

UNIFIED FITNESS CLUBS

INTRODUCTION

Special Olympics Unified Fitness Clubs are locally organized fitness-focused groups that give members a way to exercise year-round. Clubs are formed using the Unified Sports® model, matching people with and without disabilities (partners). While walking is the most common activity, clubs are encouraged to expand the range of activities based on community resources and interests of the group. Clubs earn points by tracking activity data collected from a fitness band, with points accumulated to earn the club and individual members various incentives.

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Website: <http://soindiana.org/unified-fitness-clubs/>



PURPOSE

Unified Fitness Clubs exist to provide opportunities for Special Olympics athletes, others with intellectual disabilities, and members of the community to engage in regular physical activity that promotes improved health and fitness, better understanding of healthy lifestyles, and friendship.

REGISTRATION

Clubs can register year-round using the online form located at <http://soindiana.org/unified-fitness-clubs/>. Club members eligible for Special Olympics must be registered as a Special Olympics athlete. Unified Partners must be registered as Class A volunteers.

LEADERSHIP

Unified Fitness Clubs activity must be led by one Special Olympics athlete and one Special Olympics volunteer (known as co-directors) who participate in training in how to run a club.

FITNESS DEVICES

Each registered Unified Fitness Club member receives a free Movband2 for tracking activity. Clubs may choose to upgrade to a Movband5 device for \$42.00 each. The **MovBand5** is a device that is easy to re-charge, syncs wirelessly through a mobile app, and is waterproof. There are some other brands of fitness devices (Fit Bit, Apple Watch, Garmin, etc.) that sync with the Engage Moves platform. Special Olympics Indiana handles:

- acquisition of Movband fitness devices
- the annual cost of UFC members being part of the tracking platform
- replacement or repair of broken or lost devices

INCENTIVES

- Individual** members receive a special **Unified Fitness Club medal** once they reach the 500 mile plateau of miles walked or ran as recorded through their device.
- Individuals then receive a **reward pin** when they reach 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, 2,500, 3,000 and 4,000 mile plateau achieved afterwards (4,000 through 9,000).
- Clubs** can earn incentives through participation in Virtual Challenges that are offered at least four (4) times a year.
- Clubs are eligible for incentives only if they collect member health metrics.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Any club or member who is inactive for six (6) months will be moved to "inactive status" and must re-register to participate. Any member inactive for one (1) year will result in removal from the Engage Moves tracking platform.

MILES WALKED/RAN

All activity recorded since the start of the program (2017) accumulates for members of Unified Fitness Club members. Club incentives for miles walked/ran concluded as of April 15, 2018. Club incentives going forward will be based on quarterly challenges only.

HEALTH METRICS

Unified Fitness Clubs will receive devices to assist in collecting important health metrics from the members (height, weight, and blood pressure). Training will be provided in how to use the devices. Information collected will be used for grant reporting purposes and will remain confidential. Overall results of health metrics collection will be used to document the impact of regular group exercise within Special Olympics.

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MEMBERSHIP

- Unified Fitness Clubs are organized by co-Directors (one Athlete and one Partner) who register the club with Special Olympics Indiana. <http://soindiana.org/unified-fitness-clubs/>
- All club members must be registered as SO Indiana athletes or volunteers, with between 25% and 75% of members being individuals with IDD.
- Athletes must be a registered participant, which includes an application, medical form, and all necessary forms. A person with ID is not required to be active in Special Olympics sports training to be a member of a Unified Fitness Club.
- Partners must complete requirements for a Class A volunteer.
- There is no minimum or maximum number of members, but the larger the group the easier it is to match people by ability for training.

PARTICIPATION

- Clubs are expected to organize a group walk (or other activity) at least once per week. Clubs also encourage individual members to be physically active (in safe environment) outside of club activities.
- Walking is suggested to be the main activity because it is appropriate for all levels of fitness, it does not require a facility or equipment, and it helps participants earn miles quickly; however, other fitness activities can be done in conjunction with walking or instead of walking (hiking, stretching, yoga, Zumba, biking, strength training, etc.).
- Fitness Club activities may occur in conjunction with sports practice, but it must be activity beyond sports training or skill development.
- Clubs are year-round, with weekly exercise and once a month lesson on a health topic (e.g. stretching, hydration, nutrition) as provided by Special Olympics Indiana.
- Periodic “challenges” will be organized to focus training and create intra and inter-club interaction.
- Health metrics, photos, and success stories are requested for grant reports and general publicity.

ACTIVE UNIFIED FITNESS CLUBS (as of January 2021)

Adams-Wells Co.	Gibson County	McClelland Elementary	Steuben County
Allen County	Henry County	Mishawaka Young Adult Services	Sycamore Services
Benton County	Howard County	Montgomery-Parke Co.	Tippecanoe County
Clark-Floyd Co.	Huntington County	Noble County	Turnstone (Allen County)
Clinton County	Jackson County	North Wayne Elementary	Vanderburgh County
Decatur County	Jay County	OJ Neighbours Elementary	Vigo County
Delaware County	Johnson County	Porter County	Washington County
Dubois County	Kosciusko County	Posey County	Washington Township
East Noble High School	Madison County	Putnam County	White County
East Noble Middle School	Marion Co. - NE	St. Joseph County	

ACTIVITY TRACKING

- Steps/miles/moves must be tracked through SO Indiana-provided Movbands or other approved activity trackers, with data synced on the Engage Moves platform weekly.
- Both athletes and partners should use a tracking device (**devices not issued until registration is complete**).
- To help document the impact of the program, club members are expected to provide health metrics (i.e. height, weight, BP, RHR, steps, and lifestyle survey) at least once a year.
- Clubs and participants earn incentives for reaching various levels of activity.

SO FITNOW APP

Special Olympics Indiana has a new tracking app called SO FitNow. The app is available to download on your device for both Apple and Android as well as with a website platform. This is another way to track your exercise, water intake, fruits, and vegetables and compete in challenges. SO Fitnow is compatible to sync with other devices or apps such as (Fitbit, Garmin connect, Map My Fitness, Misfit Wearables, Runkeeper, Strava, etc.). This app also allows you to manually enter amount of time for each exercise therefore a device is not needed. If you are interested in creating an account on the app please contact Itzel Graber at igraber@soindiana.org. The account will be created for you after you contact Itzel.