

2024-25 Unified Outreach Initiative

PROGRAM REPORT



RECIPIENT TYPE: 501c3 non-profit organization

TAX ID: 57-0680248

AMOUNT: \$300,000

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED OUTREACH INITIATIVE:

Special Olympics South Carolina engages communities across South Carolina to provide a variety of opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities through sports, education, and health. These opportunities not only engage and empower more than 30,000 Special Olympics athletes, but they also bring together thousands of volunteers, families, and other community members to develop more inclusive communities throughout the state.

The **UNIFIED OUTREACH INITIATIVE** provided opportunities and resources to Special Olympics athletes, family members, and volunteers in the areas of sports, education, and health to maximize the inclusive reach and impact on Special Olympics athletes, their families, and members of communities, statewide.

- **SPORTS:** Special Olympics builds upon the foundation of year-round sports at the local and state levels to provide excellent experiences to athletes, volunteers, family members and spectators while fostering a more inclusive community for everyone.
- **EDUCATION:** Special Olympics primary **education** initiative, Unified Champion Schools, develops partnerships among Special Olympics and school communities to break down barriers among students of varying backgrounds and abilities, to create school communities that embrace diversity, acceptance, and inclusion.
- **HEALTH:** Special Olympics provides opportunities for greater access to health for Special Olympics ages 2 years through adulthood. Health initiatives will include Youth Athletes Programs for early intervention, free health screenings, inclusive

health trainings for healthcare providers, and developing networks for families so that they can have easy access to inclusive healthcare providers.

PROJECT GOALS & OUTCOMES:

1. Increase opportunities for Special Olympics athletes to develop new skills, showcase their abilities, and engage with community members/volunteers through sports and leadership.

- a. Provide high-quality Special Olympics sports training and competition opportunities at local and state levels, with year-round programs for athletes ages 2 years through older adult years.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Provide at least 36 local sports competitions and 4 state-level competition events in a variety of sports.

PROGRAM REPORT: Special Olympics provided a total of **46 local sports competitions** that included opportunities in basketball, bocce, bowling, cheer, cornhole, disc golf, pickleball, tennis, and track & field. Special Olympics also provided a total of 8 state-level competitions including:

- State Tennis Championships
 - State Fall Games (bocce, bowling, disc golf, flag football, golf, soccer, volleyball)
 - Masters (over 21 years old) Bowling State Tournament
 - State Cheer Championships
 - State Pickleball Tournament
 - State Basketball Championships
 - State Summer Games (aquatics, bocce, bowling, gymnastics, powerlifting, softball, track & field)
 - State Equestrian Show
- b. Provide inclusive sports and leadership training to empower Special Olympics athletes, family members, coaches, and other advocates.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Engage a minimum of 200 stakeholders at the 2025 Annual Leadership Conference, with evaluation surveys reporting a 75% “excellent” rating, or higher.

PROGRAM REPORT: accomplished; total of **302 stakeholders** participated in the 2025 Annual Leadership Conference and 81% reported an excellent rating for higher.

- c. Utilize digital resources and technology to improve the access and quality of trainings and onboarding for all stakeholders, including athletes, their families, volunteers, and community groups.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Develop and implement a plan to increase accessibility for trainings and onboarding that will include the use of assistive technology, development of an accessible training facility, and increased use of simple digital resources.

PROGRAM REPORT: accomplished and on-going; upgraded technology in training space to include improved audio and visual equipment, increased printed and digital resources accessible in Spanish, and intentionally adding closed captioning to any newly-developed resources.

2. Provide resources, training, and technical support for Unified Champion Schools to develop innovative initiatives that promote and foster more inclusive school communities throughout South Carolina.

- a. Support elementary, middle, and high schools with resources and technical support for schools' hosting and/or participating in Special Olympics events and projects. These projects will qualify for support if they (1) increase capacity to serve students with and without intellectual disabilities with unified programming and (2) are sustainable initiatives.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Support 5 new unified events or projects in schools during the 2024-25 school year.

PROGRAM REPORT: accomplished; Special Olympics South Carolina supported **18 new unified events** or projects in Unified Champion Schools/Districts during the 2024-25 school year, including:

- Blenheim Middle School- Unified Cornhole program
- Clover High School- Unified Sports/PE Equipment
- Eastside Elementary School (Laurens 56)- Adaptive Playground Equipment
- Florence School District 1- Unified Sports Day equipment
- Gold Hill Elementary School- Adaptive Playground Equipment
- Gold Hill Middle School- Music Sensory Garden
- Harbison West Elementary School- Books for their Unified Young Readers Program
- Horse Creek Academy- Unified Percussion Program
- Lexington High School- Unified Cheer Equipment & Uniforms
- Lugoff-Elgin High School- Unified Drama Resources
- Lyman Elementary School- Books for their Unified Young Readers Program
- O.P. Earl Elementary School- Books for their Unified Young Readers Program

- Pelion Elementary School- Sensory Garden
 - Rocky Creek Elementary School- Unified School Business and Adaptive Playground Equipment
 - Rudolph Gordon School- Unified Sports Equipment
 - Sandhills Elementary School- Unified Sports Equipment
 - Sandhills Middle School- Unified Sports Equipment
 - Southside High School- Unified Cheer & Softball Uniforms
- b. Provide training to youth and adult leaders from Unified Champion Schools to equip them with strategies and best practices to provide high-quality unified programming in their school communities.
PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Provide training on unified strategies to a minimum of 900 youth leaders and 200 educators.

PROGRAM REPORT: accomplished; provided training to **1790 youth and adult leaders** through 4-Youth Activation Summit events:

- Charleston YAS on 11/7/24- 618 participants
- Beaufort YAS on 11/14/24- 253 participants
- Columbia YAS on 11/19/24- 521 participants
- Greenville YAS on 11/22/24- 401 participants

Special Olympics South Carolina also provided training to youth and adult leaders at the 2025 Annual Leadership Conference, providing scholarships to **36 youth and 34 educators**, but also hosted an additional 114 educators that were supported by their local Special Olympics program or their school district.

Finally, Special Olympics South Carolina provided numerous trainings throughout the school year at school district instructional days and school trainings, along with the 2025 Summer Educator Workshop (free one-day conference) engaging a total of **448 educators** by June 2025.

3. Provide opportunities for Special Olympics athletes and their families to access to health services and resources.

- a. Provide Special Olympics Young Athletes outreach opportunities through events and programs supporting children ages 2-7 years, with and without intellectual disabilities, in inclusive play that provides fine and gross motor skill development. Early intervention through Youth Athletes Programs also provides a support system and sense of community for families while also providing opportunities for inclusive play for siblings of young children with special needs.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Conduct a minimum of 10 Youth Athletes outreach events and programs across the state engaging at least 50 children and their families.

PROGRAM REPORT: accomplished and on-going; hosted Young Athletes (ages 2-7 years) and NEW Junior Athletes (ages 7-12 years) in Columbia and Charleston communities, engaging a total of **68 children** in the sports of flag football, pickleball, soccer and volleyball.

Local Special Olympics programs provided additional events/opportunities, serving **453 young athletes** in the following areas:

- Aiken
- Columbia
- Dorchester County
- Greenville County
- Horry County
- Laurens County
- Lexington County
- Oconee County
- Rock Hill
- Spartanburg

- b. Provide opportunities for Special Olympics athletes to participate in free fitness programming and health screenings.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Engage a minimum of 150 athletes in free programs and screenings.

PROGRAM REPORT: accomplished; Special Olympics provided free health screening and wellness prevention through Healthy Athletes events to **167 athletes** in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 in the following disciplines:

- Fit Feet (podiatry)
- Fun Fitness (physical therapy)
- Healthy Hearing (audiology)
- Opening Eyes (optometry)
- Special Smiles (dentistry)
- Strong Minds (mental wellness/adaptive coping skills)

In addition to the above Health Athletes events, Special Olympics South Carolina hosted several “Walk this Way” fitness program events and developed a guide for community teams or schools to start their own Walk this Way fitness program and walking club. Special Olympics South Carolina teamed up with Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission for their annual Jingle Bell Trot Walk/Run to promote Walk this Way fitness programs, resulting in **227 Special Olympics athletes, unified partners, family members and volunteers** participating as part of the Special Olympics team.