This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Fri Oct 30 6:44:40 2026 / +0000 GMT

Special Olympics

By Sylvia Jones, MPP

Dufferin-Caledon

Founded in 1968, Special Olympics has grown into a year-round event for children and adults with an intellectual disability to compete and train in a variety of Olympic-type sports.

Sports are a common way for individuals of all walks of life to come together and for individuals to recognize and reach their fullest potential.

That is exactly what Special Olympics embodies by allowing individuals with different abilities to discover new strengths and skills.

In Ontario, there are over 200,000 individuals with an intellectual disability, of which there are 22,000 registered athletes that train and compete with Special Olympics Ontario. Each year, 1,000 new athletes join Special Olympics Ontario. These athletes train and compete in 18 spring, summer and winter sports, including 5-pin bowling, 10-pin bowling, basketball, powerlifting, rhythmic gymnastics, swimming, athletics, bocce, golf, soccer, softball, alpine skiing, curling, figure skating, snowshoeing, Nordic skiing, speed skating, and floor hockey.

On May 3, as part of Special Olympics Day at Queen's Park, I had the opportunity to meet with Kayla of Orangeville, who competes with Special Olympics Ontario in basketball, curling, golf, and bocce ball. Kayla told me how much she enjoys competing, staying active and meeting new friends.

Special Olympics Ontario holds provincial competitions on a four year cycle, alternating between spring, winter, and summer sports. The 2016 provincial spring games will take place in Guelph on May 26 -28, and next year Peel Regional Police Service will be hosting the 2017 provincial summer games.

In addition, Special Olympics Ontario has introduced an annual Provincial School Championships with over 600 athletes competing. This year's championships will be taking place on June 1 - 3 in Durham Region.

Special Olympics offers an opportunity for children and adults to improve their physical fitness and motor skills, improve their self-confidence, build long-lasting friendships, and help build a positive self-image.

Special Olympics programs are offered at pools, hockey rinks, soccer fields, and school gyms with the support of the thousands of volunteers that help coach or organize these events.

If you are interested in learning more about Special Olympics Ontario, or want to get involved, please visit www.specialolympicsontario.com.

Let me win. But if I cannot win let me be brave in the attempt.