

## 2024 STATE CONFERENCE

**Friday and Saturday, October 25, 26**

**Embassy Suites Conference Center, Noblesville**

Special Olympics Indiana is thrilled to celebrate our 55th anniversary at the 2024 State Conference! This event will introduce new strategic initiatives and provide valuable training in sports and program management to assist in enhancing the athlete and volunteer experience.

Designed for program leaders, volunteers, coaches, and families, the conference will feature keynote speaker Jannet Capetty, along with special presentations and sessions aimed at fostering growth in a fun and uplifting environment. We'll also announce the Spirit of Special Olympics Award winners, honoring Indiana's top athlete, family, volunteer, coach, and Law Enforcement Torch Run officer. Join us as we celebrate our 55th year and build a stronger community together!

### CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Registration fees cover all sessions, including the Athlete Leadership Council meeting, conference materials, recognition luncheon and an attendee gift. Light morning snacks are also included.

**Registration deadline is October 10.** All Conference information is available on the website at: [State Conference - Special Olympics Indiana \(soindiana.org\)](https://soindiana.org)

All Conference Registration is done through online site: <https://2024stateconference.my-trs.com/>

Conference Fee: \$75.00

**SOSO Award Winner Package:** Area award winners plus one guest receives free admission to the Luncheon.  
Area family award winners receive four total Luncheon admissions free.  
SOSO Award winners wanting to attend the conference will cost \$40 to attend.

Luncheon-only: \$35.00

### HOUSING

A room block is reserved at the Embassy Suites Conference Center in Noblesville. The room rate is \$165.00 plus taxes and fees. This includes an open bar from 5-7 PM and a hot breakfast.

13700 Conference Center Drive South  
Noblesville IN 46060

To make a hotel reservation in this room block, visit **Booking Link:**  
[Embassy Suites Special Olympics State Conference Room Reservation.](#)

Group Code: 90W

Attendees are responsible for contacting the hotel directly to make reservations and room cancellations. The deadline to reserve a room is 11:59 PM on September 25. Act fast! Requests received after September 25 are subject to regular rates and space availability. If you have accessibility needs, please follow up your online reservation with a call to the hotel front desk.

## STATE CONFERENCE CONFIRMATIONS

Confirmation, including a map and final details, will be emailed to all registrants prior to the conference. In the meantime, if you have questions or concerns, please contact Francie Smith by email ([fsmith@soindiana.org](mailto:fsmith@soindiana.org)) or phone (812.312.5140). *You are responsible for retaining a copy of your registration.*

## STATE CONFERENCE CANCELLATIONS

Conference cancellations received before the deadline will receive a full refund for their Conference Registration. No refunds will be given after October 10. Attendees are responsible to cancel their own hotel reservations and are subject to the hotel's cancellation policy.



***Special  
Olympics***  
*Indiana*



# 2024 State Conference

## “55 Years & Beyond”

### Session Descriptions

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#### Friday, October 26

**7pm - 8pm**

#### **EARLY BIRD CHECK-IN**

Conference attendees attending Friday evening entertainment and social hour can check-in for the conference and pick up their nametags and conference materials.

**6pm - 8pm**

#### **SOCIAL HOUR**

Join us in Ditslear A, B, and C for food and beverages. Spend the hour mingling and catching up with old friends. We will be enjoying Trivia with our host Ben Gregory, Athlete from Montgomery-Parke County. A full evening of entertainment awaits you. Cash Bar provided.

**7:30pm-10pm**

#### **“Pickleball experience”**

Join our ALC members in Waters A as they host an evening of Pickleball. From the basics to opportunities to play full games.

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#### Saturday, October 27

**8am - 2:50pm**

#### **VENDOR TABLES AND POSTER BOARD PRESENTATIONS**

Conference sponsors will have tables set up to share information to attendees on the assistance they offer. Athlete leaders will be sharing Poster Board presentations of various projects and activities they have been involved in over the last year.

**8am - 3pm**

#### **SOUVENIRS**

Conference attendees will have the opportunity to purchase souvenirs. Get an early start on your holiday shopping and check out the great deals.

**9:30am - 4pm**

#### **ATHLETE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING**

The chairs of the Athlete Leadership Councils will participate in all four annual meeting sessions, attend the opening general session, and join the annual recognition luncheon.

**9am-9:20am**

## **OPENING GENERAL SESSION**

### **55 Years and Beyond**

*Presenters: Jeff Mohler and Melony Salla*

Welcome to all and a quick trip down History Lane and a look ahead to the future of Special Olympics Indiana.

**9:30am - 10:25am**

## **BREAKOUT SESSION #1**

### **STRENGTHEN OUR COUNTY PROGRAMS: Unified Champion Communities**

*Presenters: Jeff Mohler & Athlete Leader TBD*

What exactly is a Unified Champion Community? Let's brainstorm together! Join us as we discuss what it means to be a Unified Champion Community and learn how, together, we can bring this exciting initiative to your town. Imagine a world where every aspect of daily life is fully inclusive—this is the vision we're working towards. In this session, we'll create an overview of the initiative and map out how to expand Special Olympics' presence throughout Indiana. Come find out how you can be a part of this transformative effort!

### **HEALTHY ATHLETES: Dietician and Nutrition**

*Presenter: Michael Horner & Kyle Moran*

This session will be led by Michael Horner, a Registered Dietitian in the state of Indiana. Michael will cover daily nutrition basics, nutrition for sports basics, and strategies to help make lifestyle changes more manageable.

### **GMS REVIEW!**

*Presenter: Cathy Elzinga*

Review GMS benefits of Monitoring Athlete Eligibility

Event Registration: including Registration Wizard, setting up teams, scoring, registration timelines as it relates to GMS registration window. We will look at reviewing and correcting entries, finding errors, running reports like, games reports, compliancy reports, and medical reports.

### **ENGAGING LOCAL MEDIA**

*Presenter: Joe Frolo*

In this session, we'll explore the practical steps to build a strong relationship with local media outlets. You'll learn how to craft compelling press releases and stories that resonate with your community and gain insights into the best practices for pitching to journalists.

- **Understanding the Media Landscape.** Learn about the different types of local media platforms and how to identify the right ones for your message.
- **Crafting Your Message.** Discover how to create engaging content that aligns with your goals and appeals to local media interests.
- **Building Relationships.** Get tips on how to initiate and maintain productive relationships with media representatives.
- **Effective Pitching.** Learn the art of pitching your stories to increase the chances of coverage.

### **PREPARING AND INCLUDING ATHLETE LEADERS**

*Presenters: Elesia Yoon & Juanita Garten*

Do you have management team roles that need to be filled? Do you need help supporting your program or area? Have you thought of the hidden gems that are athletes who could be leaders? Athlete leaders are a great resource to fill roles in county programs and area management teams. Join this session to learn how you can help develop the talent of athlete leaders in your program to take on roles and responsibilities that support your program and management team.

## **COACHES TRAINING: Basketball Part 1**

*Presenters: Katie Lee*

Find out what it takes to have a successful basketball season and how to take your athletes to the next level of ability. This is a two-part training. You are encouraged to attend both sessions to get the most out of the training.

## **VMS REVIEW**

*Presenter: Kevin Aders & Francie Smith*

Whether you are a seasoned Volunteer Coordinator or newly assigned to this role for your County or Area this training is for you. Join us as we will show you all the details of how to access all your information in the new Volunteer Management System (VMS) and provide you the tools to understand the system and how to utilize it to benefit your program and to work smarter not harder with your volunteers.

## **RESERVED FOR SPONSOR SESSION:**

**Stay Tuned for more details**

## **10:35am-11:30am BREAKOUT SESSION #2**

### **CREATING PATHWAYS FOR ALL ATHLETES: Champions for Life**

*Presenter: Jeff Mohler & Athlete Leader TBD*

Special Olympics Indiana is dedicated to enhancing the development of our exceptional athletes. In this session,

We will explore ideas on how to support athletes from early childhood through their entire Special Olympics career. Discover Young Athletes and how we engage the next generation of athletes. Brainstorm how to provide ongoing programming to accommodate all ages and abilities. Let's ensure that everyone has the chance to participate and thrive. Additionally, let's see how we can provide opportunities for athletes to improve their physical skills with initiatives like Train for Life. Join the conversation about exciting new opportunities for 2025!

### **HEALTHY ATHLETES: Black Belt Fitness**

*Presenter: Kyle Moran*

This session will cover the need and reasoning behind the Health & Fitness Black Belt program. How the new initiative will work and how sport coaches can use the program to keep their athletes honest about their health and fitness.

### **TREASURER TRAINING 101**

*Presenters: Karen Kennelly and LaToya Scott*

If you are a new treasurer, just want a refresher course, or have questions about the basics, join us! We will cover all the basics of depositing money and making expenditures including a step-by-step review of the required forms. We will also walk through how to access your credit card charge details and how to keep track of the free stuff your donors give to your program. (Open to Treasurers and County Coordinators ONLY)

### **SOIN WEBSITE AND BRANDING**

*Presenter: Nicole Strouts*

In this session, we will show you an insider look into our new website, which has been designed and built for you all! One new feature are pages for all our county programs. We will be discussing these pages, improved navigation, structure of our fall sports, and explaining how to find things (and where to look). Additionally, we will be discussing one of our biggest assets which is our reputation and global recognition - our brand. Join us as we review the core tenets of the brand, including logos, shields, font, colors, the dynamic curve, language, the official credit line, and addresses the do's and don'ts of using the branding when it comes to Facebook and the website.

## **ALU PROGRAM CERTIFICATION**

*Presenter: Elesia Yoon & Jillian Moss*

Area and County Programs that seek to support athletes in developing leadership skills through Athlete Leadership University (ALU) are required to attend this certification session. We encourage NEW county and ALU coordinators to join us for this training. Already certified? If your leaders have not been to ALU in the last few years we encourage you to come and hear about what is new in ALU.

During this training you will learn about leadership roles available to athlete leaders, Athlete Leadership Councils (ALCs), ALU curriculum and requirements, and expectations for volunteers. The session provides tools and tips to get you started with an action plan for your county.

## **COACHES TRAINING: Basketball Part 2**

*Presenter: Katie Hilt*

Continued Basketball Coaches training. Deeper dive into the skills of our athletes and how to provide opportunity to grow on the court and start developing training plans to create high performance athletes. Part 2 of training must attend part 1.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN**

*Presenter: Thaddeus Thomas & Trevor Hall*

Exclusive to law enforcement and corrections personnel, this session provides a concise overview of the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) program and its diverse range of events. Participants will learn about fundraising opportunities like the Torch Run, Cop on a Rooftop, Cover the Cruiser, and Tip a Cop, as well as volunteer roles at

our various events, including the Summer Games, Fall Bowling, Winter Games, and Basketball.

## **RESERVED FOR SPONSOR SESSION:**

**Stay Tuned for more details**

## **11:40am-1:15pm RECOGNITION LUNCHEON**

*Keynote Speaker: Janet Capetty*

Take 5 Training - The 5 steps to Focused Impactful Volunteer Engagement. Take FIVE also reminds us that sometimes we need to pause for a minute, look at what we're doing and analyze whether or not our current practices are achieving our mission in the best possible way.

*Co-EMCEE: Jeff Mohler & Athlete Leaders TBD*

We will recognize our Area and County leaders as well as some outstanding people as we present the 2024 *Spirit of Special Olympics Indiana* awards!

## **1:35pm-2:40pm BREAKOUT SESSION #3**

### **TAKE 5: Part 1**

*Presenters: Janet Capetty*

Take 5 Training - The 5 steps to Focused Impactful Volunteer Engagement. Take FIVE also reminds us that sometimes we need to pause for a minute, take a look at what we're doing and analyze whether or not our current practices are achieving our mission in the best possible way.

Overseeing a volunteer program certainly has its challenges, as well as its rewards. What you do is an art, not a job. Engaging volunteers in an impactful way is not easy. It takes someone who cares about your mission, cares about people, and cares about putting those important pieces together to be successful.

**This is a two-session training. You must complete the first session to attend the second session.**

## **HEALTHY ATHLETES: Strong Minds**

*Presenter: Jillian Moss*

Come learn about a Healthy Athlete discipline called Strong Minds. As an athlete, competition provides a natural opportunity to develop active strategies for maintaining emotional wellness under stress, such as: thinking positive thoughts, releasing stress, and connecting with others. During this session, you will learn about the importance of keeping a strong mind by engaging in discussion and activities surrounding emotional well-being that can be used at home or during practice and games.

## **TREASURER TRAINING 201**

*Presenters: Karen Kennelly & LaToya Scott*

An essential class in helping you interpret the information provided in the quarterly reports! We will also cover the often-confusing topics of grant management, county carry-over funds, and budgeting. If you are a County Coordinator or Treasurer join us for this fun filled hour!

## **SOIN NEW WEBSITE AND BRANDING**

*Presenter: Nicole Strouts*

This is a repeated session. We will show you an insider look into our new website, which has been designed and built for you all! One new feature is pages for all our county programs. We will be discussing these pages, improved navigation, structure of our fall sports, and explaining how to find things (and where to look). Additionally, we will be discussing one of our biggest assets which is our reputation and global recognition - our brand. Join us as we review the core tenets of the brand, including logos, shields, font, colors, the dynamic curve, language, the official credit line, and addresses the do's and don'ts of using the branding when it comes to Facebook and the website.

## **UNIFIED LEADERSHIP**

*Presenters: Elesia Yoon & Juanita Garten*

As a county or area management team, you are or will be working with athlete leaders. It is important for management team members to learn about Unified Leadership so that you can support creating meaningful leadership opportunities for athlete leaders. Join this interactive session to learn about the Unified Leadership approach and discuss ways to promote it within your teams and Special Olympics Indiana.

## **FINANCIAL WORKSHOP**

*Presenter: Gordon Homes (Westpoint Financial)*

Introduction and discussion about Medicaid, Medicare, Waivers, SSI, and SSDE, Adult Child Benefits, juggling Social Security, guardianship, pros and cons, alternatives, juggling employment, government benefits, ABLE accounts, and transitioning into adulthood.

## **POLAR PLUNGE & PLANE PULL 101: Revenue Share Opportunities**

*Presenter: Scott Furnish & Trevor Hall & Francie Smith*

For new county coordinators or counties wanting to participate in a new special event, come attend our Polar Plunge and Plane Pull class to learn how! We will review the technology side of the event and how to use our online fundraising tool as well as team success stories with the competition and fundraising. These two special events are great ways to earn revenue for your county in a fun way without all the event logistics and special event setup.

## **COACHES TRAINING: Powerlifting**

*Presenter: Savannah Vaughn & Kyle Moran*

*Training will take place at an off-site facility.*

Training hosted offsite at a local gym (TBD). Learn the proper techniques for a correct standard squat, deadlift, and bench press. The training will also dive deeper into Summer Games competition specific event and resources coaches and athletes can utilize while also educating individuals on proper training technique.

**RESERVED FOR SPONSOR SESSION:  
Stay Tuned for more details**

**2:50pm-4pm                      BREAKOUT SESSION #4**

**TAKE 5: Part 2**

*Presenter: Janet Capetty*

Take 5 Training - The 5 steps to Focused Impactful Volunteer Engagement. Take FIVE also reminds us that sometimes we need to pause for a minute, take a look at what we're doing and analyze whether or not our current practices are achieving our mission in the best possible way. What a great decision you've made for your organization and for your own professional development by attending today's training session! Overseeing a volunteer program certainly has its challenges, as well as its rewards. What you do is an art, not a job. Engaging volunteers in an impactful way is not easy. It takes someone who cares about your mission, cares about people, and cares about putting those important pieces together to be successful.  
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**USA GAMES: TEAM INDIANA**

*Presenters: Katie Hilt & Kevin Aders*

Team Indiana building and preparing for USA Games 2026 in Minneapolis. Review of Team Indiana Handbook, reviewing the selection process, when Team Indiana will be announced, Support Staff roles. Nomination forms process. Q and A.

**ALC 2.0**

*Presenter: Elesia Yoon*

Need new ideas for your Athlete Leadership Council (ALC)? Do you need help starting an ALC in your program? Join this session to discuss ideas and give input on how we can make local ALC meetings better, discuss barriers to participation, clarify ALC processes and procedures, brainstorm ideas for support resources, and discuss ways to start an ALC in your program if you have not already done so.

**TRAINING FOR LIFE: Strength and Conditioning**

*Presenter: Kyle Moran & Savannah Vaughn*

Training will take place at an off-site facility.

The Train 4 Life session will cover the overall goal and intentions of the Train 4 Life program. We will cover the need for it, how we're partnering with community specialized gyms, and how the program will be structured for the athlete. Time permitting, we will take the attendees through an abbreviated version of a sample workout.

**RESERVED FOR SPONSOR SESSION:  
Stay Tuned for more details**