



December 2023 Newsletter - Issue #7



Best wishes for a joyous holiday season to all of our 968 athletes and to over 500 volunteers that support the 25 sports programs offered throughout the year!

Sports Registration

Registration for winter sports (Alpine Skiing, Basketball, Bowling, Snowshoeing, Spirit Fitness, Young Athletes Program) is now closed.

REMEMBER: Athletes that registered for basketball should review the [Policy on Participating in Team Sports](#) before the season begins to ensure that you can make the team commitment for attending all competitions, including State Games which will be held on April 6-7, 2024.

Registration for spring sports (Athletics, Bocce, Cheerleading, Poms, Hip Hop Dance, Pickleball, Softball, Swimming and Spirit Fitness) **will open on February 1st.**



Nick Stewart Retires from Management Team

Nick Stewart is stepping down from his position as the Athlete Representative on the SOHO Management Team after 23 years. His tenure, from 2001-2023, has been very busy, serving in this local role as well as numerous roles with Special Olympics Maryland, most notably:

- 2004-2009: Served as a member of Special Olympics Maryland Board of

Directors, making speeches at various SOMD events such as State Games and Banquets, and presenting awards to recognize individuals. In 2006, he received the Stanley S. Herr Memorial Award.

- From 2015-2018, Nick was the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) Athlete State Ambassador/Liaison. He attended the LETR Conference in Phoenix, Arizona in 2016. He was very involved in multiple LETR activities including advertising on WBAL-TV, participating in the LETR Kick-Off Ceremonies each

Office Hours

Monday/Thursday 8:30 - 1:30
Tuesday 1:30 - 6:30

Holiday Hours:

The office will be closed from December 25th through January 1st.

2024 Volunteer Orientations

The next volunteer orientation is scheduled for Wednesday, January 17, 2024. Additional volunteer orientations for 2024 can be found [here](#).

All begin at 7pm at the SOHO office.

Volunteers interested in any winter sports (Alpine skiing, Basketball, Bowling, Snowshoeing, Spirit Fitness and

year (even serving as the Master of 2017), and the Champions of Patrol Ride Along event.

- Nick also attended Developmental Disabilities Day at the Maryland Legislature in Annapolis, meeting with representatives.

Over his 23 years on the SOHO Management team, Nick was faithful in attending monthly management team meetings, providing detailed reports on his and other athletes' activities. He was always available to represent SOHO at numerous events as well as serving as a role model to other athletes. We are very grateful for his incredible service to both SOHO and SOMD, and wish him a well deserved retirement.

Nick's shoes will be hard to fill, but we are looking for an athlete leader to fill this position. If interested, please contact Janet Larrimore, our office manager, at janetlarrimore@somdhc.org.



Brave the Cold - Join Our Polar Bear Plunge Team

Wondering what to do this winter? Thought about going Over the Edge but you'd rather have your feet on the ground? Well we have the activity for you. Please consider joining the Special Olympics Howard County Polar Bear

Plunge Team and jump into the icy waters at Sandy Point State Park to support our athletes. Challenge friends and family members to join you in this annual exciting and fun filled event. There is plenty of dancing to live music, food, drink and lots of festival activities so don't miss out! If a cold swim is not for you, you can still support members of our team by donating directly to our [county page](#). SOHO will receive 70% of the funds raised. Shake up your winter doldrums, get outside and have some winter fun. Remember, ankles count!



Several SOHO athletes are serving as plunge team captains. Clara Scholz, the 2024 Corporate Plunge team Captain, has been

Young Athletes) should attend the January orientation. Individuals interested in volunteering with our spring sports programs (Athletics, Bocce, Cheerleading, Poms, Hip Hop Dance, Pickleball, Motor Activities Training Program, Softball, and swimming) or in any one-day competitions should attend an orientation as soon as possible in early 2024.

Contact **Megan Larson** at meganlarson@somdhc.org for more information. Parents and siblings of athletes as well as students who may be interested in being Unified Partners or looking for service hours are encouraged to attend.

Level 2 Golf Coordinator Needed

As you have read in recent articles about our Sports Coordinators, if we do not have a coordinator(s) to lead a sport, that sport is in danger of being cancelled. Our long-time Level 2 Golf Coordinator stepped down after the 2023 season, and we are in need of a replacement. This position requires someone who is very organized and has good computer skills. We have a very strong Level 2 Golf program and would hate to see it dropped in 2024. If you are interested in this position, please contact the office.

Thanks to Towson University Swim Team

Towson University's Swim Team recently hosted two swim and stroke clinics for 24 SOMD athletes at the Burdick Pool on campus at Towson University. Instruction was led by the Towson swimmers. Six SOHO swimmers were among the group (Freddie Nunley, Karen McGinnis, Gillian Eisenberg, Adam Tucci, Andrew, and Jason Kauffman). Everyone

participating in Special Olympics since 2006 in swimming, cheerleading, dance, soccer, and basketball.

Co-captain for the 2024 Police Plunge is Brandon McLarin. Brandon has been participating in Special Olympics in basketball, flag football and softball since 2011.

Salute to Our Winter Sports Coordinators

We've been focusing on our wonderful coordinators who, as many of you know, coordinators are a critical part of our organization. The Sports Coordinator leads the efforts associated with a particular sport, and are a critical part of our organization. In fact, if we do not have a coordinator(s) to lead a sport, that sport is dropped until someone steps up. Take a look at the number of years our winter sports coordinators have been leading their sport.

Alpine Skiing Coordinator: Clare Colleli (21 years)

Snowshoeing Coordinator: Allyson Parlock (2 years)

Basketball Coordinators:

- **Skills:** Lavonne Smith (16 years)
- **3x3 Player Development:** Gigi Sheltraw (9 years)
- **3x3 Traditional:** Jack Burk (23 Years)
- **5x5 Player Development:** Barbara Evans (2 years) and Jen Montgomery (1 year)
- **5x5 Traditional:** Jim Bourdon (14 years) and Theresa Bourdon (3 years)

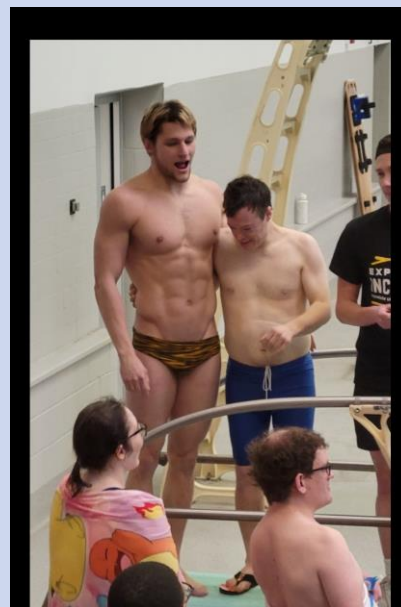
Our gratitude to all of you for your dedication to our athletes!

Soccer State Games Results

The SOHO soccer team, coached by Mike Ord, earned a Silver medal at the state soccer games at the Crown Sports Center in Fruitland on October 27th. In the individual skills competition, Abigail Vance earned two fourth place ribbons and Kalen Green took two 3rd place ribbons and a 4th place ribbon. Congratulations to all our soccer athletes and thanks to our soccer coordinators Shirley Duhaney and Sara and Martin Sommerville.



really enjoyed getting the one-on-one training and making friends with their instructors. A big thank you to the Towson Swim Team. Pictured below is Jason Kaufman with his instructor Brian, who has qualified for Olympic trials in breaststroke.



Volunteer Student Scholarship Information

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 deadline for submitting applications for the 2024 Outstanding Student Volunteers Scholarships is March 29, 2024. Applications can be dropped off at the office (8970 Route 108, Suite A-1, Columbia, MD 21045) and placed in the mailbox or emailed to info@somdhc.org and must be received by March 29th. For further information and application, click [here](#).

What to Expect From an Emergency Call to Emergency Medical Services

Leadability is excited to partner with Special Olympics Maryland (SOMD), Best Buddies of MD, and the Down Syndrome Association of MD (DSAMD) to sponsor a community event with the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (HCFRS) on: ***What to Expect From an Emergency Call To EMS.***

The event will feature a presentation by HCFRS about things like how to call and text emergency services, what to say on a phone with the dispatcher, and what to expect when EMS arrives at your house.

In addition, Leadability will present a role play scenario with self-advocate educators who will interact with first responders in a scene for a 911 call.

WHEN: Wednesday January 10, 2024, from 6-7 p.m.

WHERE: Marriottsville, MD. Final location TBD.

WHO: This event is for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families and caregivers. Exact location to be provided after registration.

Click [here](#) to claim your free ticket!

Questions? Please email Jason Schriml (jschriml@somd.org) or call him at 410-916-4749

Discounted Sports Physicals

Special Olympics North America has renewed the partnership with MinuteClinic, and, will once again be offering discounted sports physicals at a discounted rate. This [voucher](#) must be presented at the time of the physical AND athletes and families should bring the Special Olympics Maryland registration packet with them to ensure the correct paperwork is completed and can be submitted to their area program.

New

There is also a [voucher](#) for discounted Women's Health Services through Minute Clinic for Special Olympics athletes.

Reminder: Athletes are not required to use MinuteClinic, but those who do not have a primary care physician may find this discount helpful.

REMEMBER: All athletes must have a current medical at the start of a sports season before they can participate.

2024 Athlete Leadership Cruise-Book Now

Medical Support Needed - Find Out More

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. If you think you may be interested, contact our Medical Coordinator, Jackie Miller, at chitchat1955@gmail.com.

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Car Donations Benefit SOHO

The 2024 Carnival Athlete Leadership Cruise dates have been set. for October 13th-20th, 2024. The cruise will depart from Baltimore and make three stops in the Bahamas, Nassau, Half Moon Cay, and Freeport.

Three Ports of Call and Three Athlete Leadership Training Days. Click [here](#) to see the itinerary. **The cruise is booking up fast.** Call Janice Colbert to reserve your spot. She can be reached at janice_colbert@yahoo.com or 410-446-7465.

Night to Shine

On Friday, February 9, 2024 6-9pm, Grace Community Church will host Night to Shine, sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. Night to Shine is an unforgettable prom night experience for people with special needs, ages fourteen and older. Now in its tenth year, this event has annually celebrated thousands of people with special needs around the globe on the Friday before Valentine's Day! Detailed information can be found [here](#).

Through the efforts of longtime coach and volunteer, Duke Silvea, Special Olympics can now accept car donations to benefit our program. Since the beginning of this program, we have received **\$19,981.00** in donations! If you have a car you would like to donate, please contact the office at 410-740-0500 or email info@somdhc.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!

Photos of Our Athletes

You can enjoy photos of our athletes at practice, competitions and other events on our photo [page](#).

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 and 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.

Special Olympics Howard County

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[Contact SOHO Today](#)

