2022 Annual Report

Special Olympics Kansas

2022 Special Olympics Kansas Reach Report

Special Olympics Kansas

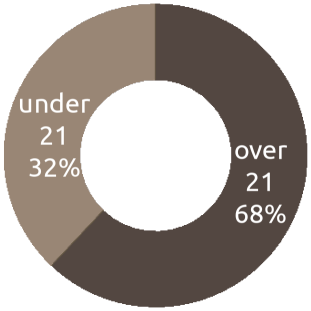
4,438
ATHLETES SERVED

49
COMPETITIONS

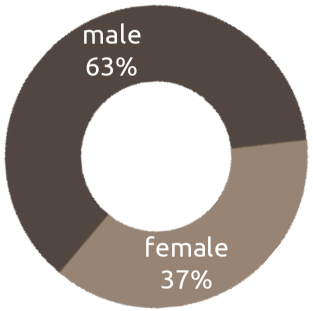
1,096
TRAINED COACHES

102
LOCAL TEAMS

2,582
VOLUNTEERS



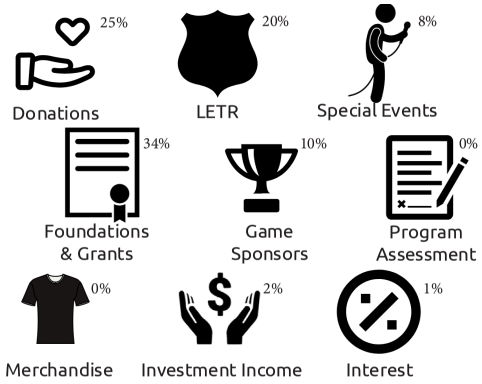
ATHLETE AGE



ATHLETE GENDER

UNIFIED SPORTS

7 Sports
576 Athletes
440 Partners



REVENUE FROM AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

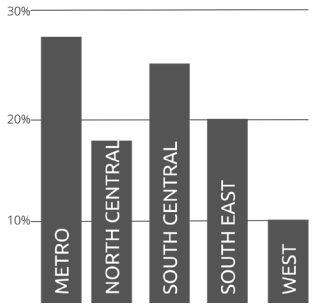
LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN® FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS KANSAS

2,015
LETR Participants

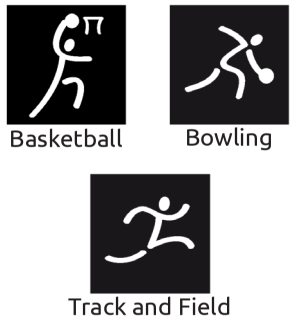
1,508
Miles Run Across Kansas

HEALTHY ATHLETES

532 Healthy Athletes
9 Screenings



ATHLETES BY REGION



TOP 3 SPORTS

ATHLETE LEADERS

40 Trained Athlete Leaders

2022 Fact Sheet

Special Olympics Kansas

Programs

Sports Training and Competition

The sports and competition program improves the health and social interaction of SOKS athletes by providing them access to regular physical activity through structured practices and competitions supervised by trained personnel.

Health and Wellness

Healthy Athletes® provides free health exams in a fun, welcoming environment that removes the anxiety and trepidation that people with intellectual disabilities often experience when faced with a medical visit. The impact on the health and well-being of SOKS athletes can be significant, in some cases changing lives by discovering unknown health issues or providing health screenings, that otherwise would not be available. Screenings are conducted by volunteer medical professionals.

Athlete Leaders

Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Programs (ALP's) allow athletes to explore opportunities in roles previously considered "non-traditional." Such participation might come in the form of an athlete serving on the Board of Directors or local organizing committee; or it might find an athlete as a spokesperson, team captain, coach, or official. Participation in Athlete Leadership Programs may be in addition to or in place of participation in traditional athlete roles.

Young Athletes™

This initiative seeks to provide activities to children, ages 2-7, with intellectual disabilities to improve physically, cognitively, and socially. The activities of Young Athletes not only facilitate growth in a child but also offer parents and other children tools to grow, play together, and become stronger in many ways.

Unified Champion Schools

This initiative introduces students to their peers with intellectual disabilities and combats bullying. SOKS works with Kansas schools to create inclusive sports teams. Volunteers ad Special Olympics athletes compete together in the Kansas Unified Sports League in year-round competition against other Unified teams.

Regions

Special Olympics Kansas is divided into five geographic regions across the state. A regional director guides each region in all Special Olympics activities, including training, competition, fundraising, public relations, outreach, and volunteer relations. To find a Special Olympics team in your area, visit soks.org.

Sports

Alpine Skiing
Track and Field
Basketball
Bocce
Bowling
Cheerleading
Cross Country Skiing
Cycling
Figure Skating
Flag Football
Floor Hockey
Golf
Powerlifting
Snowshoeing
Soccer
Softball
Speed Skating
Swimming
Tennis
Volleyball

State Events

January/February
John L. Cassidy Heartland Winter Games, Weston, MO

March
Basketball and Cheerleading Tournaments, Manhattan & Hays

June
Summer Games, Maize

July
Powerlifting and Flag Football, Pittsburg

August
State Bowling, Kansas City

October
State Golf and Softball, Wichita

November
State Volleyball, Shawnee & State Swimming, Topeka

Special Olympics Kansas is a registered 501(c) (3), nonprofit organization in the state of Kansas.
Special Olympics Kansas does not receive state funding, Kennedy Foundation funds and is not a designated United Way Agency.

Special Olympics Kansas
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www.soks.org | pr@soks.org
Twitter and Instagram: @SOKansas | Facebook: Special Olympics Kansas

Special Olympics Kansas Mission

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

2022 Highlights

2022 USA Games

June 5-12, 2022, Special Olympics Kansas sent a delegation of 96 athletes, Unified Partners, coaches, and staff to the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games in Orlando, FL where they joined more than 5,500 athletes and coaches from all 50 states and the Caribbean and 125,000 spectators during one of the country's most cherished sporting events. The athletes chosen from all over Kansas participated in Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Equestrian, Golf, Powerlifting, Softball, Swimming, Tennis, Track, and Volleyball.

Team Kansas returned from USA Games with 11 Gold, 11 Silver, and 18 Bronze medals and 17 4th Place ribbons. We are extremely proud of the hard work and dedication of these athletes and coaches and proud of how they represented Kansas on the national stage.

We all have reasons to shine. For Special Olympics athletes, one of those reasons is the love of sport. Special Olympics athletes display remarkable abilities not only on the field, but in all areas of life. By celebrating their dedication and perseverance, we become champions for a more inclusive world. A world where we all Shine As One.

Big 12 Athlete of the Year - Kelli Bringle

Special Olympics Kansas athlete Kelli Bringle was honored at the Big 12 Conference Championship football game in Dallas, Texas, as this year's Big 12 Special Olympics Female Athlete of the Year. Kelli has been involved in Special Olympics for 23 years with the All Stars of Hutchinson. She was chosen as Most Inspirational Athlete in 2005 and was inducted into the Special Olympics Kansas Athlete Hall of Fame in 2018. She has participated in track and field, basketball, bowling, swimming, volleyball, and cheerleading, winning countless medals in each sport.

When Kelli is not competing, she enjoys painting and watching sports - especially her favorite team, the Kansas City Chiefs. Kelli says that Special Olympics is a very important part of her life, for the physical benefits from practices and competition, and for the friendships she has gained. Though Kelli is not here with us today, we congratulate Kelli on this incredible honor.

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2022 Highlights

Richard LaMunyon Hall of Fame: Original Torch Runners

Beginning in 1979, the Wichita Police Department volunteered to help organize a part of the Special Olympics Summer Games. Two years later, several officers came together to brainstorm ideas about how they could do more, and especially how they could raise additional funds for the Summer Games and Special Olympics programming. At that time, the Wichita Police Department had a running club that met to run during the lunch hour. Officer Don "Barney" Ipsen approached Chief LaMunyon about a Torch Run with members of the running club. Chief LaMunyon liked the idea and gave it the green light. Ipsen set out to find officers and recruited Jack Leon, Jan McCloud, Walt Kuykendall, and Robert G Bachman. Kirk Miles, Executive Director of SOKS at the time, who supplied the torch and also agreed to run.

The six original runners ran from City Hall to Wichita South High School and carried a lit flame that would light the torch for Opening Ceremonies. Officers solicited pledges based on how many miles they ran with the flame to help raise funds for the Summer Games. The idea grew for the torch run to become a year-round fundraiser for Special Olympics Kansas and expand state-wide to other agencies. The movement is now worldwide and has raised a total of more than $946 million for Special Olympics athletes around the world. In 2022, we thanked and recognized with induction into the Richard LaMunyon Hall of Fame:

- Jack Leon
- Bob Bachman
- Jan McCloud
- Kirk Miles
- Donald "Barney" Ipsen, who passed away in 2006.
- Walt Kuykendall

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Special Olympics Kansas

Mission Partners

Board of Directors

Chairperson: Adam Taylor, Prairie Village
Treasurer: Brady Hughes, Shawnee
Secretary: Tonia Lee, Topeka
Eric Armstrong, Goddard
Jeff Bragg, Olathe
Abbi Griswold, Wichita
Elena Lincoln, Strong City
Liz Little, Olathe
Amy Loder, Spearville
Miles McCune, Mission Hills
Randy Stange, Overland Park
Gary Tanner, Lawrence
Dani Welniak, Lawrence

Staff

President/CEO: John Lair
COO: Chris Burt
Sr. Vice President Development & LETR: Luke Schulte
Sr. Director of Competitions: Tim Rehder
Director of Finance: Sheri Stanton
Director of Inclusion: Taylor Obersteadt
Director of Grants & Development: Erin Fletcher
Director of Development - LETR: Jacob LaMunyon
Director of Development - Sponsorships: Ryan Warren
Sports and Program Manager: Krystin Guggisberg
Program Operations Manager: Michele Johnson
Health and Fitness Manager: Erin McDaniel
Marketing and Communications Manager: Ally Speers
Inclusive Leadership Coordinator: Josh Alters
Unified Sports and Training Coordinator: Reid Ellis
Development and Sports Coordinator: Brent Kaiser
Fitness Coordinator/Southeast Regional Director: Olivia Ryan
Unified Champion Schools Coordinator: Caitlin Pierce
Communications Coordinator: Ken Wilson
Social Media Influencer: Daniel Schnacker
Programs Assistant: Makenzie Al-arahshun

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Hall of Fame Inductees

James and John Johnson
KCK Kings

Twin brothers James and John have been involved in Special Olympics since 1985. Since then, they have established themselves as leaders for their team and eager representatives of what Special Olympics is all about. James and John are consistently the firsts on their team to practice, always jumping at the chance to get out equipment or help set up the practice space. During competitions, James and John always try their best. Regardless of the outcome, they gladly accept their medal or ribbon with the biggest smiles ever.

Beau Renyer
Topeka Jr. Blues

Beau Renyer has been involved with Special Olympics for 25 years. Beau is described by his coaches as an athlete who is always eager to compete in any sport and not afraid to put in the work it takes to improve his skills. Though competitive, Beau is also known for his high level of sportsmanship. Beau is positive with both his teammates as well as with his opponents. Beau and his Topeka Stars teammates took home the gold this past summer during their participation at the 2022 USA Games. As well, Beau was one of the first athletes in the Topeka area to compete in powerlifting. He has since shared his passion for lifting with others and encouraged them to try the sport. Outside of sports, Beau recently completed Health Messenger training and now uses those skills to help his teammates to be better prepared for competition by exercising, eating right, and getting the right amount of sleep.

Elizabeth Feemster
Wichita Independents

Elizabeth is remembered by her coaches and peers as a positive and passionate athlete. She enjoyed being involved in as many activities as possible and was a particularly successful fundraiser for her team during LETR events and her team's Bowl-a-Thon. Elizabeth never complained, always lent a helping hand where she could, and was adamant that her disabilities didn't make her any different from anyone else.

Michael Smoot
Topeka/Shawnee

Michael has been involved in Special Olympics for 34 years and during that time, has become a great ambassador for the movement. He is one of the first to welcome a new athlete and loves talking to the volunteers. Mike loves to tell others about how important Special Olympics is to him. In 1998, Mike was named the Most Inspirational Athlete at Summer Games and later that year, was featured in the Topeka Capital-Journal in an article titled "We Should All Be Like Mike". Mike exudes positivity and loves to give high fives and hugs. His face lights up when someone makes a good play, a great catch, or has a good bowling frame. Mike is his team's resident encourager and his teammates often request to be partnered with Mike because he is so well-liked and respected by his peers. Mike shows up to all practices, all events, and any fundraiser he can with a smile on his face and a room full of people who are happy to see him.

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Miriam Greenfield Courage Award

Riley Robinson
Topeka/Shawnee
Rylee is a young and vibrant 22-year-old. At the age of 12 however, Rylee was hit by a car while riding her bike. Rylee suffered a severe traumatic brain injury as well as a left lower leg amputation, loss of her spleen, and many other fractures. Rylee was on a ventilator and feeding tube for over 30 days. She was transferred to Madonna Rehab Hospital in Nebraska where she worked endlessly, re-learning to talk, read, write, eat, and walk. She exceeded all goals and expectations set for her and continues working with therapies 10 years later. Her strength and courage remain as she continues to fight and reach new goals every day. Rylee became involved with Unified Sports in high school, where she learned she could continue her love of sports. Now on Team Topeka Shawnee, Rylee enjoys playing softball, bocce ball, bowling, and some basketball and soccer. She also competed this summer as part of Team Kansas at the USA Games as a bocce athlete. Special Olympics has given Rylee the ability to challenge herself to do everything she sets her mind to. She was given the nickname "Smiley Rylee" because, despite all the mountains she's had to climb, she takes each step with a smile on her face!

Making a Difference Awards

Coach of the Year
Darrell Reida

Family of the Year
The Moore Family

Organization of the Year
Maize South High School (South Central Region)

LETR Champion
James Browning

Organization of the Year
Lindsey Gutierrez and Alpha Media (North Central Region)

Organization of the Year
KCK Huggers (Metro Region)

Volunteer of the Year
Craig Venters

Organization of the Year
Erie High School (Southeast Region)

Organization of the Year
Rocking M Media (West Region)

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Energized by the pride and power of teamwork, Special Olympics Kansas provides individuals with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to be an athlete, and so much more, through acceptance, inclusion, physical fitness, health and nutrition programs, and leadership development.

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Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation for the benefit of persons with intellectual disabilities.