

CONNECT



Special Olympics
Ireland



On your marks....
get ready for the new 4 year cycle!



Northern Ireland
Executive



WELCOME!

Message from the CEO

First of all let me wish you a very happy, healthy and fulfilling 2012. Thank you so much for all you dedication and support last year.

2011 seems to have flown by and we are certainly left with plenty of good memories to reflect upon. The 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games were undoubtedly one of the sporting highlights of the year. Team Ireland had an outstanding performance at these Games returning home with 107 medals, 52 ribbons and recording numerous personal best records. We are extremely proud of the athletes, coaches, volunteers and all who made Team Ireland's participation at the Games such a huge success.

Last November we announced details of a new funding package worth £2.296m over the next four years for Special Olympics in Northern Ireland. Five Government Departments, including the Office of The First Minister and Deputy First Minister, joined together to agree the package which will be delivered through Sport Northern Ireland. This funding coupled with the support we receive from the Irish Sports Council, our sponsors, donors and friends will ensure that we can continue to further realise our promise of changing the lives of people with an intellectual disability through sport. This funding allows us to maintain the current SO Programme in Ulster but in order to grow we must continue to fundraise.

Of course we must always look to the future, embracing challenges and opportunities with equal vigour. Tremendous work was done by so many stakeholders to develop an excellent 2012-2015 strategy which gives a clear road map for the four years ahead. Our key focus areas include:

- Managing current needs and addressing new demands.
- Developing & enhancing sports excellence.
- Engaging volunteers, particularly youth to support the growing programme.
- Support clubs so that they can enhance and drive the impact Special Olympics makes at local level.
- Getting our message across to the general public about what we do at grassroots level.
- Attending to gaps in provision to some children & young adults.



Pictured are joint captains Michael Leavy, left, and Daniel Cannon, right from Northwest Special Olympics Club, Letterkenny being presented with the Mens Division 1 National Basketball Cup trophy by Special Olympics Ireland CEO Matt English. See full story opposite on page 3.

- Addressing sport participation by Intellectual Disability Service Providers & Special Schools.
- Long-term sustainable funding in a climate of austerity and core grant funding cuts.

Disability Research Series

The National Disability Authority undertook a national survey of public attitudes to disabilities in Ireland in July/August of 2011. Regrettably the findings of the 2011 study (which follows similar studies in 2001 and 2006) show a hardening of attitudes across all types of impairments. Together we have much work to do in this area and I would encourage you to review the survey which is available at www.nda.ie.

On the Cover - 4 Year Competition Advancement Cycle

The cover picture of this edition of Connect shows Timothy Morahan from Irishtown Special Olympics Club, Dublin at the start of the 800m final at the 2011 Special Olympics World Games. 2012 is the first year in our Competition Advancement Cycle which will mean we will be running area competitions in every region. It also means that we will need your help – it will be a very busy year and I hope that you will check out what events are taking place in your region and sign up to volunteer for one or two! We look forward to your support and participation.

We look forward, with great optimism, to a very bright future for all our athletes with the knowledge that so many brilliant family members, volunteers, coaches and supporters engage wholeheartedly in delivering our Special Olympics Programme throughout the 32 counties of Ireland on a daily basis.

Matt

Announcement of 2012 AGM

The 2012 Annual General Meeting of Special Olympics Ireland will be held at 1pm on Saturday, 26th May, 2012, Red Cow Moran Hotel, Naas Road, Dublin 22
(venue may be subject to change but adequate notice will be given).

All registered members of Special Olympics Ireland, which includes all registered athletes, family members and volunteers, are invited to submit motions for consideration at the AGM, and to submit nominations for the Board of Directors (two individuals will be elected to the Board at the AGM).

All Regional Councils and Clubs are entitled to send delegates to the AGM, twenty from each Regional Council and two from each Club. Special Olympics Ireland athlete leadership (ALPs) and families committees are also entitled to send delegates.

Each delegate has one vote and must be a registered member of Special Olympics Ireland. Only duly appointed delegates or existing members of the Board shall be entitled to attend and vote at general meetings of Special Olympics Ireland. Any member of Special Olympics Ireland may attend the Annual General Meeting.

If you wish to submit a nomination or a motion, you can download the relevant forms from www.specialolympics.ie/agm. Contact your Club or contact Special Olympics Ireland on +353 (0) 1 882 3972 for more information.

2011 European Basketball Week

Throughout European Basketball week in November a huge range of events took place including the Special Olympics National Basketball Cup and the launch of a basketball grading DVD.

The Women's Basketball Cup was held in Corduff Sports Centre, Blanchardstown and the participating teams were COPE Foundation (Munster), North West and Antrim Borough (Ulster) and Palmerstown Wildcats (Eastern). A round robin competition was played, and the results were:

National Cup: North West S.O. Club
2nd Place: Palmerstown Wildcats S.O. Club
3rd Place: COPE Foundation S.O. Club
4th Place: Antrim Borough S.O. Club

Bernie Priestley from the Irish Sports Council was on hand to award the teams their trophy and place medals.

The National Basketball Arena in Tallaght played host to the Men's Cup with teams from Cabra Lions, Lucan Hedgehogs and Palmerstown Wildcats (all Eastern region), Navan Arch Club (Leinster), and Antrim Borough and North West Special Olympics Club (Ulster region). Results:

Division 1: Cup: North West S.O. Club
2nd Place: Palmerstown Wildcats S.O. Club

Division 2: Plate Navan Arch S.O. Club
2nd Place: Lucan Hedgehogs S.O. Club
3rd Place: Antrim Borough S.O. Club
4th Place: Cabra Lions S.O. Club

Special Olympics Ireland CEO, Matt English, presented the medals to the winning teams. Congratulations to all the athletes and their coaches who participated. A huge thanks to the Event Management teams who did a fantastic job in hosting both events.

As part of the celebrations for European Basketball Week, Special Olympics Ireland, in conjunction with Basketball Ireland and with support from the European Union and Special Olympics Europe Eurasia, launched a coach education programme on DVD. This DVD which has been distributed to all participating clubs will assist coaches to grade players according to their basketball ability. Basketball Ireland's Secretary General, Bernard O'Byrne, launched the DVD in the National Basketball Arena together with Special Olympics Ireland CEO, Matt English, and in Corduff Sports Centre, Bernie Priestley, Irish Sports Council and Special Olympics International Technical Delegate, launched the DVD with Frances Kavanagh, Director of Sport, Special Olympics Ireland.

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MEET OUR EXTRAORDINARY TEAM

In this edition we are profiling two incredible volunteers who won prestigious awards in recognition of their outstanding contribution to Special Olympics Ireland.

First up is **Sharon McKeon**, Aquatics Coach with Cork SO Swimming Club. She was nominated under the "Sports & Recreation" category in the Ireland Involved Awards which took place on Monday December 5th, the International Day of Volunteering. President Michael D Higgins was in attendance to honour all the nominees. Sharon was announced on the night as the winner of her category. The current Rose of Tralee, Tara Talbot, presented Sharon with her award.

Sharon was nominated by the parents of athletes at the Cork SO Swimming Club. Their words describe best Sharon's commitment to the club:

Sharon is head instructor to 36 athletes with a range of disabilities. She teaches swimming to two groups every Monday night at Lota Swimming Pool in Cork City. She coordinates the volunteers to ensure each athlete has a volunteer to teach them. She is patient, kind and creates a very happy atmosphere in and out of the pool. She spends time with every athlete and brings out the best in them. Sharon is an outstanding coach with great knowledge and expertise.

Sharon has been a coach and involved with our Club since its inception back in 1993. She is amazingly very generous with giving us her time and cannot do enough for our athletes. She is an unassuming person who works tirelessly for the Club. Her standards are high and she makes sure that the strokes are perfect before athletes are allowed to move up in the class.

With her team of coaches she makes sure that everyone who joins the club is helped and coached to become a better swimmer and a better person in the spirit of the Special Olympics movement. Sharon travels from Bandon every Monday night all through the winter in any weather conditions never missing a night; such is her dedication to coaching people with intellectual disabilities. She goes above and beyond to ensure these children learn to swim and has a great rapport with them.



Deirdre Flood, pictured above on the right and Sharon McKeon pictured far left receiving their awards.

Deirdre Flood, a Sports Officer volunteer with Drogheda Special Olympics Club, was the recent winner of the Special Award for Educational Media Promoting Volunteering 2011 during the MEDEA Awards 2011 Ceremony in Brussels on November 25th. Deirdre created a "Changing Lives" video to showcase the extent of the volunteering opportunities that lay beyond the realm of sports coaching at club level in Special Olympics. The premise behind the video was to allow volunteers to grasp quickly the volunteering opportunities in a club, capture their attention and focus their interest. The video also gives new volunteers the opportunity to be exposed to a fast tracking of the volunteers' experiences in just 21 minutes which they would otherwise have to wait a full year to experience directly. It provides a new volunteer with a much greater appreciation of how they can contribute their time in an easily accessible format.

Deirdre is herself keen to emphasise the contribution the volunteers and athletes at Drogheda Special Olympics Club made to the production of this video: "The volunteers and indeed the athletes were incredibly supportive of the project and it couldn't have happened without them. Our volunteers exhibited a strong sense of collegiality and a very genuine spirit of fun and care for the experiences provided to our athletes during this time."

Congratulations to Sharon and Deirdre on their richly deserved awards. We are all very proud of you both!

Challenge 2012

Sign up for one of our challenges, help raise some funds and achieve something new this year!

Golf Classic

Date: 25th May 2012
Location: Mount Juliet, Kilkenny

Cycle Challenge

Date: June 2012
Location: Cycling in a number of locations around Ireland.

Flora Women's Mini Marathon

Date: 4th June 2012
Location: Dublin

National Lottery Dublin Marathon

Date: 29th October 2012
Location: Dublin

Paris 2 Nice Cycle

Date: 29th September to 4th October 2012
Location: Cycle from Paris to Nice

CONNAUGHT

Polar Plunge

Date: 19th February 2012
Location: Salthill, Galway

West of Ireland Women's Mini Marathon

Date: 6th May 2012
Location: Castlebar

Over the Edge, Sponsored Abseil

Date: to be confirmed
Location: Either Croke Park or Aviva Stadium

EASTERN

Terenure 5 Mile Run

Date: May 2012
Location: Terenure College, Dublin

Freezin' for a Reason Polar Plunge

Date: December 2012
Location: Forty Foot, Dun Laoghaire

LEINSTER

Run Kildare Marathon

Date: 13th May 2012
Location: Curragh Racecourse, Co Kildare

Special Olympics Walking Festival

Dates: 28th - 29th July 2012 (TBC)
Location: Glendalough, Co Wicklow

Golf Classic

Date: August 2012
Location: Knightsbrook, Trim, Co. Meath

MUNSTER

24 Hour Spin-a-thon

Date: March, 2012
Location: Limerick

Over the Edge, Sponsored Abseil

Date: May
Location: Thomond Park, Limerick

ULSTER

Over the Edge Sponsored Abseil

Date: Sunday 5th February 2012
Location: Victoria Square, Belfast

Golf Classic

Date: Early September 2012
Location: Moira, Co Antrim

If you are interested in taking part in any of these events or would like more information please contact Amy Vaughan on +353 (1) 869 1617 or amy.vaughan@specialolympics.ie

RCP Tiburon Mile Open Sea Swim 9th September 2012

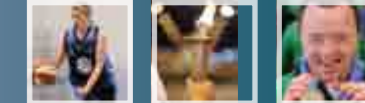


Entries closing soon for this challenge of a lifetime to swim a nautical mile in San Francisco Bay

For more information please contact the Regional Fundraising Coordinator in your Special Olympics Regional office or

Brenda Mahon on
+353 (0) 1 8912000
Email: tiburonmile@specialolympics.ie

Alternatively sign up online at
www.specialolympics.ie/tiburon



CONNAUGHT

Inaugural Sports Forum to take place in Galway

Special Olympics Connaught is pleased to announce the first ever Sports Forum for the region which will take place on Saturday 18th February in the National University Ireland Galway (NUIG) campus. This day is open to all registered volunteers who have an interest in sport and want to learn more.

The guest speaker on the day will be Brendan Hackett, a well known sports psychologist who has coached and advised many athletes at both a local and elite level over a number of years.

We will also have a number of other interesting and informative sessions which will give participants the chance to learn more and also raise issues which they may be experiencing in their coaching.

Any further queries please contact John at the regional office on +353 (0) 71 911 8320.

Will you be one of our VIPs (Very Important Plungers!) on February 19th?

Brrrrrrrave the elements and be freezin' for a reason in Salthill, Galway on Sunday February 19th!

Experience heart-warming and bone chilling extremes as you take the plunge into the Atlantic Ocean for Special Olympics Connaught.

Will you be one of our VIPs (Very Important Plungers)? Trust us, our Polar Plunge will be the coolest thing you do all year (literally!).

Hurry! There's still time to register see www.specialolympics.ie/connaught



Freezin' For A Reason

Save the dates!

Special Olympics Connaught Annual Regional Meeting - all clubs, volunteers, athletes and family members are invited to attend our Annual Regional Meeting on **Thursday, 29th March 2012 in the McWilliam Park Hotel**, Claremorris starting at 7.30pm. Please contact the office to confirm your attendance, email Connaught@specialolympics.ie or call +353 (0) 71 911 8320.

Other meeting dates Dates for your 2012 Diary:

Sports Forum	Saturday, 18th February, 9.30am-4.00pm (NUIG)
Annual Regional Meeting	Thursday, 29th March, 7.30pm
Regional Council Meeting	Thursday, 7th June, 7.30pm
Selection Night	
- (Area to Regional Competition)	Thursday, 28th June, 7.30pm
Regional Council Meeting	Thursday, 8th November, 7.30pm

All the above will take place in the McWilliam Park Hotel except the Sport Forum which will take place in National University Ireland Galway (NUIG), and the selection night which will take place in the Connaught Office.

Volunteer Induction Training Dates - All volunteers must now complete volunteer induction training as part of the volunteer registration process. This course can be completed online at www.specialolympics.ie/GETINVOLVED/VOLUNTEERS/VOLUNTEERTRAINING or at any one of the following group sessions in Jan/Feb 2012.

Monday, 13th February	McWilliam Park Hotel, Claremorris from 7.30-9.00pm
Tuesday, 21st February	Athlone IT from 7.30-9.00pm
Tuesday, 28th February	The Landmark Hotel, Carrick on Shannon from 7.30-9.00pm

Volunteer Vacancies

Sports Events

We are currently recruiting volunteers to assist with the organisation of sports events in 2012. If you are interested in getting involved with any of our sports events please email connaughtvol@specialolympics.ie or call Michael on +353 (0) 71 911 8320.

Clubs

The clubs below require volunteers. Please contact Mary Ann McBrien on +353 (0) 71 911 8320 or email connaughtvol@specialolympics.ie for further information.

Tuam/Headford SO Club - Gymnastics every Wednesday from 8-9pm and Swimming every Saturday from 8.45-9.45am. Contact Geraldine Hannon at gerrihannon@gmail.com or call +353 (0) 87 926 6231.

Castlerea SO Club - Table Tennis every Monday 7-8pm. Contact Marie Baggott at ambaggott@eircom.net or call +353 (0) 86 335 9483.

Team South Galway in Clarinbridge - Swimming every Wednesday from 7.50pm-8.45pm. Contact Nuala Keady at nualakeady@hotmail.com or call +353 (0) 86 170 0948.

Splashin' Penguins SO Club in Sligo - Swimming every Monday from 6-7pm. Contact Pat O'Malley at patlawrenson@eircom.net or call +353 (0) 86 854 3046.

Nightriders SO Club in Sligo - Equestrian every Tuesday from 8-10pm. Contact Claudia Florchinger at claudiafl@utvinternet.com or call +353 (0) 71 916 8085.

Medical

We have a number of forthcoming events in Sligo, Galway, Mayo, Athlone and Roscommon for which we need volunteers with a first aid qualification or a medical background to help out. Please check the calendar of sports events on www.specialolympics.ie/connaught and if you are available to help out at any of the events please email connaughtvol@specialolympics.ie or call +353 (0) 71 911 8320.

Support Centre

Volunteers come in to the regional office based in Collooney, Sligo every week to help out with making phone calls, sending emails, recruiting volunteers for our sports events, clubs and general office assistance. If you have a few hours to spare on Wednesdays or Thursdays we would like to hear from you. Please email connaughtvol@specialolympics.ie or call +353 (0) 71 911 8320.

Our Schools Got Talent Finals



Congratulations to Roscommon band, Intervention who were crowned Provincial winners of Special Olympics 'Our School's Got Talent'. The third annual talent initiative was launched last September with the support of Supermac's. Following county-by-county heats, semi-finals and finals, over 20 acts battled it out for the Regional prize in the Royal Theatre, Castlebar on December 2.

Four-member band, Intervention, received great praise from listeners on their local radio station Shannonside FM after winning the top accolade. Runners up at the Connaught final were Aoibhinn McDonagh, Sligo and Louisburgh's Matthew Cabot.

Special Olympics Connaught would like to take this opportunity to thank the organisers, students, parents, teachers and sponsor, Supermac's, for making the 2011 project such a success in showcasing the immense young talent in the region.

St Hildas win Affiliation Prize

Congratulations to St Hildas Work Therapy Unit who won the 2011-2012 affiliation prize of a new camera for their school. The school was entered into the draw along with all groups who got their affiliation in before the deadline of October 14th.



EASTERN

T-Birds & Pink Ladies join the family fun!

The 3rd annual Eastern Region Family Day saw 487 family members attend throughout the day including lots of 'T Birds' and 'Pink Ladies' as well as many Danny & Sandy wannabes. There were plenty of blue jeans, white t-shirts, leather jackets and big quiffs on show from the guys. For the girls, it was all about the pink ladies, shades and a big hair do.

The event had a real 'classic grease diner' feel to it, along with fun activities such as hopscotch, fruit bowling alley, basketball hoops, DJ, dance instructor, Special Olympics information stands as well as free gourmet popcorn (from JD's gourmet popcorn see www.jdp.ie) and fruit goodie bags for all guests (supplied by Begley's fruit 'Simply Fresh' www.begleys.ie). The event also had its own real 'classic car' on display that even Danny Zuko would be jealous of!!

The 'Grease' Family Fun Day was for registered family members with the Eastern Region Family Programme. The Region currently has 1,743 registered family members which is a fantastic number!



Athlete Forum

Our Athlete Forum took place on Saturday/Sunday 26th/27th November 2011 in Dublin City University. The regional Athlete Leadership Programme (ALPs) support team, consisting of key volunteers and staff members planned and implemented the event with the view of bringing existing ALPs athletes and new ALPs athletes together to further develop their knowledge of Special Olympics.

There are currently 84 active athletes and 65 active mentors involved in ALPs in the Region. This event attracted 72 Special Olympics athletes over the course of the weekend; 27 of which were new athletes along with their parents, volunteers & mentors.



On behalf of all the Regional Family Support Team we would like to thank everyone involved for making this event happen.

New Clubs

We are delighted to welcome two new clubs to the Eastern Region.

Maynooth Stingrays Special Olympics Club is a new aquatics club based in Maynooth. If you would like to find out how you can get involved with this club, please contact Jacqueline (Secretary) on +353 (0) 86 361 8361 or alternatively you can email maynoothstingrays@gmail.com

Celbridge Condors Special Olympics Club offers training in athletics in Celbridge and due to its popularity they are currently looking for more general volunteers to come on board so that they can invite more athletes to train with the club.

If you are interested in getting involved with this new and exciting venture then please contact Mary (Secretary) on +353 (0) 87 245 0771 or alternatively you can email celbridgecondorsoc@gmail.com

Volunteer Opportunities

Below are a number of current volunteering opportunities within the region. Please contact easternvolunteers@specialolympics.ie or phone us on +353 (0) 1 891 2000 for more information

Elmgreen Golf Club - Golf coach (either qualified or someone willing to train & qualify) Castleknock, Saturdays 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Stillorgan Rangers - Football, general volunteers, Alexander College, Milltown, Dublin 6 Mondays 6pm-7pm

Carmona Cougars - Bowling - general volunteers, Stillorgan Leisureplex Wednesdays 6.15pm - 7.30pm

Bray Lakers - Rhythmic Gymnastics, Coach/Assistant Coach, Bray, Co Wicklow, Mondays 5pm - 6pm

Sports Events - if you are interested in becoming part of a team to help plan, manage and run events please call Sinead on +353 (0) 1 891 2004. A commitment of about 1 hour per week during the sports calendar year is required.

Committees/Event Teams - if you have experience of being on a committee or leading a team and would be interested in leading a group of volunteers undertaking specific projects please call Sinead on +353 (0) 1 891 2004.

Medical First Aid - We urgently require qualified medical & first aid volunteers for all our sports events held during the year.

Support Centre - we require volunteers to assist in our volunteer support centre at Northpark Offices, North Road, Dublin 11. Duties include helping with database work, telephone calls, etc. Monday-Friday from 10am - 5pm

Inter Club Events

Has your club attended or hosted an inter club event yet? If so we would love to hear about it. We are encouraging all of our clubs to give this a try! Please send us details on when, where, how many athletes participated; what sport or event was offered and pictures of the event. We will try our best to get your story on our website.

Volunteer Induction

The region will host three volunteer induction training sessions in 2012. The first took place in January, however there are two more coming up:

7th May from 7pm - 9pm, Crowne Plaza, Tallaght
10th September, 7pm - 9pm, Blanchardstown Library

For more information contact the office on +353 (0) 1 891 2000

Fantastic FUNdraising!

Dublin 5 Mile

DATE: May 13th 2012
Race Entry: €20 (€25 on the day)
CHARITY: Special Olympics Eastern Region
Location: Terenure College Dublin 6W

> Visit us on the web at www.dublin5mile.com
 > Find us on Facebook or Twitter (@dublin5mile) for running tips, expert advice and registration
 > Race organised by Sportsworld Running Club



Special Olympics Eastern Region is delighted to have been chosen as Charity Partner for the 2012 Dublin 5 Mile Run which will be hosted by Sports World Running club on Sunday 13th May, at Terenure College. Walkers and joggers as well as runners are welcome to participate.

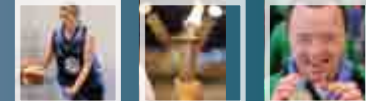
Matt Cooper & Louise Duffy from Today FM are supporting Special Olympics by running the race and encouraging their listeners to participate too.

Contact Paul Ahearne at +353 (0) 1 891 2000 or paul.ahearne@specialolympics.ie for more information or enter now at www.dublin5mile.com

Freezin' For A Reason

The Annual Polar Plunge fundraiser took place at The Forty Foot, Sandycove on Sat 10th December. Amongst those taking part were Deputy Garda Commissioner Nacie Rice, Assistant Garda Commissioner Michael Feehan, Niamh McNamara and her Santa clad ladies who added to the festive atmosphere.

A huge thank you to everyone who braved the elements and all who supported them.



Eastern Region Events Round-Up

Area 1 Aquatics Advancement Event **Bowling Tournament**



Area 1 held their aquatics advancement event at The Shoreline Leisure Centre, Greystones Co. Wicklow on Sunday 11th December. Participant numbers increased from previous years so it was a busy day from 11.00am to 6pm.

We were delighted to welcome Michael Whelan, trainer of the Dublin All-Ireland winning football team, to open the event. He also brought along another welcome visitor - the Sam Maguire cup! Ali Dowling, Irish and European female bodybuilding champion very kindly came along to present awards.

Brian Fallon from Swim Ireland was referee/starter for the competition and ensured that it all ran smoothly and professionally. We were delighted to see such high standards of swimming from all 120 athletes - a great testament to the hard work of the coaches and volunteers in their clubs.

Thanks to all at Greystones Leisure Centre and to the very hard working and enthusiastic volunteers who made the day such a successful one.

Pam Beacom, Area 1 Aquatics Advancement Event - Competition Manager

The Eastern Region Bowling Tournament is now into its second year. We are delighted to see the growth in the numbers registered for the tournament. The 2010-2011 season had 226 (48 teams) and for the 2011-2012 this has risen to 268 (57 teams). The three Areas in the region play in various venues with four event days per month. The tournament runs in the months of October and November with a break in December for Christmas and January and February for the Advancement Events to take place. The tournament restarts in March and April with a finals day in May.

The next bowling session is the Area 1 event on February 18th in Leisureplex Tallaght. I would like to thank our athletes, volunteers, medical officer, coaches, Leisureplex staff, Garda John O'Shea, Paul our Photographer. A special thanks to our athlete volunteers Sile Maguire, Darren O'Reilly, Nathon Philips, Nigel Philips, Lisa Cox and Lisa Byrne. Well done and thank you all.

Chris Mackey
Area 1 Bowling Tournament Coordinator



Sports Surgery Clinic supporting Special Olympics Ireland

Sports Surgery Clinic are very proud to have sponsored athlete Laura Mangan during the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens. Staff at the Clinic organised a number of fundraising events throughout 2011 and are delighted to continue supporting Special Olympics in 2012.

Pictured is Michael Kinsella, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sports Surgery Clinic with Laura Mangan and Geoff Moylan, CEO of Sports Surgery Clinic.



LEINSTER

Offaly County Council hosts Civic Reception

A Civic Reception was hosted by Offaly County Council on 1st December recognising three Offaly-based athletes who participated in the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games - John Michael Gannon (Men's Artistic Gymnastics), Patrick Moore (Men's 5-a-side football) and Gary McCabe (Men's Basketball).

The Council also honoured the volunteers, coaches, families and clubs in Offaly for their commitment and dedication to the training of athletes, developing their sporting prowess to their highest standards. Cathaoirleach Cllr Danny Owens stated "Any organisation that can call on so many volunteers, people who give so freely and will-



Back Row Annette Codd, Regional Director, Cathaoirleach Cllr Danny Owens, Matt English CEO, Claire Grehan Sports Inclusion Officer Offaly Front Row John Michael Gannon, Gary McCabe, Patrick Moore, Pauline Clavin Regional Fundraising Co-ordinator

ingly of their time to others, must have at its core an unshakeable belief that they have the ability to change lives, and to bring happiness and fulfilment to the people they seek to help".

Each of the athletes was presented with an inscribed silver plate to mark their achievements with their clubs also receiving a scroll.

Get online!! Get Informed!! Get it out there!!

We want to make the Special Olympics Leinster website pages better for you. The aim is to make sure we have all the information you need available at your fingertips to keep you informed about what's happening in your area but we need your help to do it. Please take a few short minutes to go to our homepage at www.specialolympics.ie/leinster and click on the survey link to complete a short survey to give us some feedback and what you would like to see more of on the Leinster pages.

We also love to hear about volunteer, club and athlete experiences and success so we can share them with everyone on our website and in CONNECT. So if you have attended an event or would like to share what you are doing in Special Olympics send an email and your photos to leinsternews@specialolympics.ie. We look forward to hearing from you!

Volunteers Needed

Royal Rovers SOC is a ladies football club that meets on Tuesday evenings at the MDL Soccer Grounds in Navan, Co. Meath. They are seeking new volunteers to assist at training sessions. Coaching qualifications are not essential, however an interest or qualification in football would be beneficial. For further information contact Anne Marie Govern on +353 (0) 87 944 0835 or email annemariegovern@gmail.com.

Kilkenny SOC is looking for new volunteers to provide supervision at their swimming training sessions. They meet at the Watershed Leisure Centre in Kilkenny City on Wednesday evenings. For further information, contact Marguerita O'Flynn on +353 (0) 87 203 3411.

Games Management System Volunteers
Special Olympics Leinster is looking for people who are computer proficient to support our events. The Games Management System (GMS) is a software package used by Special Olympics to operate and manage our sports events. The

programme can complete tasks such as registering athletes, generating reports and results. It is a user-friendly software package so no computer programming/coding required.

Basketball and Football Officials/Referees
We are looking for qualified Basketball and Football Volunteer Referees for our up-coming League Days listed below:

Football League 24th March, 12th May
Naas Sports Centre (Male League)

Basketball League, 11th & 25th Feb, 31st May
Gormanston College (League)

If you don't have a referee qualification in either of the two sports above but are interested in doing a refereeing course and volunteering in this area, please let us know! Contact Ashling on +353 (0) 1 629 6999 or email ashling.kennedy@specialolympics.ie.



LEINSTER continued ...

Cops and their Donut Shops

The second Annual Cops and their Donut Shops event took place in Kilkenny City on Friday 23rd December and raised over €6,500 for Special Olympics Leinster. This event creates great excitement on High Street where the Dolly's Donuts mobile donut shop is set up. The Local Community Policing Unit under the direction of Sgt Gary Gordon organised the event yet again.

In the run up to the day many local schools and businesses including Banking 365, AIB, Taxback and VHI Healthcare ordered donuts in advance as their way of supporting this venture. The donuts are donated by Joy Moore of Dolly's Donuts made at The Oldtownhill Bakehouse, Tullaroan, Kilkenny. We extend our sincere thanks to Joy and to the Gardaí for their ongoing support and organisation of this event as well as everyone who turned out on the day to help sell donuts.

The next Cops and their Donut Shops event will take place on All-Ireland Collection day on 27th April in Carlow.

Local schools, volunteers, Special Olympics athletes and family members alongside local celebrities came out to get involved in the action. Mick Galwey, former Ireland and Munster Rugby Player, Brian Cody and several members of the Kilkenny Hurling team came along to show their prowess at donut selling.

Supporting you Supporting us

This year we will be heading to a location near you to meet with families, volunteers and athletes to look at ways that Special Olympics Leinster can best support you and ways you can help Special Olympics. We will be visiting each county once this year and dates are as follows:

Offaly March 1st, Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore
 Louth March 8th, The Grove House, Dunleer
 Kilkenny March 21st, SOS Kilkenny

Each meeting will start at 7pm and will finish by 8.30pm.

From September to November we will have meetings in the following counties:

Wexford September 26th Kildare Wednesday October 10th
 Meath Wednesday November 21st Carlow Wednesday November 7th

The venues for these meetings will be outlined in the next edition of CONNECT. We are looking forward to seeing you at one of these meetings over the coming year.

Leinster Events to April 2012

Date	Event	Venue
11th Feb	Basketball	Gormanston College, Co. Meath
21st Feb	Bowling (North)	Drogheda Leisure Centre, Co. Louth
25th Feb	Basketball (League)	Gormanston College, Co. Meath
22nd March	Motor Activities Training Programme (North)	Gormanston College, Co. Meath
24th March	Football (League)	Naas Sports Centre, Co. Kildare
31st March	Basketball (League)	National Basketball Arena, Dublin 24
28th March	Motor Activities Training Programme (South)	Watershed, Co. Kilkenny
14th April	Table Tennis	Dunshauglin Community Centre, Co. Meath
20th April	Equestrian (South)	Lalor Centre, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow
24th April	Equestrian (South)	Kill Equestrian Centre, Co. Kildare

Leinster athlete attends Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Youth Training Seminar

Barry and Pat Olwill from Carlow Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Programme (ALPs) travelled to Brussels to represent Special Olympics Ireland at a Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Youth Training Seminar held from 28th-30th of November. The seminar focused on training athletes and mentors on how to create websites. On Barry's return he was quizzed by fellow ALPs athlete PJ Nolan about the experience:



Barry pictured above on the right with MEP Liam Aylward.

- P.J.: Hi Barry, what were you doing in Brussels?
 Barry: My dad, who was my mentor, and I, were selected to take part in a Special Olympics Europe two day workshop to learn about wiki websites and to create a presentation for the European Parliament.
- P.J.: What's a wiki website?
 Barry: It's a small website that can be created quickly and easily by an athlete. I learned how to create a wiki website in two days. An athlete can use it to tell stories about themselves and their lives using images, videos, links, music and text, keeping the text to a minimum to allow viewers to understand it easily. I will show you the links later.
- P.J.: Who else was in Brussels?
 Barry: There were athletes and mentors from six other countries; Belgium, Great Britain, Austria, Romania, Italy and the Czech Republic. Our host was Nolwen Grassin from the SOEE Brussels office and we had lots of help from Andy, Charlie and Ajay (the wiki wizard), from the RIX centre in the UK.
- P.J.: What was the highlight of your trip?
 Barry: Making new friends from all those different countries was great. Also we had to make a presentation to the European Parliament. We had to wear suits and ties and the ladies had to wear their best dresses. Our host at the Parliament was MEP Liam Aylward from Kilkenny and I had to sit beside him up at the top table (see photo above). Each country then made their presentation. I think they were all good and very well received.
- P.J.: Thanks very much Barry that sounds really interesting.

A day of volunteering by Athlete Leadership Programme (ALPs) athlete Ann Marie Rowan

Part of my work towards achieving my Gold ALP's award is to volunteer at an Area Event. The opportunity arose when there was a badminton skills event held recently in Newbridge.

Special Olympics, as I have competed in bowling and bocce myself in the past. In addition to the volunteering I had a lot of fun, made some new friends and I also saw loads of friends that I had met at competitions in the past.

Another athlete (Shauna Bradley) and I travelled to Newbridge with our mentors Catherine Matthews and Liz Bradley. We checked in with Shirley and Liz when we got to Newbridge and were given our first task.

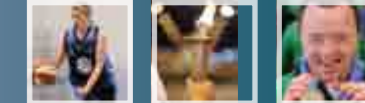
Thank you to my mentor, Catherine, to Shirley and Liz who were so helpful on the day and also to all the other volunteers and athletes who made me feel so welcome.

We were in charge of making sure that all athletes were registered correctly when they arrived. When play started it was our job to collect the shuttlecocks from the floor and return them to the athletes. The athletes were really talented and enthusiastic about the sport and with the coaching they had on the day I am sure that they will be the stars of the future.



Mentor Liz Bradley, ALPs athletes Shauna Bradley and Ann Marie Rowan and mentor Catherine Matthews pictured at the badminton event in Newbridge.

Volunteering like that was very special to me. Not only did I feel that I was doing something worthwhile I was also giving something back to



MUNSTER

Sport in Focus

- Bocce

Having identified Bocce as a sport of focus, the Munster region ran a very successful and enjoyable "Level 1 - Bocce coaching day" in St. Josephs, Charleville, Co. Cork on September 24 2011.

Twelve participants representing the 6 clubs of Lisnagry, Bruff All Stars, Tipperary, Inniscarra Blues, Brothers of Charity, Limerick, and Limerick West participated. Under the expert guidance of Roy Savage they tackled a number of topics, including bocce skills, drills for skills development, tactical considerations, strategic use of the pallina, rolling the pallina to/along the side boards, selection of lead athlete for doubles and teams play, choosing which shot to play, the role of the coach and the day at a competition.

Roy used a mix of teach and talk together with demonstrated action on the court itself. This proved to be very effective, with each individual having an opportunity to put into practice what had been discussed in the classroom.

A special word of thanks must go to Roy for his continued commitment to developing the sport, to David Doyle for allowing us to use the fabulous facilities at St. Josephs, and to Patricia Hickey for the coordination, including the catering, on the day.

The Bocce development sub-group of Patricia Hickey, Bruff All-Stars, Mary McCarthy, Inniscarra Blues and Eileen O'Connell, Limerick West have ideas on some future events that will be of interest to clubs in the region, but should you have any ideas that you would like to submit, then feel free to contact us on +353 (0) 87 120 1218 or alternatively contact Shaun Hennessy at the Special Olympics Munster office on +353 (0) 21 4977192.

- Floorball

The first ever Special Olympics Munster Floorball event took place in Tralee on Dec 3rd. Floorball is the newest addition to the Munster sports programme. This sport is similar in many ways to ice-hockey, without the ice!



8 teams from across the region participated, with all teams playing a minimum of 6 matches. Following the initial round robin matches, players were then placed in ability graded teams, and played some more matches. This event was supported by students from I.T. Tralee, who played a very active part in planning and delivering a very high quality event. Pontus Glad, from the Irish Floorball Association, provided the rink, and also spent a very busy day refereeing.

Floorball will be offered as a demonstration sport in the Special Olympics World Winter Games in South Korea in 2013. In Munster, we will be holding a regional advancement event on Feb 18th, in Killarney. From this, athletes will be selected for the Ireland event later in the summer.

For more information on floorball or bocce please contact Shaun in the Special Olympics Munster office by email at shaun.hennessy@specialolympics.ie or phone +353 (0) 21 4977192.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

2012 is going to be very busy with events in the Munster Region. Some volunteer event teams are already meeting to plan and organise events and more team meetings will be happening in February for events coming up in March and April.

Upcoming events that we need volunteers for are:

Saturday 3rd March - Swimming Gala in Fermoy from 8am to 4.30pm

Wednesday 21st March - Tenpin Bowling in Waterford

Saturday 23rd March - Indoor Games in Cork

Thursday 29th March - Tenpin Bowling in Cork

Saturday 26th May - Athletics in Cork

Saturday 9th June - Athletics in Waterford

If you would like to volunteer for any of the above events please contact Vivien at Vivien.buckley@specialolympics.ie or call +353 (0) 21 497 7192.

Congratulations Katie!



Well done to Bruff All Stars athlete, Katie Cronin, who recently received a Fetac Level 2 certificate in General Learning at an awards ceremony held at the Catherine McAuley School in Limerick.

To achieve this national certificate Katie completed projects for eight subjects including English, Maths, Horticulture, Health and Personal Effectiveness, Woodwork, Computers and her favourite subject Art.

Katie is also a twice past winner in the Texaco Art Competition and one of her pictures was requested by the Central Statistics Office for the cover of their publication 'Children and Young People in Ireland 2008'.

Kate has just started working on Fetac Level 3 projects and we would like to wish her the best of luck with her future studies.

Finisk Riders



Saturday December 16th was a beautiful day and perfect to have our very first Christmas Gymkhana for the River Riders.

The wood burning stove was lit in the tack room, the kettle was on for hot tea and with mince pies in abundance, the important preparations were sorted. While all the ponies were being groomed and tacked up our riders were familiarising themselves with a trail ride set up in the arena.

The first group of riders to start was Elaine Martin, Aoife Buckley, Davina Power and sisters Katie and Rosie Wright. Elaine started at quite a speed but with her cool personality she controlled her horse Jacko and executed a lovely course.

Next up was Davina who rode Denver. Aoife was trekking in behind her on her reliable companion Jock.

Sisters Katie and Rosie were battling for rosettes on their ponies Ebony and Danny.

In our next category were the boys, Eoin Phelan, Conor Faher and Patrick Looby. Eoin rode his first competition unaided which was a wonderful achievement. Patrick was thrilled with his red rosette, as was Conor.

Our mature and more experienced riders came the following Tuesday December 19th and were put through their paces over a course of fences. Competition was very high but we still managed to have a fun time as some of the riders dressed up in Santa hats as did their horses. Hopefully these two successful days of competition will get our riders ready for their next big day. Happy New Year to everybody from the River Riders.



ULSTER

Omagh District Club continues expansion with a new sport!

Omagh District Special Olympics Club, through the generosity of the local community either with their time, or financially, continues to expand with plans to offer Bocce during 2012. The club already provides excellent coaching and training in swimming and golf.

Bocce: We now have a venue for a new sport for our club thanks to the support of Canon Robert Clarke and the parishioners of Edenderry Parish Church who have made their Church Hall available to us. Three volunteers have already completed the Special Olympics Introduction to Coaching Practices Course and are excited about bringing this fun filled, developing sport to our area.

Golf: Our golf athletes continue to improve their skills at the weekly training sessions at Omagh



Golf Club thanks to the volunteer coaches, all of whom attended a Special Olympics Golf Leadership course recently. A special thanks to volunteer Eugene Cunningham for doing the ground work and to Harry Mulligan from H.M. Carpets for his generosity in supplying the putting mats for indoor golf so our athletes can continue to develop their skills even when the weather is inclement. Coaching takes place on Tuesday evenings from 6.30pm - 7.30pm in Edenderry Church Hall. All abilities are catered for.

If you are interested in volunteering with our club or know of anyone with an intellectual disability who would benefit by joining us please get in touch with Rosemary, on (+44) 079 2669 7745 or email rmcaleer@hotmail.co.uk

Special Olympics Ulster celebrates Government funding boost

Special Olympics Ulster has been recognised for the significant contribution it makes to the lives of people with intellectual disabilities in Northern Ireland, with the announcement of a four-year cross departmental funding package.

Five Government Departments – Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Department of Education, Department of Social Development and the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister have come together to agree a funding package worth £2.296m, which will be delivered through Sport Northern Ireland over the next four years.

Special Olympics was established in Ulster in 1978 and this is the first time that it has received public funding from Northern Ireland Government on an ongoing basis.

On Tuesday 22nd November 2011, Ministers and Junior Ministers from each of the five Departments attended an event at The Pavilion, Stormont to announce the significant funding package.

Commenting after the event, Shaun Cassidy, Regional Director of Special Olympics Ulster said: "We are delighted with the decision that the Northern Ireland Assembly has made to support Special Olympics Ulster.

This funding will enable us to further engage with athletes and family members; motivate and train volunteers; and encourage schools and communities to play their part in providing sporting opportunities for people with an intellectual disability. We owe a great deal of thanks to all who were engaged in our successful bid for core funding – their commitment to this opportunity will ensure that Special Olympics continues to change the lives of people with an intellectual disability within the Ulster Region".

Matt English, CEO of Special Olympics Ireland said: "This is fantastic news for Special Olympics in Northern Ireland and we are extremely grateful to the Northern Ireland Assembly for this support, which will help us to further realise our promise of changing the lives of people with an intellectual disability through sport".

Recent Events

Special Olympics Athletes Make a Splash in Ulster

Special Olympics athletes from all over Ulster took part in area advancement aquatics competitions during November as part of the first year of the new cycle 2011-2015.

First up was the Area West event, hosted in Omagh Leisure Centre on Friday 11th November. Fifty athletes along with their coaches, family members and a group of dedicated volunteers converged on Omagh for the day. The event was attended by both the Chairman of Omagh District Council, Paul Donnelly and the Manager of Northern Bank in Omagh, Marian Crozier, who had the honour of presenting athletes with their medals.

This was followed by the Area South event which was hosted in the Orchard Leisure Centre in Armagh on 17th November. This was a similar sized event to Area West with 60 athletes competing on the day.



The volunteers who assisted at the Area South aquatics event held in Armagh on 17th November.

The final event was the Area East which was hosted in Lisburn LeisurePlex on Friday 25th November. This proved to be the biggest event with 90 athletes competing on the day. The event was attended by the Lord Mayor of Lisburn City Council Brian Heading who had the honour of presenting athletes with their medals.

Special Olympics Ulster would like to thank all athletes, coaches and family members who attended the events and of course all the volunteers who generously gave up their time to help organise and run the events.

Clubs

2011 was a busy year for Club Development and Special Olympics Ulster would like to wish all our new Clubs the very best of success! Club contacts are listed below if you are interested in getting involved either as an athlete or volunteer.

Roe Valley SO Club

Based in the Roe Valley Leisure Centre, Limavady, this club offers training in athletics every Wednesday night at 7.15pm. Contact Helen O'Hara on +44 (0) 77 4567 3687 for more information.

High Rollers SO Club

This club meets at Ardmore Recreation Centre in Armagh and bocce is their chosen sport. They meet on Wednesday nights at 7pm. Contact Barbara Abbott on +44 (0) 77 9940 3888.

Cheetahs SO Club

The Club offers athletes between 6 and 18 years old training in football on Monday nights at 6pm at the Playball facilities located at Stormont Estate in Belfast. Contact Paul Shaw on +44 (0) 28 9052 2767.

Ballyshannon & District SO Club

This newly affiliated Club train in swimming at the Ballyshannon Leisure Centre on Monday nights at 6.30pm. Contact Joan McGrath on +353 (0) 86 6192 7849.

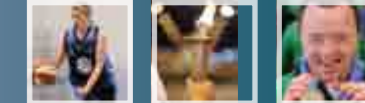
Lennon Special Olympics Club

Based at Craoibhin, Terman, in the Kilmacrenan area this club offers training in bocce and meet on Fridays at 6pm. Contact Anne Sharkey on (+353) 086 3260256.

We are looking forward to another busy year in 2012 with the establishment of many more Special Olympics Clubs! Anyone who would be interested in setting up a Special Olympics Club in their area should contact Victoria at Special Olympics Ulster on +44 (0) 28 9089 2995 or e-mail victoria.kelly@specialolympics.ie

Ulster Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Venue	Date	Event	Venue
09/02/12 10/02/12	Bowling - South & East Advancement	DunDonald Icebowl	30/03/12	Basketball - West Advancement	Bready Cricket Club
23/02/12 24/02/12	Bowling - West Advancement	Brunswick Superbowl, Derry	19/04/12 20/04/12	Bocce - East Advancement	Jim Baker Stadium, Templepatrick
28/03/12	Basketball - East Advancement	Lough Moss Leisure Centre, Carryduff	TBC	Bocce - West & South Advancement	Lakeland Forum, Enniskillen
29/03/12	Basketball - South Advancement	Castlepark, Lisnaskea	If you are a volunteer interested in assisting at any of these events please contact the office on +44 (0) 28 9089 2994		



HEALTH IN FOCUS

Springtime brings long evenings, warm weather and growth. But one thing that we don't want to see growing is our waistlines! People are often sick of hearing of the growing problem of weight gain and obesity in Ireland; however, regardless of how much it is discussed, the figures continue to increase at an alarming rate.

Being overweight or obese can have a serious impact on health. Carrying extra fat leads to serious health consequences such as cardiovascular disease (mainly heart disease and stroke), type 2 diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders like osteoarthritis, and some cancers.

These conditions cause premature death and substantial disability. What is not widely known is that the risk of health problems starts when someone is only very slightly overweight, and that the likelihood of problems increases as someone becomes more and more overweight. Many of these conditions cause long-term suffering for individuals and families. In addition, the costs for the health care system can be extremely high. (World Health Organisation, 2004)

The good news is that weight problems are largely preventable. The key to success is to achieve an energy balance between calories consumed and calories used. We should try to achieve the following to follow a healthy diet:

- limit energy intake from total fats and shift fat consumption away from saturated fats (animal sources) to unsaturated fats (vegetable oils, nuts etc.)
- increase consumption of fruits, vegetables,

whole grains, nuts and legumes (beans, peas and lentils)

- limit intake of sugar



Physical activity is another important factor to help us to achieve an energy balance and to maintain a healthy weight. Physical activity reduces risk for cardiovascular diseases and diabetes and has substantial benefits for many conditions, not only those associated with obesity. It reduces blood pressure, improves the level of high density lipoprotein (good) cholesterol, improves control of blood glucose in overweight people, even without significant weight loss, and reduces the risk for colon cancer and breast cancer among women.

It is recommended that we take at least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity physical activity on most days, thereby reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, colon cancer and breast cancer. More activity may be required for weight control.

For more information on health please see www.specialolympics.ie/health or contact Carol Farrell, Special Olympics Ireland Health Promotion Project Officer on +353 (0) 1 869 1669 or Treasa Rice, Education and Health Promotion Officer, Special Olympics Ulster on +44 (0) 28 9089 3004

HEALTH SERVICES TRAINING

Athletes Code of Ethics Training

Athletes need to know their:

- role, responsibilities and rights
- the behaviour expected of them
- what they should do if they have a worry

We offer a Code of Ethics and Good Practice Workshop for Athletes with volunteer tutors ready to come to your club to deliver it. Athlete Protection Officers should contact Muireann at Muireann.niriain@specialolympics.ie or on +353 (0) 1 869 1615 for details.

Club Opportunities

Why not ask your club to organise our volunteer tutors to come and deliver modules in the areas of Intellectual Disability, Health, Communication, Relationships and Sexuality, Safety and Behaviour and Ethics in Volunteering? For further details contact Muireann at Muireann.niriain@specialolympics.ie or +353 (0) 1 869 1615.

Looking to do something new?

Volunteer Tutors wanted countrywide to deliver our:

- Intellectual Disability Education Modules
- Athlete Code of Ethics Workshops

Full training and support will be given. If you are interested please contact Muireann Ní Riain, Health Services Coordinator, at +353 (0) 1 869 1615 or Muireann.niriain@specialolympics.ie.

All Volunteers

Have you done your Basic Awareness – Code of Ethics and Good Practice workshop yet? It only takes 3 hours and can be done locally through your Local Sports Partnership (Irish Sports Council) or Local Sports Development Officers (Sports NI). Call the RDO Club Officer at your Regional Special Olympics office for more information.

COACHES' CORNER

Baby its cold outside!

For serious athletes, the show must always go on. However, Irish weather doesn't always cooperate! So here are our top 8 tips for training in cooler weather!

1. Stay hydrated – just because it is cold outside, it doesn't mean you won't sweat while training. Keep your water bottle close by and take frequent water breaks. Scientists say we feel less thirsty when we are cold, so it is even more important to make sure to drink! Use an insulated water bottle which can keep your drinks at a more palatable temperature!
2. Keep a lid on it – we lose most of our body heat through our heads, (up to 40%), so a light hat is useful for training in lower temperatures. If you find a hat too warm, consider a head band to keep your ears warm!
3. Shrek says ogres have many layers, like an onion! So should you! Dressing smart for the cold is all about layers. Start with a synthetic layer which will absorb sweat away from your skin (cotton will soak up sweat and get wet and cold, not a good idea for winter!), next a warmer fleece or breathable layer and finish off with a breathable wind-cheater/waterproof layer. Many layers are better than few as you can peel them off as you warm up.
4. Ten little fingers, ten little toes – you need to be extra careful to keep them warm in winter. Wear suitable footwear (waterproof shoes if necessary) and light gloves to keep your fingers warm. It is always a good idea to have some dry shoes and socks to change into after your training session! Mind those toes!
5. Warm Up – a good warm up is even more important on cold days to prevent muscle strain that can end your season. Start your warm up slowly, take your time! Be sure you are warm before you start any tough training!
6. Check the Weather Forecast – we all know the weather can be unpredictable, but keeping an eye on the weather forecast can help ensure you are prepared. Bring extra layers if temperatures are expected to drop. If rain is forecast, bring a rain jacket and dry clothes.
7. Be Safe, Be Seen – if you are training anywhere near road traffic, make sure to wear a reflective band so that you can be seen. If you cycle or walk to training, you should also ensure you wear reflective jackets or vests and have suitable lights on your bicycle.
8. Wrap up once you've wrapped up! Once you've finished your training session, your body temperature will drop rapidly. You should always put on some warm, dry layers as soon as you finish, even if you don't feel cold just yet!

Are you ready to give coaching a try?

If you are interested in getting involved in coaching at your local Special Olympics club, but you have never coached before, then Special Olympics Ireland's Introduction to Coaching Practices course is the perfect course for you.

Delivered by experienced Coaching Ireland trained tutors from all across the country, all with experience in coaching and in Special Olympics, this course is specifically designed for volunteers who are new to coaching, even those who are new to sport!

During the day, you will learn about Special Olympics and what makes it different to mainstream sport. You will learn the basic principles of coaching and the most important things you need to know as a coach. You will learn how to plan and deliver a coaching session all in a fun and interactive way.

The course runs over a full day and is offered in each region a number of times each year.

If you are interested in finding out more about this course please e-mail Fiona at fiona.murray@specialolympics.ie, phone +353 (0) 1 869 1651 or contact your regional office.

We need you!

With 16 sports programmes now running in Special Olympics Ireland, we are always seeking volunteers to get involved with our development teams.

We aim to establish a team of volunteers within each sport, who will work together with the Sports department and Regional Development Officers, Sports, along with key regional volunteers in the sport, in order to continually improve the standards of opportunities available to our athletes.

Key sports for which we are recruiting volunteer team members in 2012 are:

Alpine Skiing	Athletics
Aquatics	Badminton
Bowling	Equestrian
Kayaking	Table Tennis
MATP	

If you think you could spare 2-4 hours per month, have a strong interest and passion for one of our sports, along with a good knowledge of the sport, as a player, coach or administrator, and would be interested in working as part of a team to develop the sports programme, please contact us in the Sports Department at sports@specialolympics.ie



Volunteer to collect on April 27th.

It means a bucketload to us.



Volunteer at
specialolympics.ie



FAN THE
FLAME



Special Olympics