



**Special  
Olympics**  
Maryland



**50**  
YEARS  
1970-2020

## October 2024 Newsletter - Issue #8

### Winter Sports Registration Scheduled

Registration for Winter Sports - Apine Skiing, Basketball (Skills, 3x3, 3x3 Player Development, 5x5 Player Development, 5x5), Spirit Fitness, and Snowshoeing) will open on November 4th.

Remember that if you register for a team sport, you are committed to participating in that sport and all competitions to include State Games.

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.



### We Need Your Help, It's Time to Step Up

In the past few newsletters, we've been highlighting many of our coaches and coordinators and shown the number of years they have been volunteering with SOHO. For those of you that don't realize it, **SOHO is an ALL**

### Office Hours

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

### Volunteer Corner

We are fast approaching the start of our 2025 winter season. If you would like to volunteer for one or more of these sports, basketball (5 levels), bowling, alpine skiing, snowshoeing or the Young Athletes program we would love to welcome you and your families and friends. We also need help with one day competitions. This is a great way for high school students to gain their service hours.

If you would like to be a part of a great volunteer organization, please reach out to Rachel Maddock-Cosden our volunteer coordinator at [rmaddockcosden@somdhc.org](mailto:rmaddockcosden@somdhc.org). You can also call the office at 410-740-0500 for more information. The process to become a volunteer is to attend a volunteer orientation that we hold once a month, dates below for the rest of the year are: **Monday October 14, Thursday November 7 and December 17** at the SOHO office, along with a volunteer application and two online training courses (Protective Behaviors and Concussion). We look forward to having you join us.

**VOLUNTEER RUN organization.** Without our hundreds of volunteers, including many student volunteers, we would not have been able to build the incredible organization that we have over the years. BUT, in recent years, a number of our long time coordinators have decided to "retire." As is our policy, if we do not have a coordinator or co-coordinators, that sport will be dropped which means there is one less sport for our athletes to have the opportunity to train and compete in.

This year, our Level 2-5 golf program was in jeopardy of being dropped due to the retirement of long time coordinator, **Jenn Mineart**, parent of an athlete. Jenn did not want to see that happen and so graciously offered to do it for one more season which she just completed. Luckily, two individuals - **Christine Civik and Harish Wagle**, parent of an athlete, stepped up to train with Jenn this season and be prepared to take over completely next year, thereby saving that sport.

Now we are facing two additional coordinators leaving after their seasons this year. After 21 years, **Russ Young**, parent of an athlete, will be retiring as the volleyball coordinator. Russ has continued to run this program even after all the other Maryland counties dropped their volleyball programs, leaving SOHO with the only program in the state. He worked tirelessly over the years to find competitions with programs in other states or bring other state teams here for competitions. We need someone to step into his big shoes and preferably now so that they can shadow him this season and learn the ropes.

This will also be the last season that **Jim and Theresa Bourdon**, parents of an athlete, will serve as the 5x5 basketball coordinators. The Bourdon's have been involved with the basketball program for over 20 years and also need someone (or someones) to come on board in 2025 and shadow them to learn what has to be done prior and during the season.

So we have two sports in danger of being dropped if we do not identify replacements for these outstanding and long-serving coordinators. Additionally, **did you know that the average age of our 16 member management team is 58 years old with 8 members over 62? All 8 are parents of an athlete and on average have been volunteering over 25 years and 11 of 16 members are parents of an athlete.** We will have turnover in the coming years and need parents of younger athletes to get involved.

Parents, isn't it time you thought about getting off the sidelines and stepping up to continue the legacy of this organization? See the "Volunteer Corner" article on how to become a volunteer. Besides being a coordinator or a coach, **there are many other opportunities for you to contribute. We invite you to take that step!**



After having to cancel Saturday's Over the Edge due to a weather emergency in 2023, Mother Nature gave us a beautiful day for this year's 4th Annual Over the Edge. 89 individuals bravely went over the edge,.For some rapellers, it wasn't their "first rodeo" but for others it was their first time, including SOHO

athlete Anna DeWitt (see below). We raised \$123K, thanks in large part to multiple corporate sponsors, including our Presenting Sponsor, the Howard

## Free Basketball Clinic

HCYP is again offering the Joe Wooten basketball clinic on Sunday, November 10th from 4-5pm at Long Reach HS. A separate Special Olympics session will be offered for all athletes 22 years and younger. Register by [clicking here](#).



## OUR 2024 OVER THE EDGE SPONSORS

Many thank to our corporate sponsors who are critical in helping us put on this exciting event!

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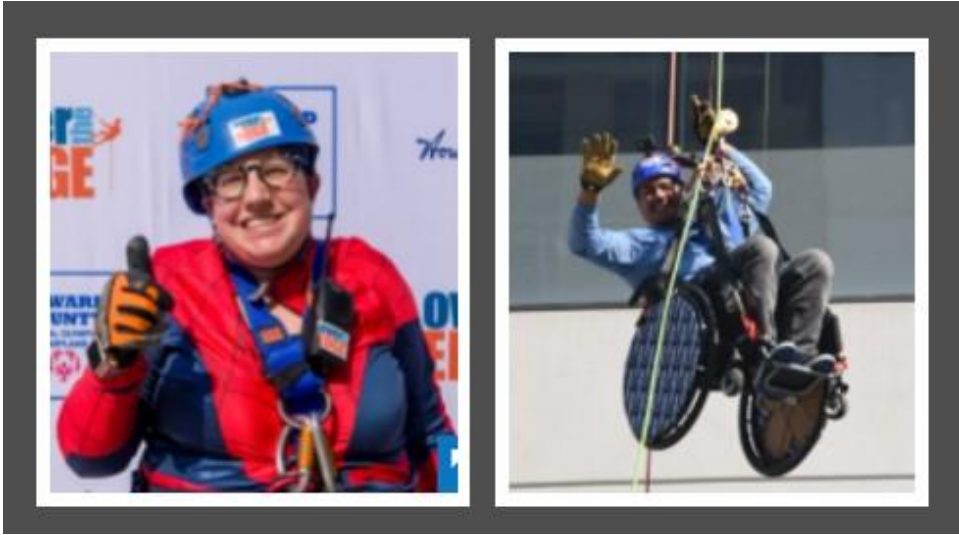
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### STREET FESTIVAL SPONSORS

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Hughes Corporation. (See other sponsors listed in the column to the right.) Many thanks to DJ Steve Towne and emcee Jeff Abel and our cheerleaders who kept the event lively. One of the highlights of the day was rappeler and Tenable employee, Joe Guintu, who came from California and went over in a wheelchair proving that if he can do it, you can do it! Watch the newsletter for next year's date so you don't miss out on participating next year. We are still taking donations; if you like to support [click here](#).



### Join the Polar Bear Plunge Excitement

Wondering what to do this winter? Looking forward to the crisp fresh air of winter? Please consider joining our **SOHO Sponsor, Allan Homes Unlimited**, and jump into the icy waters at Sandy Point State Park to support our athletes. Join our

team on **Saturday, February 1st** for a day of dancing, live music, food, and a quick dip in the Chesapeake Bay. Challenge friends and family members to join you in this annual exciting and fun filled event. If a cold swim is not for you, you can still support members of our team by donating directly to Allan Homes Unlimited Plunge page. To join the team or donate, click [here](#). SOHO will receive 70% of the funds raised. Plan ahead to shake up your winter doldrums, get outside and have some winter fun by joining our team now. Remember, ankles count!

### Silvea's to Compete at National Golf Invitational - Support Needed

SOHO Level 2 Unified Golf Team of Brian and Duke Silvea have been selected to be part of the Maryland delegation competing at the National Golf Invitational Tournament from October 27<sup>th</sup> to November 1<sup>st</sup> in Wichita, Kansas. We are thrilled for them to represent Maryland and Howard County at this event and wish them the best in competing. If you would like to help cover the cost of their participation (\$4,000), you can click [here](#). Brian and Duke thank you!

### New Fitness Program



SOMD has been working with Revival Fitness in Gambrills for a free fitness program on Sunday mornings beginning in November. It is open to athletes 15 years old and older whose registration (medical) are current. For further information, click [here](#). To register, email Robert Signor ([rsignor@somd.org](mailto:rsignor@somd.org)) who will send you a facility waiver form.

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## SOHO Merchandise for Sale

We have some SOHO baseball hats for sale. They are \$10.00 each and can be purchased at the office. We also have some folding chairs and rain ponchos on hand. Items can be purchased at the SOHO office. Keep a look out on our website for the opening of our new online store!

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## FALL SPORTS NOTES

**Long Distance Running (Cross Country)** program is led by Coordinator **Ann and John Worley**. This season the team has 21 athletes ranging from age 12 to 38, including 3 new athletes. We are now blessed with 22 volunteers. We are looking forward to our in-house meet on October 2nd, the Autism Walk/Run on October 5th, and the Fall Fest on October 19th.

Twenty-one athletes competed at Meadowbrook Park on Saturday, Sept. 21st for our first meet. Two of these athletes traveled from Fairfax, Virginia, and joined us in a post-competition breakfast potluck. Sunny weather and great music were in the air! Josh Geesaman was first in the 5K with a time of 18:52, followed by Logan Thomas (2nd) and Max Hershberger from Virginia (3rd). Will Frisinger won the 3K, and 12-year-old Mubasil Tungeker aced the 1500m in a time of 7:54! Applause and support from the crowd encouraged athletes to deliver great running times.



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## Is Your Medical Form Current?

Athlete medical forms must be updated every 3 years. The medical expiration date is 3 years from the date of the last physical exam, and to be current, the date must be after the end of the sports season. For example, state games for soccer will be on 10/27/2024. At the start of the sports season, athletes participating in soccer must have a medical form with an expiration date after 10/27/2024. When submitting medical forms, be sure to submit all the



**Flag Football:** This program is led by coordinator **Cyndi Song**. The teams had another night of fun under the lights at our second qualifier. Twelve Teams came out to pull some flags and play through some rain. We will meet under the lights again next week while we host our last qualifier before heading to Frederick for two qualifiers in October.



**Cycling:** This program is led by coordinators **Cheryl and Zach Decker**. The cycling season is off to a great start. We have fifteen athletes riding with us and ten of those are competing at the state games. We are grateful for our volunteers and coaches as we couldn't do it without them.

required pages (except page 4, which is optional).

- Pages 1 and 2 need to be completed by either a parent, guardian, or athlete.
- Page 3 must be completed and signed by a physician; the date of the exam must be within the last year.
- Page 4 is optional and only needs to be completed if the physician feels that the athlete needs to be referred to a specialist.
- The Athlete Participation Waiver and the Communicable Diseases Waiver need to be signed by the athlete, or by the parent or guardian if the athlete is a minor. Note that we need actual signatures. Typed signatures cannot be accepted.

Once completed, medical forms can be sent via email to [info@somdhc.org](mailto:info@somdhc.org) or mailed to the Special Olympics Howard County office, 8970 Route 108, Suite A-1, Columbia, 21045. Forms can also be dropped off at the office. When the office is closed, forms can be left in the secure black mailbox outside the office door. Not sure when your medical form will expire? Call the office at 410-740-0500 or send an email to [info@somdhc.org](mailto:info@somdhc.org). [Click here](#) for a copy of the medical form.

## 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](mailto:chitchat1955@gmail.com).



**Powerlifting** : This program is led by coordinator Javier Armendariz. Powerlifting had its qualifier on Saturday, September 28th at 12 Labours Crossfit. The Montgomery County team joined in the competition. All total there were 29 athletes who competed.



**Tennis Player Development:** This program is led by coordinator **Barbara Evans**. The 20 member player development tennis team practices Tuesdays and Thursdays focusing on match play. Fourteen athletes will compete at Fallfest along with 10 unified partners. Early in the season the team celebrated Special Olympics Global Ambassador and WTA Pro, Gaby Dabrowski who won the BRONZE MEDAL in the 2024 Paris Olympics for mixed doubles. Gaby has been a long time supporter of our MD tennis program!

## 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](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).



**Tennis Skills:** This program is led by Coordinator Sierra Mikha'El. This season has been marked by vibrant energy and exciting progress, with plenty of highlights that showcase the dedication and hard work of everyone involved.



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## 90 Day Fitness Challenge

The Fitness Challenge began on Monday, September 23rd. Consider participating in this great way to improve your health and wellness.

**WHO?** All SOMD athletes, Unified Partners and family members are encouraged to sign-up and participate.

**WHAT?** All are invited to participate in this 90 Day Fit 5 Fitness Challenge designed to create healthier lifestyles while following the Fit 5 goals.

**WHERE?** At home and anywhere you can be physically active. Walking the dog, hiking, biking, sports practice, Physical Education class...everything counts as long as it is intentional!

**WHEN?** September 23rd - Thursday, December 21st, 2023 (First Day of Fall - First Day of Winter)

**NOTE:** *You can still sign up and participate even if you miss the start date.*

**HOW TO REGISTER:**

**Step 1:** Register by visiting this [link](#) (Information that you'll need: Participant's Name, Email/Contact Info, Age Group, and Local Program).

**Step 2:** After registering, participants will keep track of their physical activity, nutrition, and hydration goals on the corresponding trackers.

Any questions, please reach out to Kayla Shields, the Health and Fitness Director at SOMD at [healthyathletes@somd.org](mailto:healthyathletes@somd.org).

For more information, click [here](#).

**Special Olympics Howard County**

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[Contact SOHO Today](#)

