



**Special  
Olympics**  
Maryland



**50**  
YEARS  
1970 - 2020

## February 2024 Newsletter - Issue #2

### Registration for Spring Sports Continues

Registration for the spring sports is still open for most sports. The deadline for registration is listed after each sport: *Athletics* (4/1), *Bocce* (4/1), *Cheerleading* (3/15), *Poms* (3/15), *Hip Hop Dance* (3/15), *Pickleball* (Closed), *Softball* (4/1), *Swimming* (Closed), *Spirit Fitness* (4/1) and Young Athletes Program (4/1). [Click here to register.](#) **NOTE:** Sports marked in italics already have waitlists.

**REMEMBER:** Athletes that register for any team sport 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 Summer Games which will be held on June 21-23, 2024.

### It's Inspiration Walk Time!!

The **23rd Annual Inspiration Walk** will be held on Saturday, April 27, 2024. The Walk will once again begin at the Oakland Mills Interfaith Center (The Meeting House) and will travel down to Lake Kittamaqundi and back to the Interfaith Center (choice of 1 or 2 mile walk).

While there is no registration fee, the minimum donation/fundraising to get event tee-shirt is \$50.00 for an individual or \$125.00 for a family of three or more. We strongly encourage every participant to make a personal donation and commit to raising funds to support Special Olympics Howard County sports programs which are offered free of charge. Prizes will be awarded for the top fundraisers (as of May 25th). Door prizes will be drawn for participants who are there in person, including tickets to a Ravens game!!



Use this QR code to go to the registration site or [click here to donate or setup your IW fundraising page.](#) This annual event that brings our Special Olympics family out into the community for a fun morning of exercise and comradery! Participants enjoy having their pictures taken in the photo booth or with the Oriole Bird and other surprise mascots and also

### Office Hours

Monday/Thursday 8:30 - 1:30  
Tuesday 1:30 - 6:30  
The office will be closed the week of March 4th.

### 2024 Volunteer Orientations

The next volunteer orientation is scheduled for **Monday, March 18th**. Additional volunteer orientations for 2024 can be found [here](#). 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.

award our Volunteer, Family and Coach of the Year as well as students who have been selected for the four Outstanding Student Volunteer Scholarships.

If you are interested in volunteering on the day of the event, contact Megan Larson ([meganlarson@somdhc.org](mailto:meganlarson@somdhc.org)).

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## 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 Jackie Burk Memorial Scholarship** (up to \$1,500) was created by Jack and Linda Burk in memory of their daughter, Jackie, a special friend and volunteer to Special Olympics Howard County.
- **Allan Homes Scholarship** (up to \$1,500) was created in 2006 by Allan and Kathy Waschak. Formerly open only to student volunteers in the swimming program, it is now open to student volunteers in any of our sports programs.
- **Kathy Lindner Memorial Scholarship** (\$500), created in 2012, this scholarship is in memory of Special Olympics Howard County's first Volunteer Coordinator.
- **Schnorf Family Scholarship** (up to \$1,500) was created in 2018 by Cole and Joan Schnorf to honor outstanding student volunteers.

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](mailto:info@somdhc.org) and must be received by March 29th. For further information and application, click [here](#).

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## Winter Games Results

Our SOHO athletes had a great time at Winter Games at Wisp Resort this past week. Snowshoe athlete, Daniel Larrimore and Alpine Ski athlete, Isabella Almeida, represented Howard County by carrying our banner. Snowshoer Jessie Carrico was selected to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Contact **Megan Larson** at [meganlarson@somdhc.org](mailto: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.



## Polar Bear Plunge Results

Howard County's two Polar Plunge teams had very successful Plunges for the 2024 campaign. The Allan Homes team, led by captain Allan Washak, raised \$17,395 and the Howard County Team, led by captain Mimi Goodman raised \$5,411. Thank you to everyone who joined one of these teams or donated in support of them. While the air was warm on Plunge Day, the water remained nice and cold to keep our plungers on their toes (if they could feel them).

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## Searching for a Level 2-5 Golf Coordinator



**Snowshoe Team (at right) :** Kate Moschel (25m, 50m), Daniel Larrimore (100m, 200m, 400m) and Jesse Carrico (100m, 200m and 400m) did an awesome job during the competition. The weather was warm on the first two days, and luckily, the athletes finished their races

before the rain arrived on the third day. The total results were three Gold, three Silver, one Bronze, and one 4th place ribbon. Congratulations team!



### **Alpine Skiing:**

Our Alpine Athletes worked hard and had so much fun! First year skier, Isabella Almeida, earned a Bronze in the Alpine Glide and a Participation ribbon in the Super Glide. (This was only her third day on snow!) Alec Chase took home the Gold in the Novice Slalom and a Silver in the Novice Giant Slalom.

Four athletes participated in the Intermediate Giant Slalom, Ben Stevick (Silver), Thomas Logan (Bronze) , Wayne Slifker (4th) and Joe Bobinski (4th).

Harris Littman placed 4th in the Intermediate Super G.

Five athletes participated in the Intermediate Slalom. Harris Littman (Gold), Joe Bobinski (Silver), Thomas Logan (4th), Wayne Slifker (7th) and Ben Stevick (Participation Ribbon).

In the Intermediate Super G Unified, Melanie Allen and her brother, Joe Bobinski took the Gold and Trevor Croft and Logan Thomas earned the Silver with Theresa Roberts and Ben Stevick placing 4th.

For seven years, Jenn Mineart served as the Level 2-5 Golf Coordinator. As was announced in the October newsletter, Jenn decided to step down, and we have been searching for a replacement. In recent articles about our Sports Coordinators, we reiterated our policy that if we do not have a coordinator(s) to lead a sport, that sport is in danger of being cancelled. The position requires someone who is very organized with good computer skills. We noted that we would consider having two individuals serve as Co- Coordinators.

Jenn does not want to see the program cancelled and has said that she will work with training someone this year in order to maintain the program, and she has already started the planning that needs to be done now for the summer.

We have a very strong Level 2-5 program, due to the dynamic duo of Jenn as coordinator and husband, Al, as Head Coach. Please consider this opportunity to be trained and work with Jenn this year in order to maintain this program. Contact the office if you are interested.

## **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





## Athletes Spotlight

In early January, **Meaghan Hyer** attended "The Xperience" Tennis Tournament in Charlottesville, Virginia, hosted by Virginia Special Olympics at the Boars Head Resort. The tournament is an annual invitational event that features many of the best Special Olympics tennis players in the United States. Meaghan and her coach, **Jack Healey** (SOHO Head tennis coach and 2023 SOHO Coach of the Year) were joined by another Special Olympics Maryland tennis athlete, **Julian English** and his coach, **Jeff Abel** from the SOMD staff. Even though the event provides tough competition, sportsmanship was a core foundation of the competition. The players supported

each other and showed grace to their opponents in both victory and defeat. Meaghan played against two men from Virginia and Illinois and took second place in her division. Congratulations to Meaghan who was very thankful for this opportunity and all the support she received.

Last October at the annual Howard County Recreation and Sports Celebration of Sports banquet, SOHO multi-sport athlete, **Charles Gaines**, received a Good Sports Award which honors individuals for their sportsmanship, respect, positive leadership, team ethics and dedication. We were notified in January that Charles will be one of Howard County Recreation and Parks nominees at the Mid-Atlantic Recreation and Parks Sports Alliance (MARPSA) annual Good Sports banquet on March 11th at Quiet Waters Park in Annapolis. Congratulations, Charles!



## Salute to Our Spring Sports Coordinators

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.

## Upcoming SOMD Athlete Activities

**March 14, 2024**

**Introduction to Leadership (7pm-8pm)**

Register by [clicking here](#).

**March 21st,**

**2024 Understanding Leadership (7pm-8pm)**

Register by [clicking here](#).

**April 12th, 2024 GAME NIGHT LIVE! (SOMD) at SOMD HQ**

To register yourself or a team contact Jason Schriml at [jschriml@somd.org](mailto:jschriml@somd.org)

## 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

We've been focusing on our wonderful Sport Coordinators who, as many of you know, are a critical part of our organization. The Sports Coordinator leads the efforts associated with a particular sport and all the administrative work that accompanies that sport. They attend monthly meetings with the management team during their season as well as work closely with all the coaches and families. They ensure everything for that sport such as equipment, training sites and practices, etc. as well as other administrative activities such as ensuring every athlete has a current and updated medical. They are the link between the coaches and the athletes and families, providing important information about the sport before and throughout the season. This position is so important that if we do not have a coordinator(s) to lead a sport, that sport is dropped until someone steps up. Let's take a look at our spring sports coordinators and for how long they have been in that position. Note that any person with an \* means they also coordinate a sport in another season.

The longest serving spring sports coordinator is **Lavonne Smith, Athletics Coordinator**, who has been in that role since 2009! What is amazing is that Lavonne barely finishes up as the Basketball Skills Coordinator, which she has done for 16 years, when she then starts the Athletics season. Note that a number of these coordinators are relatively new, having either stepped up to replace someone or stepped into a new sport program such as Pickleball and Spirit Fitness.

**Kim Davis** (Softball Skills) - since 2016

**Katie Boggs** and **Ashley Murphy** (Young Athletes Program) - since 2018

**Jackie Miller** (Bocce) - since 2021 (Jackie also serves year-round as our Medical Coordinator)

**Dave Donovan** (Swimming) - since 2021 in this year-round sport

**Donna and Sam Wright** (Spirit Fitness) - since 2022

**Felicia McLarin** (Softball) - since 2022

**Marianne Otto-Smith** (Spirit Fitness) - since 2023 (Marianne was the Co-Coordinator for Equestrian from 2011 to 2022)

**Stellamarie Kosman** (Cheer/Poms/Dance) - since 2023 (Stellamarie was formerly the Bocce Coordinator and also a huge part of the Inspiration Walk planning committee for many years.) Stellamarie will be assisted by three co-coordinators: **Felicia Hastings (since 2014)**, **Stacy Valentine (former Bowling Volunteer Coordinator)** and **Debbie Holfelder** (who is also doing Spirit Fitness in the same season.).

**Maria Docal** (Pickleball) - since 2022. Maria will be assisted by new co-coordinator **Nancy Hartka**.

Thank you to everyone for your dedication to our athletes and our program. You are what makes this organization great!

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## Sports Snippets

**Spirit Fitness** has been running two classes, one on Monday and one on Tuesday nights. Everyone loves the instructors, Tim and Sean, who are always very positive and great at engaging all the athletes. Each session starts and ends with stretching for warm-ups and cool downs. The athletes play a variety of fun and active physical games such as an obstacle course and shooting basketballs. One of the athletes commented that "It was the most fun class I've had." Thanks to our Monday coordinators, Sam and Donna Wright, and our Tuesday coordinators, Debbie Holfelder and Marianne Otto-Smith.

be interested, contact our Medical Coordinator, Jackie Miller, at [chitchat1955@gmail.com](mailto:chitchat1955@gmail.com).

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## THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 OVER THE EDGE SPONSORS

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## Car Donations Benefit SOHO

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





## Basketball Clinic at Atholton High School

Since 2017, Atholton boys varsity Coach Jared Albert has held clinics for our basketball teams. Both Atholton boys and girls varsity players participated in the clinic this year which was held on Saturday, February 24th. SOHO Teams Hyer and Ord (5x5 Traditional) attended.



you would like to donate, please contact the office at 410-740-0500 or email [info@somdhc.org](mailto: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](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).

## Special Olympics Howard County

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[Contact SOHO Today](#)

