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Local Special Olympics athlete promotes Tim Hortons Special Olympics donuts

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Local Special Olympics athlete Ryan MacBean helped promote inclusion, community support, and athletic opportunity during a Special Olympics Donut fundraiser held at the Orangeville Mall Tim Hortons on Friday, Jan. 30.

The campaign encouraged customers to purchase Special Olympics Donuts throughout the weekend (Jan. 30 to Feb. 1), with 100 per cent of proceeds directed toward Special Olympics programs. Funds raised support year-round sport training and competition opportunities for athletes with intellectual disabilities, ranging from recreational participation to high-performance competition.

The fundraiser was supported by Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers and Orangeville Fire Department firefighters, who came out to support MacBean and the campaign.

Krista Goudreault, who owns the Orangeville Mall Tim Hortons, said the campaign has been a nearly decade-long partnership.

?We've been doing this initiative since 2016,? she said. ?Last year in Orangeville, we raised about $3,000, which is great for a community this size. Nationally, we raised about $1.3 million.?

This year, the Special Olympics Donut fundraiser saw a similar level of support, again raising around $3,000.

Orangeville has consistently shown strong community backing for the annual fundraiser, contributing thousands of donut sales locally as part of a province-wide effort that generates significant annual support for athletes. Despite ongoing cost-of-living pressures, residents once again came out in force to support the Special Olympics in 2026.

Special Olympics Canada serves thousands of athletes across Ontario and across the country, emphasizing lifelong participation and encouraging athletes to remain involved at every stage of life.

Fundraisers such as the donut campaign are always needed to help sustain those programs while also raising awareness about the organization's mission and the role sports play in building confidence and inclusion.

Helping promote the event was MacBean, a Special Olympics swimmer from Orangeville who has been involved with the organization for many years. Kevin MacBean, Ryan's father, said he is extremely proud of his son and remains a strong supporter of the organization's approach to sport.

?The Special Olympics provides sports competition and sports training to athletes with intellectual disabilities,? he said. ?You can just go and be a recreational athlete, or you can compete. I'm so, so proud of Ryan for the work he puts in.?

Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post also stopped into the Tim Hortons with Deputy Mayor Todd Taylor and Councillor Joe Andrews to express their support and that of the town.

?Please continue to support Ryan and his work with the Special Olympics,? Mayor Post said. ?He is a great athlete, a great person and a great community member who's always giving back to the community in any way he can.?

MacBean is a born-and-raised Orangeville resident who began his Special Olympics career in other sports before focusing on swimming, where he has since found continued success through consistent training and competition. He has earned multiple medals at regional and provincial competitions, including the 2025 Spring Games in Waterloo.

He is currently the only swimmer from Orangeville advancing to the upcoming Summer Games, which will be held in Medicine Hat in August. He will be representing both his community and the impact of long-term athlete development within the Special Olympics.

Beyond competition, MacBean is a dedicated ambassador for the organization, regularly participating in fundraising and awareness events that help ensure future athletes have the same opportunities to train, compete, and thrive through sport.

His advocacy was on full display during the fundraiser, with a steady stream of customers stopping to speak with him, offering words of encouragement and exchanging high fives as he helped promote the cause.

MacBean will be bringing his best to the upcoming Summer Games and said he is ready to bring home another win for Orangeville, showcasing his optimism, confidence and dedication.