



Special Olympics Howard County

8970 Route 108, Suite A-1

Columbia, MD 21045

Phone (410) 740-0500

[Contact SOHO Today](#)



February 2026 Newsletter - Issue #2

Spring Sports Registration Coming to a Close

Sign ups for the spring sports season is now open and includes Bocce, Cheerleading/Dance/Poms, Softball, Athletics (Track and Field), Pickleball, Spirit Fitness, CrossFit and the Young Athletes Program. The sports rosters are quickly filling up, so [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#). The last day to sign up is March 15 (February 28 for pickleball). Per the October Newsletter, swimming was part of the winter sign ups since practices began in January. See sidebar article on how to sign up for beginner swimming lessons through Rec and Parks.

New for 2026:

- A new sign up 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.**



Winter Games Wrap-Up

Snowfall greeted the ski and snowshoe teams as they arrived at Wisp Resort for the 2026 Winter Games! Kate Moschel and Dominic Na represented Howard County in carrying the banner in opening ceremonies. A special thanks to coordinators Allyson Parlock and Clare Colleli and all the

coaches for another successful season.

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

The alpine ski team had so much fun at the Winter Games! They loved all of the snow coming down, and had the best time running their races in the freezing cold. Our team did amazing and came away with 8 Gold, 4 Silver, 3 Bronze, 3 fourth Place, 1 seventh Place, and 1 Participation.



Ten athletes and two unified partners competed in snowshoeing at the Winter Games and took home 10 gold medals, 21 silver, 2 bronze, 2 fourth place ribbons and 1 fifth place. Veteran athletes Jesse Carrico, Nick Howard, Daniel Larrimore,

Desmond Miller, Dresden Miller, Kate Moschel and Julian Than continued to dominate the snowshoe course. New athletes Liam Burney, Aditya Chenuhula and Jaden Ukpabi had great races and we hope to see them again next year. Thanks to unified partners Ryan Moschel and Gianni Ukpabi who competed with Desmond and Dresden to take the silver in the 4x100 relay.

Polar Bear Plunge Results

Special thanks to Super Plungers **Clara Scholz and Thomas Smith**, along with the 45 plungers on the **Allan Homes / SOHO Team** who together helped raise over \$40K for Special Olympics Howard County! Pictured with our Plunge team leader, **Allan Waschak**, is athlete **Michael Waschak**, and **Governor Moore** who plunged again this year in support of our athletes. Below is a picture of most of the Allan Homes/SOHO Team who braved the cold weather and icy water!!



coaching the athletes, 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.

The next volunteer orientations will be on Tuesday March 17 and Thursday April 9, both from 7-8pm.

For further information, send an email to info@somdhc.org.

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**



Jersey Mike's Fundraiser

Looking for a place to have lunch? Try Jersey Mike's. In March, a portion of sales at all Jersey Mike's locations will be donated to Special Olympics and **on March 25th, all sales will be donated!** We'd like to have athletes at Jersey Mike's locations on 3/2, 3/13 and 3/25 to give a special thanks to Jersey Mike's and their customers. If interested, send

an email to info@somdhc.org by 2/28. The money donated will be used for Special Olympics USA Games.

2026 Student Volunteer Scholarships

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 for four scholarships provided through the generosity of three 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.
- The **Allan Homes Scholarship** (up to \$1,500) was created in 2006 by Allan and Kathy Waschak and is open to student volunteers in any of our sports programs.
- The **Schnorf Family Scholarship** (up to \$1,500) was created in 2018 by Cole and Joan Schnorf to honor outstanding student volunteers.
- The **Marilyn Miceli Memorial Scholarship** (up to \$1,500) is a new scholarship to honor the legacy of long time SOHO Assistant Director, Marilyn Miceli.

The deadline for submitting applications for the 2026 Outstanding Student Volunteers Scholarships is March 28, 2026. 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 and must be received by March 28th. For further information and application, [click here](#).

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

Young Athletes Program

The Special Olympics Young Athletes Program (YAP) is an early childhood play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities, ages 2 to 7 years old. Young Athletes introduces basic sport skills, like running, kicking and throwing. It's a great opportunity to introduce young children to sports and help them to prepare to transition to our competitive sports program when they turn 8 years old. [Click here](#) to sign up your athlete for the upcoming spring YAP session.

SOHO Merchandise Store

Want to show your Special Olympics spirit by proudly sporting SOHO 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.

Rec & Parks Registration Opens Mar 4th

One of our longest standing partnerships has been with HC Rec & Parks Therapeutic Dept and Susan Potts. Check out the sports and recreational offerings in their most recent R&P activity guide's therapeutic recreation section. In particular, several learn to swim



A Special Reunion: SOHO Athletes Cheer on Local Teachers

On February 4, our community witnessed a truly heartwarming moment! A group of Special Olympics MD Howard County (SOHO) athletes came together to surprise and cheer on the dedicated special education teachers of **Howard County Public School System (HCPSS)**. The performance was undoubtedly the highlight of the day, filled with high energy and smiles. It was a beautiful opportunity for athletes and staff to reconnect and show their mutual support, proving that the strongest teams are built on cheering each other on!

The celebration continued into the afternoon with three of our athletes leading insightful presentations for the HCPSS systemic professional learning day. Athletes **Thomas Smith and Nick Stewart** participated in a HCPSS Graduate panel, sharing powerful firsthand accounts of the impact special education teachers have on their students' lives.

Clara Scholz co-presented with her Hip Hop Dance Team coach **Barbara Baker**. Together, they highlighted the many year-round opportunities Special Olympics Maryland Howard County provides for current students and the continued support available to athletes after graduation.

This was a fantastic opportunity for teachers to learn more about Special Olympics programs to share with the families they support. A job well done to Thomas, Nick, and Clara for representing our community so well!

Pictured in the photo above: *Kayla Kosman, Kim Holfelder, Crystal Dean, Daniel Miller, Coach Barbara Baker, Taniya Leckey, Denise Murray, Jessie Sergi, Mary Condron, Nick Stewart, not pictured- Coach StellaMarie Kosman (photographer)*

Spring Tennis Training Offered

Former SOHO coach Ms. Wendy Guo, is offering a spring tennis training class starting in March. Although this class is not sponsored by Special

options are available and as you know, SOHO can only offer our swim program to athletes who can already swim 2 laps (50 yds) or more. Online registration begins on March 4th at 6pm. [Click here to register.](#)

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

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

Olympics, the class content is geared toward enhancing the skill set of those athletes with neurodiversity needs. See below for the details.

- **Contact Coach Wendy** if you need additional information: tennisatypical@gmail.com
- **Wendy Guo** Founding Director, Tennis Atypical Foundation | USTA Junior Tournament Director
- **The Goal:** Provide a "Pre-Season" foundation in the spring so athletes are not starting from scratch in the fall.
- **The Model:** 8 structured classes led by my **High School Varsity players** serving as mentors and coaches, providing form correction and match-play drills.
- **The Offer:** \$99 for the full 8-session block (Limited to 8 players to maintain a high coach-to-athlete ratio).
- **Timeline:** Thursday night 6-7pm starting March 12th.
- **Location:** Western Regional Park
- **Registration Link:** [Neuro-Inclusive Tennis Class Registration](#)

Cheer on Brandon and Dominique at "Brave Talks 2026"

WHAT: A groundbreaking personal storytelling platform in a "TED Talk" style format, where you will have the chance to hear from speakers who have intellectual and developmental disabilities. Speakers will discuss topics from their own life experiences, lessons learned, and how they are leading the way now and in the future. A night of sharing stories from speakers over the past 9 years, as we catch up and see what they have accomplished since their first time as a speaker. We will be celebrating our tenth year hosting the talks and would love to have you join us. SOHO athletes' **Brandon McLarin and Dominique Palmer** will be speaking.

WHEN: Monday, March 9th, 2026, 6pm-8pm

WHERE: Roundhouse Theater- 4545 E West Hwy, Bethesda, MD 20814

WHY: The purpose of the talks is to give a voice to our athletes and others in the community who are often forgotten or overlooked. A positive night of storytelling and sharing common experiences in a supportive environment meant to inspire attendees.

REGISTRATION:

It is FREE to attend, but we ask that you [click here](#) to register.



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.