports in Howard County. Megan recognized as a high schooler that her passion was working with and interacting with people. She played Unified basketball and wanted to find a job in the Special Olympics organization. She loves what she does, but even more so, Megan loves the people she get to meet. Megan notes that she has made so many friends and wants to continue to expand her



Special Olympics has continued their nation-wide partnership with **MinuteClinic!** Click [here](#) for the updated voucher for discounted medicals at all MinuteClinics for Special Olympics participation! Please make sure you bring Special Olympics medical forms with you as they may not have them there.

## Medical Support Needed

Do you have a medical or nursing degree? Are you an EMT? We are in need of medical support staff to assist at competitions. You would be asked to attend a competition two to three times a year to provide medical assistance, if needed. Special Olympics will provide supplies. If you can help, send an email to [info@somdhc.org](mailto:info@somdhc.org).

## Winter Games Location Changed

Special Olympics Maryland will host the 2023 SOMD Winter Games at Wisp Resort, in McHenry, Maryland. The 2023 Winter Games will be held on Sunday-Tuesday, February 26-28, returning to Wisp for the first time since 2010. Wisp is enthusiastic to once again host SOMD's premiere winter sports competition.

SOMD is also very appreciative of the tremendous and incredibly generous support it has received over the past decade from Whitetail Resort, serving as both a primary athlete training location and host for Winter Games. We are excited that our partnership with Whitetail will continue, as it will serve as site for on-snow athlete training dates on January 7, and February 12, 2023.

## Car Donation

social circle within Special Olympics! If you are thinking of getting involved with Special Olympics in 2023, there are monthly volunteer orientations where you can learn about all the volunteer opportunities.

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## JTCC Tennis Clinics are Back!

Registration for JTCC's Special Olympics tennis program for the winter and spring sessions is OPEN! Located in College Park, MD, the tennis center's mission is "Tennis for Everybody" and is proud to partner with Special Olympics MD to offer year-round tennis clinics. The clinics focus on building a strong athletic foundation while learning tennis stroke and strategy fundamentals through an engaging game-based format. Additionally, JTCC has a low coach-to-player ratio to ensure athletes are getting individualized, level-based instruction that they need to take their game to the next level, whether they are beginner Level 1, high-performance Level 6, or anywhere in between!

The clinics are held on Sundays from 4-5:30pm at JTCC (5200 Campus Drive, College Park, MD 20740). Winter Session runs January 29-April 2 and the Spring Session runs April 16-June 11. You do not need to attend all clinics within a session to participate and benefit from the program! To register for the program, click [here](#) and contact Gabby Hesse at [ghesse@jtcc.org](mailto:ghesse@jtcc.org) with any questions.

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## Explanation of Fitness Programs

We have added two fitness programs in partnership with 12 Labours CrossFit and Spirit Club. Because class sizes are small and we want to provide more opportunities for as many athletes as possible, the introductory class in each is being offered under SOHO auspices.

**Intro to Cross Fit** will be offered free of charge on Monday and Wednesday evenings and open only to new CrossFit athletes. For those that have previously taken CrossFit, 12 Labours is offering a discounted membership rate to participate in classes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 6:30pm. This isn't an official Special Olympics program, but a regular class at 12 Labours, integrated with their members. They have instructors trained just for our athletes and it's the same great CrossFit experience. The discounted membership is \$125/month and runs throughout the year.

**Spirit Club:** Two introductory sessions will be offered, one in the winter and one in the spring. The winter session is already filled. After participating in the initial session, athletes can choose to join other Spirit Club classes (a list which will be provided by Spirit Club) that they can elect to join for a fee. Again. These additional classes are not an official Special Olympics program.



Through the efforts of longtime coach and volunteer, Duke Silvea, Special Olympics can now accept car donations to benefit our program. If you have a car you would like to donate, please contact the office at 410-740-0500 or email [info@somdmc.org](mailto:info@somdmc.org). We will come and pick up your car, ready it for sale, and provide you with a tax deduction for the amount the car is sold for at auction. Please help us by donating an unwanted vehicle!

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## Photos Of Our Athletes

You can enjoy photos of our athletes at practice, competitions and other events on our photo page.

[Event Photos](#)

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## Summer Games Dates Set Through 2025

SOMD has made the decision to shift Summer Games to the weekend immediately following Fathers' Day for at least the next three years:

- June 23-25, 2023
- June 21-23, 2024
- June 20-22, 2025

Special  
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For the most current

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## COVID-19 STATUS

information on Covid -19 related requirements, click [here](#) .

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## Outstanding Student Volunteer Scholarships

High school seniors and college students who have been committed to the Special Olympics Howard County program as a volunteer and advocate of the athletes can apply to four scholarships provided through the generosity of four families.

**The Jackie Burk Memorial Award** for Outstanding Student Volunteer for Special Olympics Howard County (\$1,500) was created in 2004 by Jack and Linda Burk in memory of their daughter, Jackie, a special friend and volunteer with Special Olympics Howard County.

**The Kathy Lindner Memorial Award** (\$500), in memory of Special Olympics Howard County's first Volunteer Coordinator, was created in 2012.

**The Allan Homes Award** for Outstanding Student Volunteers in the swim program (up to \$1,500) was established in 2005 by Allan and Kathy Waschak. Allan was a member of the SOHO Executive management team, Fundraiser Co-Chairperson, and Aquatics Coordinator.

**The Schnorf Family Scholarship** (\$1,500) was created in 2018. Cole Schnorf is a member of the Executive Management Team, Fundraising Chairperson, and a basketball coach.

Information about applying for these scholarships will be posted on our website. .

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## Tim Tebow Night to Shine Event

Grace Community Church in Fulton will be holding the annual Tim Tebow Night to Shine on Friday, February 10, 2023 from 6-9 p.m. There will be room for approximately 150 honored guests who will be joined by 150 "buddies" and parents. For further information on reservations, volunteering and sponsoring, click [here](#).

NOTE: Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church who has held a Night to Shine in the past will NOT be having the event there this year.

## Newsletter Information

If you are an athlete, parent or caregiver, we highly recommend that you do not Unsubscribe from this newsletter. You will miss valuable information about seasonal sports registration, policies, highlights, activities and other relevant information. Please add [info@somdhc.org](mailto:info@somdhc.org) and [bobbaker@somdhc.org](mailto:bobbaker@somdhc.org) email addresses to your address book so that this letter does not go into your Junk Mail folder. If you have any suggestions or questions about the newsletter, please let us know at [info@somdhc.org](mailto:info@somdhc.org).

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## 2022 OVER THE EDGE SPONSORS

Our deepest appreciation to our Over the Edge Sponsors. Because of their support and the support of 101 rappellers, we have

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Columbia Association

raised \$165,900 to date. These funds will enable us to continue to provide a year-round sports and competition program in 25 sports programs.

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Care First

**Special Olympics Howard County**

8970 Route 108, Suite A-1  
Columbia, MD 21045  
Phone (410) 740-0500

[Contact SOHO Today](#)

