

April 2021 Newsletter - Issue #4

Athletes are WHY we do it; Volunteers are HOW we do it! IT'S VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION MONTH!



We will be celebrating our 20th Walk on Saturday, August 21st near Symphony Woods and the Merriweather grounds in Columbia's new Merriweather District. The event will be combined with an Over the Edge (OTE) event taking place on August 20th and 21st. (see below). This should be a terrific weekend celebration!

Please begin to [setup your fundraising pages or make a donation by clicking here](#). The Walk has been our single fundraiser for many years and

provided us with much needed funds to run our FREE training and competition programs. We are looking forward to being able to celebrate this 20th Anniversary together with all of you! Anyone interested in being part of the planning committee for the Walk and OTE, please email info@somdhc.org or call the office.

An exciting new fundraising event for SOHO this year is Over the Edge! Individuals will rappel down 12 stories of the tallest building in Howard County, the 6100 Merriweather Building (aka, the Tenable Bldg.) in the Merriweather District in support of Special Olympics Howard County. Friday night's event will feature a CEO challenge. Sponsorship opportunities are available. If you have a business lead, please contact our fundraising coordinators, Allan Waschak (allan@allanhomes.com) or Cole Schnorf (cschnorf@verizon.net) who can follow-up with more details.



Office Hours

The office is open from 4:00-7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. on Thursdays. Individuals entering the office are required to wear a mask and to use social distancing.

Newsletter Scavenger Hunt

Congratulations to Cycling and Snowshoeing Coach Marissa Parlock Christenson who correctly answered our March Scavenger Hunt question: **"In what sport did our oldest athlete participate?"** The correct answer is **Bowling** and the athlete was Kathleen Anderson who was born in 1937. She last bowled with us in 2017.

This month's question is **"Who was SOHO's first Volunteer Coordinator?"** The answer **must** list both the name **AND** the article it is found in. The first person to find the answer and email info@somdhc.org with the answer **in the correct format** will win a restaurant gift card. Also, no one can win two months in a row (in order to give more people the opportunity to win.)

Status of Spring and Summer Sports

We are all ready to get back to practices and competition, but remain under the **Return to Play protocols**. Although most spring and summer sports are cancelled due to restrictions and inability to have training facilities, we do

have very limited athletics, bocce, dance/cheer, and equestrian programs in session this spring. We are all hoping that by the fall, we will be back on track with our normal fall sports. Keep your fingers crossed!!

Athlete Medicals:

Remember that all athletes must have a current medical before they can participate in a Special Olympics program, whether in person or virtual. It's a good time to ensure that your medical will be current once programs open up again. Medicals last for three years. If you are unsure of when your medical expires, contact info@somdhc.org. Don't wait until the last minute to schedule your physical.

Thanks to a national partnership with MinuteClinic, Special Olympics athletes are eligible to receive a sports physical at a discounted rate of \$49.00. This **voucher (need to add link)** must be presented at the time of the physical. It is also important that the athlete bring the SOMD Medical form with them to ensure the proper paperwork is completed. To find the closest MinuteClinic and to make an appointment, visit www.minuteclinic.com. Please note, this is not an endorsement of MinuteClinic by Special Olympics Maryland or Special Olympics Howard County. We are just passing along a resource for athletes and their families.

2021 Volunteer Award Winners

Every year at the Inspiration Walk, we highlight our volunteers and choose a **Volunteer of the Year, Coach of the Year and Family of the Year**. Rather than wait until the rescheduled Walk in August and because this is the month to recognize our volunteers, we are announcing this year's winners now (and hope to make an in-person presentation in the near future.)



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: A volunteer since 1999, this individual got involved after visiting a recruitment booth and jumped right in attending a volunteer orientation two days later. She started by updating the volunteer list by contacting all past volunteers, then coordinated volunteers for several events and finally assumed the role as Volunteer Coordinator, a position she held for 12 years. She's been involved in the Inspiration Walk planning for many years. But she wanted more involvement with the athletes so, as she notes, "with no athletic talent whatsoever", she learned to ski, golf, and play bocce and became a certified coach in each sport. Her enthusiasm for the athletes is contagious and she is always willing to step in and help whenever needed. We salute **Beth Greenberg**, our **2021 Volunteer of the Year**.

COACH OF THE YEAR: One of our athletics coaches for over 20 years, this coach was responsible for creating the SOHO distance running (cross country) program. Starting with a few athletes, he built the program and challenged the athletes to push themselves to greater distances and performances, including participating in the Baltimore Tunnel Run as well as the Marine Corp Marathon. He addresses the different skill levels of each of his runners,



Volunteer Orientations

The next volunteer orientation will be held virtually on **May 12th** from 7:00-8:00 p.m. Anyone who is interested in obtaining volunteer certification should contact Janet Larrimore (janetlarrimore@somdhc.org) for further information. Pre-registration is required.



Softball

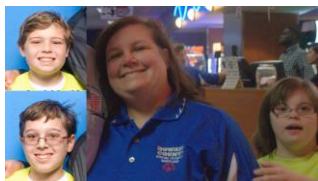
Coordinators Needed

After 5 years serving as our Softball Coordinator, Lisa Emmerling is stepping down. Ideally, we would like to have two coordinators, one to cover the Senior Team and one to cover the Rookie Team. Even though we are not having a softball season this year due to COVID restrictions, we want to give everyone a chance to consider these opportunities. Please remember our policy that if a sport does not have a coordinator, we will not have that sport until someone steps up. Interested individuals should contact the office for more information. (Call or email info@somdhc.org)

Healthy Communities and Protecting Oneself from COVID-19

Research shows that people with intellectual disabilities (ID) are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19, and setting up a vaccination appointment is **highly encouraged!** Maryland is currently in Phase 3: All Marylanders 16+ years of age are eligible to receive the vaccine. For information about vaccination sites in Maryland, click [here](#). At this time, we are not requiring you to get the COVID-19 vaccine. However, we are strongly encouraging everyone to get vaccinated to keep safe and save lives.

ensuring that they work hard at improving while still having fun and enjoying the challenge. He and his wife, the Distance Running Coordinator, were going to retire from volunteering two years ago but luckily for us, changed their minds and even during the pandemic, stepped up working with his athletes by hosting weekly ZOOM meetings to keep in touch with their running athletes. For 30 minutes every week, they have a discussion of running activities, other fitness endeavors (i.e. hiking), SOHO updates and other topics of the athletes' choice while screen sharing their photos and videos of their workouts. Dedicated to his athletes, we are grateful for our **2021 Coach of the Year, John Worley.**



FAMILY OF THE YEAR: Volunteering is definitely a family affair for this year's Family of the Year. Stacy has been volunteering since 2015 when she assumed the role of Volunteer Coordinator for the Bowling program, coordinating all the student and adult volunteers

for our largest program. Not to be idle in the off season, she volunteered with athletics as well as Basketball skills. In the early part of the quarantine, she worked with another coach and developed a virtual fitness program to keep athletes busy. She then assumed the role of 5x5PD Basketball Coordinator in 2021 and developed a virtual skills development program when the team couldn't meet in person. Mom sets the example as both sons, Josh and Zach, have been volunteers in all the same sports. We are grateful for this very involved family and award the **2021 Family of the Year** to the **Valentine Family.**

Volunteer Appreciation - Why Do You Volunteer?

"To live an inspiring life, you must be inspired." (Matthew Kelly) We always say that our athletes inspire us but we feel our volunteers and their commitment to our athletes inspire us as well and are so grateful to all of our volunteers who generously give of their time and talent to make our organization what it is. Here are some thoughts of our volunteers shared with us on why they volunteer.

Mimi Goodman, Executive Board Member, SOHO Photographer,

"I volunteer with Special Olympics because it is one of the most genuine organizations I've ever worked with. The staff, the families, and especially the athletes are warm and welcoming and so grateful for any effort you give. Special Olympics is one of the few organizations where I can really feel gratitude for every little thing which makes every encounter rewarding. I've made lifelong friends by volunteering with Special Olympics".

Joe Dougherty, Golf Unified Partner, 2012-2019: sent us a Haiku with his thoughts:

Olympians, the Special Kind(ness)
Olympians, Win
Hearts gold, smiles bright, humble me
Partner up, let's Go!

Allison McLamb, Golf Unified Partner, 2018-2019

"I volunteer with Special Olympics because I get more from it than I could ever possibly give back. Watching the determination, passion, and most importantly, the joy the athletes have reminds me that there is so much more to life. I love to see athletes push the limits and overcome adversity!"

Remember to continue wearing your mask, washing your hands and being socially distant.!

Coaches Training and Resources

Coaching Special Olympics Athletes (CSOA) - SOMD is pleased to offer virtual training sessions for Coaching Special Olympics, a requirement for all Coaches. (Due to the conversational and interactive nature of this course, there must be a minimum of 7 registrants at least 3 business days prior to the course in order for it to be held.)

Saturday, July 10, 2021, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Virtual Session (limit 20 participants) Register **here.**

Principles of Coaching (POC) - SOMD is pleased to host additional sessions of the Principles of Coaching course, a required course for all coaches wishing to take teams/athletes or serve as a coach to any competition above the state level (including USA Games, World Games, NITs, NIRSA events, etc.). This free course is intended for coaches with a minimum of two years coaching experience and, along with appropriate sport-specific training, serves to certify a coach as an Advanced coach. (Due to the conversational and interactive nature of this course, and the need to send "hard copy" course materials to participants in advance of the session, we must have a minimum of 7 registrants at least 5 business days prior to a virtual PoC course in order for it to be held.)

Saturday, June 5, 2021, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Virtual Session (20 seats available. Register **here.**

Important Note on all Virtual Training Sessions: Given the interactive nature of these courses, if a course gets changed to a virtual training session, participants **MUST** be able to join the Zoom meeting with a webcam, speaker and microphone so we can see and hear everyone during the course. Please also check in advance of the session that Zoom works properly for your computer (with webcam, microphone and speaker) as

Thomas Pirratano, Golf Unified Partner and Coach, 2012-2019

"My happy place is when I am coaching Special Olympic athletes! The feeling I get when an athlete realizes what they can achieve! I learned to love the activity far more than the final score!"

Beth Greenberg, Volunteer Coordinator, Ski Coordinator, Golf Skills, Bocce Coach; 1999-present

"It's true what they say "it's not what you give, it's what you get back that immeasurable" I have learned more than I ever thought possible. The athletes, their families, gave me unconditional love, taught me how to enjoy life and taught me that I could teach. Who knew!"

Lexi Cucchiaro, Student Volunteer, Swimming, 2014-2020

"I had no idea working with intellectually disabled athletes would ignite a passionand completely change how I viewed service to others."

Jillian Lewis, Student Volunteer, Soccer and Swimming, 2017-2020

"SOHO has taught me what being part of a community means and what types of friendships I want to keep in my life. SOHO changes people, not only the athletes, but the volunteers as well."

SOHO is always accepting comments from volunteers about why they volunteer. that we can share with others Comments can be sent to info@somdhc.org.

Student Volunteer Scholarship Winners: Where Are They Now?

Student volunteers are an integral part of our program. Starting in 2005, SOHO has awarded scholarships - Jackie Burk Memorial Scholarship, Allan Homes Scholarship, Kathy Lindner Memorial Award, and the Schnorf Family Scholarship - to 47 deserving students who have been committed to our athletes and program. We are taking a look at some former winners to see how their involvement with Special Olympics influenced their lives after graduating. (*We are interested in how our other scholarship winners have been influenced by their involvement with SOHO. Send comments to info@somdhc.org.*)

Leading Best Buddies at Centennial High School and volunteering with our cross country program, Megan Orth (winner of the 2009 Allan Homes Scholarship) continued her involvement with intellectual and developmentally disabled individuals when she graduated from college. She worked with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder at the New England Center for Children (NECC). She also worked with individuals in a residential setting in international and government schools in Abu Dhabi and in New England public schools. She earned a MA in Special Education with a Master's specialization as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Her involvement with Special Olympics help to direct Megan to that she describes as an "incredibly enriching career."



we will have limited opportunity to provide tech assistance during the session (Zoom's online help has been good.)

Concussion Training

ALL Special Olympics coaches (head coaches and assistant coaches) must complete a concussion training certification process prior to starting coaching and once every three years.

Car Donation

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 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!

Pals in Production

Pals in Production will continue its program in 2021 after a successful virtual cabaret performance in summer 2020. (See **August 2020 SOHO newsletter**.) It is an eight-weekend program beginning in May and will once again fully virtual and will culminate in a Pals in Production cabaret on June 19, 2021. The program is run by Hannah Quigley and other Glenelg Country School students and is open to students ages 11-18 with special needs. Registration ends on May 4th by emailing hannahq@glenelg.org.

Recreation and Parks Activities

On-line registration for Spring and Summer Activities is now open. You can see all the opportunities **here** in the new Activity Guide.



IN MEMORIAM: Michael Flatley

SOHO lost another member of our family with the passing of **Mike Flatley** on April 8th. From 2003 to 2013, Mike and his wife, Annette, were volunteers in our cycling and ski programs. They were instrumental in keeping the cycling program continuing in the beginning years of cycling. His dedication and enthusiasm provided much needed support with the ski program. He was always willing to lend a hand and was as much of a friend as he was a coach to

the all the athletes and other coaches. We were sorry to see them leave when they moved to North Carolina. His obituary noted that his most rewarding adventure was volunteering with Special Olympics Howard County. Mike leaves behind a legacy of kindness and caring.

Special Olympics Maryland Online Programs

SOMD Saturday night dances .To register, **CLICK HERE**. Dances run from 7-8:30 p.m. May dance themes are:

May 1st: Pirate Night

May 8th: Cinco de Ocho

May 15th: Glow in the Dark/Neon Night

May 22nd: Prom/Formal

May 29th: Memorial Day - Red, White and Blue

Athlete Virtual Leadership and Social Clubs - Descriptions of events and registration information can be found **here**.

Virtual Movement: This is an online community of athletes, staff, and volunteers sharing what they're doing to stay active, stay healthy, and stay connected while we can't have in person programs! **CLICK HERE** for more information. Don't have Facebook? No problem! Visit this **website** for archived workouts, social clubs, and a calendar of events. Don't miss the virtual block party section!

YAPpy Hour: Grab your Young Athletes and join in for the half-hour virtual practices based upon SOMD's Young Athlete Program (YAP) curriculum! We guarantee you'll leave #YAPpy Mondays at 4:30 PM Wednesdays at 4:30 PM Friday at 10:00 AM

SOHO Merchandise for Sale

No need to go out to stores. We are continuing our big sale on SOHO merchandise. Need a birthday gift? Want to thank a sponsor? Lots to choose from.

Ice scraper \$1.00

Sherpa blanket \$15.00

Navy short sleeved T-shirt \$10.00 (limited sizes)

Maroon long sleeved t-shirt \$10.00

Foldable umbrella \$15.00

Foldable Chair \$20.00

Small foldable stool with carry bag \$10.00

Click **here** to see the May issue of the Therapeutic Recreation newsletter.

Photos Of Our Athletes

You can enjoy photos of our athletes at practice, competitions and other events on our photo page.

[Event Photos](#)

Special Education Parent Involvement Survey

Parents of children receiving special education and related services were mailed the Maryland Special Education Parent Involvement Survey from the MD State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services in early February. The deadline to submit the survey is May 21, 2021. You can either mail the survey back in the postage paid envelope enclosed with the survey or complete it on line **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.

Seat cushions \$5.00
SOHO Face Mask **SPECIAL** - \$1.00 each
Tote Bag - insulated & foldable \$8

Don't miss out on these great prices and show your SOHO Pride with these items!! Contact the office (410-740-0500) or email info@somdhc.org to place an order.



**The Lisa Higgins-Hussman
Foundation**



Special Olympics Howard County

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Contact SOHC Today

