



Special Olympics Howard County

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[Contact SOHO Today](#)



January 2026 Newsletter - Issue #1

Registration for Spring Sports Opens February 2nd

Registration for the spring sports season will open on Monday, February 2, 2026. The spring season includes Bocce, Cheerleading/Dance/Poms, Softball, Athletics (Track and Field), Pickleball, Spirit Fitness, CrossFit and the Young Athletes Program. Register from our [website](#) beginning February 2, 2026. Per the October Newsletter, swimming registration was part of the winter registration since practices began in January.

New for 2026:

- A new registration system has been implemented. For existing athletes, the system will automatically show current information and allow an opportunity for updates. If the system does not find your athlete, call the office at 410-740-0500.
- To allow more athletes to participate and to reduce the length of wait lists, athletes may only register for a maximum of 3 sports.
- Athletes who register for a sport that is at capacity will automatically be wait listed and will be notified if a spot becomes available.
- We want to maximize participation for as many athletes as possible. This means that if you register for three sports, you may get bumped from one, in order to allow athletes that are only on waiting lists to also participate.
- **As always, participation is guaranteed for families that step up to coordinate or coach a sport.**



Fundraising Changes - Support the Plunge!

For the past 5 years we hosted our Inspiration Walk (IW) in the spring and Over the Edge (OTE) in the fall, while also supporting the MSP Polar Bear Plunge in the winter. The decision was made to end OTE for now and move our IW to September at a new location, Symphony Woods in downtown Columbia! This will allow us to focus on

the MSP Polar Bear Plunge in the winter and the IW in late summer.

With that said, please support our fundraising efforts at the plunge. We have combined our county efforts with our 2023 SOHO Lifetime Achievement Awardee, Allan Waschak, who has spearheaded our plunge fundraising for 21 years!! You can sign up to plunge or simply donate by [clicking here](#).

Office Hours

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

Volunteer Corner

Looking for a place to volunteer? Want to feel the joy of watching athletes with intellectual disabilities work hard and excel in the various sports? Need to earn Community Service Requirements for high school graduation or church requirements? Whether you are looking for a few hours a week or month or a larger commitment, whether you can help with administrative/office work, fundraising or want to work hands-on coaching the athletes, Special

Funds raised on the [Allan Homes/SOHO Plunge Team page](#) go directly to our local program!!

Important Changes to Athlete Medical Form - ACTION NEEDED FOR EVERY ATHLETE

The current athlete medical form has been discontinued and is replaced by the new [U.S. Athlete Registration Form \(click here\)](#). Important features of the new form:

- Physician signature NOT required for sports participation and competition within Maryland
- Medical questions are completed by parent/guardian/caregiver
- Waivers combined with only 1 signature needed
- Typed signatures are not accepted; electronic signatures such as DocuSign are accepted
- **All old medical forms will expire on 06/30/2026, but don't wait, download and complete the new form today**
- New forms should be signed, scanned and submitted to info@somdhc.org or sent to the office by 06/30/2026
- **The U.S. Athlete Registration Form must be updated annually**

Questions? Call the office 410-740-0500 or send an email info@somdhc.org



Marilyn Miceli Memorial Scholarship

As announced in November, our longtime Assistant Director, Marilyn Miceli, passed away after a 3 year battle with breast cancer. In honor of her 33 years of dedicated service and contributions to our organization, we are establishing the Marilyn Miceli Memorial Scholarship. Each spring, an outstanding student volunteer will be selected and awarded \$1500 to be applied to their future education. If you would like to honor Marilyn and contribute to the scholarship, [click here](#) or send a donation to the office.

Please note that at Marilyn's viewing, envelopes were set out to send remembrances of Marilyn to her three grandchildren. Unfortunately the zip code was incorrect. It was Marilyn's wish that folks take a moment to write down a special memory you have of her, or a quality or value she embodied that touched your life and then send that to the grandkids, so when they are older they will come to know the love, warmth, and wisdom Marilyn shared with all of us. Here's the correct address:

Theo, Gabe, and Ezra Kauffman
600 N. Bend Road
Baltimore, MD 21229-2210

Special Olympics Howard County can use you!

If you're ready to dive in, check out our website for all the details on how to get started as a volunteer: [Become a Volunteer](#). Parents are highly encouraged to attend an orientation to learn more about SOHO.

For further information, contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Felecia McLarin (feleciamclarin@somdhc.org) or the office.



Passing of Special Olympian Bucky Buchanan

Long time athlete William (Bucky) Buchanan passed away on December 18, 2025 at the age of 60. Bucky participated in soccer, tennis, bowling, bocce and his most favorite sport, golf. In the late 90's when the US Senior Open was hosted at Hobbits Glen Golf Course, Bucky helped kick off the event next to golf legend, Arnold Palmer! He and Palmer both hit ceremonial golf shots into Lake Kittamaqundi as part of the festivities, and to the delight of the crowd and Palmer himself, Bucky hit a perfect 5 iron to the middle of the lake! Rest in peace Bucky, you will be missed.

SOHO Merchandise Store

Want to show your Special Olympics spirit by proudly sporting SOHO

Organizational Changes

Since 2014, **Janet Larrimore** has done a phenomenal job as our office manager, executing the daily administrative and operational tasks required to run an organization of our size. She is stepping down from that position on April 30th, but we are very fortunate that her breadth of knowledge and expertise will still be close at hand as she agreed to take on the Assistant Director role!



Taking over as Office Manager will be **Felecia McLarin**, who is our current Volunteer coordinator, Athlete Leadership Coordinator and Softball coordinator. She'll be mentoring under Janet from January to April and going solo on May 1st. Felecia wears many hats and with taking on the Office Manager position, she obviously will not be able to do all these jobs.

Felecia's volunteer coordinator position will be now be split between new management team members, **Star**

Bogenschutz and Colleen Donovan.

A huge thank you to Janet, Felecia, Star and Colleen for taking on these important roles within our organization!!

We are still looking for volunteers to take over Felecia's Athlete Leadership and Softball coordinator positions. Please email Bob Baker at bobbaker@somdhc.org if interested.

2025 Coaching Retirements

Special Olympics exists and operates only through the efforts of volunteers. We are blessed to have committed individuals who give of their time to ensure that our athletes have sports training and competition opportunities throughout the year. We honor and thank the following individuals who hung up their coaching and coordinator hats this past year.



Rick Baker (17 Yrs) - Rick not only coached for the past 17 years, he coached 3 seasons per year!! In winter, he was a Basketball coach, Spring our Softball Skills Coach, and each fall, he coached soccer. In 2017, Rick was the SOHO Coach of the Year and his year-round commitment and love for our athletes will be dearly missed.

gear? Looking for a gift for your athlete or family supporters? Check out the new Special Olympics Howard County online merchandise store! Items available include hoodies, jackets, backpacks, hats and much more. To order, [click here](#). We also 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. These items can be purchased at the SOHO office. Stop by during office hours to see samples of some items.

Mark Your Calendars!

2026 Summer Games at Towson University has been scheduled for **June 12-14**.

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.

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. 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



Jim Mundy (9 yrs), Jeff Anderson (14 yrs), Jack Burk (25 yrs), Bo Mundy (25 yrs), Mike Thompson (14 yrs) - This group of friends coached our 3v3T Basketball teams, some for the past 25 years!! Led by Jack Burk, a 2023 Rec & Parks Hall of Fame inductee and 2015 SOHO Coach of the year, these coaches brought fun and great instruction to every practice! You all will be missed! Also a big thank you to **Alesia Richter**, retiring as our 3v3T coordinator after 10 years.

Ann Worley (25 yrs) and John Worley (25 yrs) - Our Long Distance Running Coordinator and Head Coach leave a legacy of contributions. Under their leadership, SOHO had the best long distance runners in the state and their "Quick Feet" motto motivated our athletes to new heights. John was our 2021 SOHO Coach of the year!



Russ Young (20 yrs) has set the standard for being a sports coordinator leading our volleyball program from 2006 to 2024. While he stepped down from this role, he continues to be our Sports Director on our management team, responsible for training all new sports coordinators! Russ was the 2024 SOHO Volunteer of the Year!

June Kerger (14 yrs) started volunteering with our tennis program 14 years ago and has been the head coach for the past 5 years. A highlight of her time was attending the 2018 National Games in Seattle as Edie Daniello's unified tennis partner, both winning a Silver medal. June also volunteered with our Pickleball program since its inception in 2022. Beloved by the athletes she served, her leadership will be missed.



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

SOMD Annual Report

The Special Olympics Maryland 2024 annual report was recently released and can be [viewed here](#).

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.



Cyndi Song (7 yrs) took over as our Flag Football Coordinator 7 years ago at a time when the sport was in jeopardy of being cancelled. She has done an amazing job over this time period and the sport has doubled in size! The highlight of her tenure was in 2024 when SOHO captured the Gold Medal in the National Intramural Recreation Association (NIRSA) regional competition for several states held at the University of Maryland.

Fall Sports Reports

A big thank you to all our fall sports coordinators, coaches and volunteers. Here are the coordinator reports:

Cycling (by Cheryl Decker)

What a fantastic season! This year, sixteen dedicated athletes trained with heart and determination, and twelve proudly competed at the State Games. Head Coach Bill Parlock and athlete Zach Decker had the honor of representing Howard County at the opening ceremonies, delivering the Coach's Oath and Athlete's Oath respectively.

We're deeply grateful to Bill Parlock, Zach Decker Sr. and Elizabeth Yao for their outstanding coaching support throughout the season. Special thanks also go to our incredible volunteers—David and Eli Chandler, Jerry Jing, and Jayden Rojas—whose time and energy made a lasting impact.

And of course, a huge thank-you to the many parents who pitched in at practices. Their involvement and encouragement helped make this season a true success!

And special thanks to Cheryl and Zach Decker for continuing to coordinate and coach this sport, their 25th year in this role!!



Flag Football (by Cyndi Song)

The Howard Hawks had an incredible flag football season, growing from three teams to four and welcoming even more athletes into our Hawks family. Their hard work and teamwork paid off at State Games, where we proudly brought home one Gold, two Silvers, and one Bronze. We're so proud of the sportsmanship, spirit, and heart our athletes showed all season long. Go Hawks! 

And special thanks to Cyndi Song who coordinated this sport the last 7 years with 2025 being her last. We are in need of a new flag football coordinator, so if you'd like this sport to continue, please step up to take on this role.



Long Distance Running (by Ann Worley)

The Long Distance Running program ended with a triumphant performance of our team (aka Quick Feet) at Fall Fest. Our athletes also showed incredible times at Montgomery County's qualifier and at our home meet. Twenty athletes participated this year. Persistent practice and the challenging hills at Meadowbrook Park contributed to improved times as did the continued dedication of our 19 volunteers and families.

And special thanks to Ann Worley who coordinated this sport the last 13 seasons years with 2025 being her last. Thank you to Marlene O'Cleary for stepping up to take over as our new coordinator and to Adam Yoe, who will replace John Worley as Head Coach.



Powerlifting (by Javier Armendariz)

Powerlifting ended another year with a great showing at Fall Fest. Our newest athlete, Johann Monroy, set a personal best with 42.5kg on the bench press and 65kg on the deadlift, but he still had more in the tank. We'll increase those numbers next year. Returning athletes Jessica Li and Sean Doherty represented Howard County and carried in the banner for opening ceremony. It's always sad to see the season end, but the joy the athletes get and bring make it rewarding.

And special thanks to Javier Armendariz for continuing to do an excellent job as our powerlifting coordinator for the past 5 years!



Tennis (by Barbara Evans)

Sixteen Howard County tennis athletes and eleven unified partners competed in the SOMD Fallfest tennis tournament and brought home multiple medals and ribbons! We had a beautiful weather day topped only by the excitement of competition. Four of our athletes competed at Level 5, the highest tennis

match level offered. All athletes and unified partners made a strong showing and demonstrated exceptional competitive spirit. Our team was led by long time head coaches Jack Healey and June Kerger. At the end of the season party we said goodbye to Coach June who is retiring this year. We will miss her!

And special thanks to Barbara Evans (13 yrs) and Tricia Hyer (2 yrs) for continuing to be our awesome tennis coordinators!



Also thank you to our other Fall sports coordinators, Jared Lucey (Soccer Skills), Shirley Duhany (Soccer Team), Donna and Sam Wright, Marianne Otto-Smith and Deb Holfelder (Spirit Fitness), Sierra Mikha'El (Tennis skills), Katie Boggs & Ashley Johnson (YAP), Franco Frande (Bowling), John Emmerling (Volleyball) and Kim Winters (CrossFit).