



Special Olympics Indiana to hold 48th Annual Summer Games at Indiana State University

Nearly 2,700 competitors and as many as 5,000 volunteers, coaches, and spectators from across Indiana will converge on Terre Haute this June for state-level competitions in eight Summer Games sports.



TERRE HAUTE, Ind. — Founded on the campus of Indiana State University nearly 50 years ago, Special Olympics Indiana will return home once again this year as scores of athletes and their families make the journey from the farthest corners of the state to take part in the 2017 Summer Games, June 9 – 11 in Terre Haute.

Nearly 2,700 Special Olympics athletes and unified partners representing 63 delegations will participate in the organization's largest annual sporting event, with competitions scheduled for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in a variety of sports including: bocce, bowling, cycling, horseshoes, powerlifting, swimming, track & field, and volleyball.

An additional 1,100 coaches and 1,500 volunteers are expected, along with family members and supporters. The Games are open to the public and free to attend.

"I annually look forward to interacting with the families, volunteers, and athletes and having the opportunity to be together for a few days and get to know everyone," said Michael Furnish, president and CEO of Special Olympics Indiana. "Personally it represents an anchor for me—it represents a really important reminder for why we do what we do."

A focus of this year's Summer Games is improving athlete health and fitness through Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® and Healthy Communities® initiatives, a goal that will be at the forefront of all Special Olympics programs for the next several years. Free screenings and instruction will be offered to all Summer Games participants in each of the six Healthy Athletes® disciplines, with clinical directors overseeing stations focused on vision, dentistry, podiatry, audiology, physical therapy, and better health and well-being.

In response to a statistic showing that as many as half of all Special Olympics athletes may be wearing improper or ill-fitting footwear (many of them suffering health problems as a result), Finish Line will generously provide a free pair of shoes and socks to all who participate in at least three of the six free screenings. Finish line is a global partner of Special Olympics International and the Finish Line Youth Foundation is a champion sponsor of Special Olympics Indiana.

"In our sixth year of partnering with Special Olympics Indiana at the 2017 Summer Games, we continue to build on our already strong relationship by fitting and providing shoes to all of the athletes," said Marty Posch, president of the Finish Line Youth Foundation. "Our Finish Line team always looks forward to spending the day with these athletes who are running, swimming and lifting their way to becoming the healthiest versions of themselves."

Additional activities are scheduled surrounding the Games, including:

- The inaugural “Run Unified Relay” (Friday at 3 p.m.), a special fundraising event centering on a 4 X 100-meter run by eight teams each made up of Special Olympics athletes, law enforcement officers, and supporters from Special Olympics Indiana champion sponsor Finish Line.
- Opening Ceremonies at the Hulman Center (Friday at 7:30 p.m.), the official start of the Games featuring live entertainment, the Parade of Athletes, an address by Indiana State University President Daniel Bradley, the lighting of the “Flame of Hope,” and more.
- Olympic Town, presented by Duke Energy (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday), offering a variety of activities for athletes, coaches, and family members including Healthy Athletes® screenings, carnival games, souvenirs, and arts and crafts.
- The Festival of Champions at Indiana State’s Dede Plaza (Saturday from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.), a fun-filled Summer Games party and outdoor dance surrounding the university’s iconic fountain.

The slogan for the 2017 Games is “You Can!”—an homage to the spirit of the Special Olympics movement that’s at the heart of every Special Olympics event. It serves as a reminder that, together, the athletes, coaches, volunteers, and staff who make this event possible can change the world through the transformative power of sports.

For more information about Special Olympics Indiana or the 2017 Summer Games, visit www.soindiana.org.

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ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS INDIANA

Special Olympics Indiana is a not-for-profit organization that provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in more than 20 Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, reaching more than 13,000 athletes across Indiana. The organization receives no federal or state appropriated funds, is not a United Way agency, and relies entirely on corporate, civic and individual donations. For more information about Special Olympics Indiana, call (317) 328-2000 or visit www.soindiana.org.

ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS HEALTH

Special Olympics Health Program, made possible by the Golisano Foundation, strives for inclusive health for people with intellectual disabilities—which means equitable access to quality healthcare, education, and services throughout the community. By organizing free screenings, facilitating follow-up care, and providing resources to athletes, Special Olympics Indiana is on track to be recognized as one of Special Olympics International’s first 100 Healthy Communities® by 2020. To learn more about Special Olympics Health, visit www.specialolympics.org/health.

CONTACT: Nathan Barnes, Manager of Marketing & Public Relations (Special Olympics Indiana)
nbarnes@soindiana.org | Office: (317) 328-2008 | Mobile: (219) 742-3755

Lisa Moore, Executive Director Communications (Indiana State University)
lisa.moore@indstate.edu | Office: (812) 237-7782 | Mobile: (812) 207-5500