



**Special
Olympics**
Maryland



50
YEARS
1970 - 2020

July 2024 Newsletter - Issue #6

Fall Sports Registration Now Open

Registration for fall sports - Bowling, Cycling, Distance Running, Flag Football, Powerlifting, Soccer, Tennis, Volleyball, Spirit Fitness, and Young Athletes Program - is now open. **CLICK HERE** to register.

All athletes must have a current medical at the start of a sports season before they can participate so don't wait until the last minute to get your physicals completed. See sidebar article on Discounted Sports Physicals.

Please review the **below important information** before selecting a sport for your athlete:

- Athletes who participate in golf cannot participate in tennis, since both sports practice on Thursday evenings.
- Athletes who select a team sport must commit to participating in all qualifiers and competitions to include the Fall Sports Festival at Mount Saint Mary's University on October 19th (flag football, tennis), Soccer State Tournament at the Crown Sports Center in Fruitland on October 27th (soccer) or the Volleyball Invitational in Jessup on November 9th.
- Note the practice days, as there are overlaps. For example, soccer and volleyball practices are both on Wednesday evenings. An athlete cannot participate in both.
- Due to limitations in facilities and/or volunteers, we may not be able to accommodate all athletes who register. If needed, wait lists will be established. Wait lists will be established based on registration date and the below considerations:
 - Athletes who reside in Howard County are given priority over athletes who live out of county.
 - Athletes whose family members volunteer will have priority.
 - To provide participation opportunities for as many athletes as possible, athletes who register for only one sport may be given priority in that sport over athletes who register for multiple sports.

Office Hours

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

Upcoming Volunteer Orientations

The next volunteer orientation is scheduled for **Monday, July 15th** at the SOHO office. Two additional orientations are scheduled for **Thursday, August 15th and Tuesday, September 17th.**

Anyone interested in volunteering with fall sports (bowling, cycling, distance running, flag football, powerlifting, soccer, tennis, spirit fitness, volleyball and young athletes program.) should attend an orientation as soon as possible.

Contact the office (410-740-0500) or info@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.



Have you been thinking about that item on your bucket list for a few years? Well, this could be your year! Our 4th Annual Over the Edge

event will take place on Saturday, September 14th at the Tenable Building in the Merriweather District. Each rappeler must raise \$1,000 to reserve their spot and can start their fundraising [here](#).

Companies or businesses that are interested in being a corporate sponsor (sponsorship levels can be found [here](#)) should contact Cole Schnorf (cschnorf@manekin.com).

Many volunteers are needed for this event. If you are interested in helping out, contact the office or info@somdhc.org.



Spring Sports Wrap Up

Unfortunately, due to the excessive heat and out of an abundance of caution for the health and safety of our athletes and volunteers, SOMD cancelled all outdoor activities at Summer Games. The cheerleading competition on Friday was on but the block party Friday night was cancelled. Opening Ceremonies still took place in SECU Arena, and we were proud to have swim coach Ann Scholz read the Coaches' Oath at Opening Ceremonies. All outdoor sports (Athletics, Bocce, and Softball) were cancelled, but Swimming occurred on Saturday and Sunday and Healthy Athletes was also a big success inside. The Saturday night dance also happened as usual and rumor has it that swim athlete Ryan Thibadeau was selected to participate in the dance off and stole the show! Way to represent, Ryan!

Check out the SOMD June Impact Newsletter [here](#), filled with great Summer Games pictures and stories.

Vote for SOHO for Best in Howard!

We are one of the nominees for **Best Volunteer Organization** in this year's Best of Howard. Click [here](#) to vote. You can find us in the Out and About section **You can vote once a day until July 11th**. The competition is stiff and all worthy so we would appreciate your support in highlighting our wonderful volunteers.

Still seeking a Level 2-5 Golf Coordinator

We are still in need of a Level 2-5 Golf Coordinator. With the impending season, it's critical that we get someone in this position in order to get trained by our previous golf coordinator.

Colorful Summer Challenge

Join SOMD in a 6-week virtual Challenge that focuses on healthy and colorful eating. Many times, eating healthy has the look of a very white plate- chicken, rice, and boring vegetables. BUT nutrition and healthy eating should be COLORFUL. [Join SOMD in learning the importance of eating a colorful meal, the benefits of eating a variety of colors, and new yummy and simple dishes to try along the way.](#) This will be a self-lead challenge, with helpful hints and tricks along the way. Each participant can fill out a daily nutrition tracker to help you keep track of your nutrition goals along the way. This challenge is currently running from June 1st through July



Coach Shirley Duhaney.

Cheerleading

We had 42 Howard County athletes compete in Cheer, Poms, and Hip Hop at the SOMD Summer Games at Towson University on Friday, June 21st. The teams did a great job and showed great sportsmanship, cheering on their fellow team mates as well as all teams from other counties.

Many thanks to our fantastic coaches - Barbara Baker, Hillary Scott, Michelle Shuman, and Kalie Messner - who bring out the best in our athletes all the time. **THE PROOF IS IN THE MEDALS!!** Three Golds and One Bronze. (Cheer Hawks, Royal Hawks, Pearl Hawks all got Gold medals and the Diamond Hawks got a Bronze.) Way to go Hawks!!!

Thank you to all our family members who assisted with the mats at each practice through out the season. It was a huge help.

From Coordinator Stellamarie Kosman: Big thanks to the Assistant Coordinators, Non-Family Volunteers, and our Spotters. (Ann Scholz, Stacy Valentine, Genevieve Weydant, Felicia Hastings, Deborah Holfelder, Tina Miller, Dee Wise, Jennifer Funk, and Ava Funk) You helped make my job as Coordinator a little easier. THANK YOU ALL 💕

Carrying the Howard County banner in the Parade of Athletes were RJ Phillips, Jessie Carrico, Kate Moschel, Richard Allen, and Track

13th, 2024 (but you can also create your own timeline!!)

Sports Camp

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is sponsoring a day long sports camp at Chapelgate Presbyterian Church on July 27th from 8am until 2pm. The campers will get to be an athlete all day! Athletes will be paired up with a one-on-one teammate who will be their best friend throughout the day and go through all sports stations with them. Register at www.cmdfca.org/allability.

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.



Cheer Hawks



Pearl Hawks



Royal Hawks



Diamond Hawks

Pickleball

SOHO pickleball continues to be a Locally Popular Sport (not yet included in SOMD Summer Games), Coach Bob Sans held a pickleball demonstration at Summer Games to encourage interest in other counties. The following pickleball athletes were part of the demonstration: Josh Osten, Sam Carder, Erika Hagelis, Andy Young, Chris Evans, Nitesh Parikh, sporting our new pickleball uniforms.



We are thankful for the following pickleball volunteers who came up to Summer Games to participate in the demonstration: Julie Meyers, Amy McGuire, Dan McGuire, Sue Berger, Milt Berger, Darren Frisinger, Frank Lannon, Brenda Hensley, Bharat Parikh, Maria Docal and Bob Sans.

We hope that next year, pickleball will officially be part of Summer Games!

Swimming

The SOHO swim team had a fabulous year! We had 48 swimmers on the roster, including seven new to SOHO this year, and a few others who came back to swimming after taking some time off. Rounding out the team were many coaches and volunteers.

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.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 OVER THE EDGE SPONSORS

Want to see your company listed as one of our 2024 Sponsors? Contact Cole Schnorf (cschnorf@maneking.com)

PRESENTING SPONSOR AND ROPE SPONSOR
Howard Hughes Corporation

LANDING ZONE SPONSOR
ARCO Design/Build

TEAM BUILDER SPONSORS
Allan Homes Foundation
Cushman Wakefield
KO Public Affairs
Manekin LLC
Pioneer Services

FEARLESS LEADER SPONSORS

Bohler Engineering
BrightView Landscape Services
Columbia Association
Dembo Jones
Downtown Columbia Partnership
Environmental Systems Associates
Gula Tech Adventures

Our three practice groups met Sunday evenings, each group having one hour of dryland and swimming. We ended each practice group with relays – everybody’s favorite! Swimming is a demanding sport and we love watching our athletes grow in their skills and endurance. It’s an hour of non-stop action, and although they got tired, they gave it their all.

We’re especially lucky to have volunteers and coaches who love the sport and enjoy sharing it with our athletes. Special thanks to all our wonderful coaches and volunteers, we couldn’t have done it without you! Several of our swimmers are taking leadership roles in the team, taking attendance, leading warmups, getting equipment ready, helping with relays and mentoring younger swimmers.

At Summer Games in Towson, SOHO swimmers brought home 43 golds, 31 silvers, and 25 bronze medals. We took four unified relay teams to states, the first since pre-Covid for our swim program. Although that’s impressive, the proudest moments for the coaches came while watching our athletes reach across the lane line to shake hands after a close race, give a high five to a competitor on the medal stand, or comfort another swimmer who had a tough race. Those are the times that mean so much!

A special shout-out to our coordinator Dave Donovan, who does so much for the team as well as Head Coach Ann Scholz and all our coaches. Both have dedicated so much time to these swimmers year round and it’s greatly appreciated.

4x50 Unified Freestyle
Gold Medal Relay
Team: Ryan
Thibaudeau, Issac
Wudu, Andrew Chen,
Abigale Rothrock



4x25 Freestyle Gold
Medal Relay Team:
Elana Dong, Luis
Cotto, Elliot Kim and
Zion Neugroschel

H&R Retail
Mackenzie Commercial Real
Estate
Shiple and Horne
Stewart Title
Tenable

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 you would like to donate, please use this [link](#) and select Howard County as the recipient of the funds.

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.

Athletics

Athletics had an awesome season this year! Besides having a record number of both athletes and volunteers, we were so pleased to have many athletes that joined Athletics for the first time! The weather did not always cooperate with practice days and times, but we all made the best of it.

We celebrated the return of the Howard County Qualifying Track Meet held on June 1st at Wilde Lake High School. Seven other counties attended the event. (See June newsletter for more details about the event.)

It was disappointing that all outdoor competitions at Summer Games at Towson were cancelled due to the excessive heat. But that didn't stop the athletes from enjoying what was still available. Howard County Athletics was well presented at Opening Ceremonies Parade of Athletes by Coach Shirley Duhaney and athlete Richard Allen. Athlete Gary Wilson was the highlight photo on the back of the 2024 Summer Games Program. Several of our Athletics athletes ventured back up to Towson on Saturday evening for the annual dance.

We are already looking forward to next year Athletic season!

Bocce

Howard County Bocce practiced every Saturday all season including in the pouring rain at their home qualifier and with muggy bugs at the Montgomery County qualifier. They were practiced and skilled and ready to demonstrate their bocce prowess at Summer Games.

However, with the excessive heat, bocce was one of the outdoor sports that had to be cancelled. While the athletes were sad not be able to compete, everyone was appreciative of SOMD's dedication to the safety of our athletes. We will look forward to next year and the ability to compete once again a Summer Games.

Thanks to all the Bocce coaches and volunteers whose dedication was clearly visible in the growth and skills of all our players. Thanks to Bocce Coordinator Jackie Miller and to former Coordinator Stellamarie Kosman for mentoring and overseeing Jackie's first year as Coordinator.

Softball - Mother Nature was not kind to us again and two softball qualifiers were rained out. Our annual Special Olympics Softball Invitational, this year scheduled for May 19th, had to be cancelled due to torrential rain the day before which made the fields unplayable. Special thanks to Zach Decker, our Softball Invitational Coordinator, who worked so hard to have another memorable event, and to the folks at HCYP who are always our best partners in preparing fields and help run the event.

A smaller softball competition was scheduled for May 5th but again, Mother Nature caused it to be cancelled. Finally on May 26th, thirty-six athletes from Harford and Howard Counties played two games, showcasing their exceptional skills and impressive teamwork. Harford County defeated the two Howard County teams (Silvea and Warren) in the first two games and then SOHO Team Silvea defeated SOHO Team Warren in the third game. Softball Coordinator Felicia McLarin described their hard work and dedication as truly remarkable. Photos from the competition can be found [here](#).

ERRATA: We regret there was an error in the softball article in the June 2024 newsletter. It stated that Harford County won both games. However, Coach Silvea's team won their game against Harford County.

Special Olympics Howard County

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

Contact SOHO Today

