

HAMILTON COUNTY

**Special
Olympics**
Ohio



Special Olympics Hamilton County TORCHBEARER

FALL 2017 EDITION

WHY WE NEED YOUR HELP!

- SOHC is not subsidized by Special Olympics Inc. All funds must be raised locally.
- SOHC serves over 1,800 individuals with intellectual disabilities, and is growing current programs as well as adding new ones.
- SOHC's Young Athletes Program has expanded to six new schools and counting.
- SOHC is not funded by the United Way. We rely solely on local donations from individuals and businesses.
- SOHC just started a healthy athletes program. This program not only helps athletes train for sports, but teaches individuals how to live a healthy lifestyle.

SOHC Going for Gold in the Emerald City

By: Mollie Wheeler

Brian Tate had no idea he had earned the experience of a lifetime.

"When they called me and told me I was picked to go to the USA Games, I was really shocked," said Tate. "When I heard the news, I just had the biggest smile on my face. I've never been before. I'm so excited to meet new people and players there."

Special Olympics Hamilton County will be sending four of its athletes to next year's USA Games in Seattle, Washington. Rachel Travis and David Tripathy will compete in aquatics, Kim Schobert will represent in the bocce tournament while Tate earned a spot on Ohio's softball team. This will be the first USA Games for each of them.

Special Olympics USA Games is a national competition showcasing the power and joy of sports at the highest levels. It takes

place every four years, and from July 1-6, 2018 more than 4,000 athletes and coaches and 70,000 spectators are expected to participate.

Ames, Iowa was the first city to host the USA Games in 2006. Since then it has visited Lincoln, Nebraska, Lawrenceville, New Jersey and now Seattle. All 50 states and the District of Columbia will be represented.

While Team Ohio members have clearly demonstrated excellence on the field and in the pool, their interests and achievements go far beyond athletics. Schobert loves to travel and shop, and spends time honing her computer skills. Tate juggles life as a husband and father, and mentors his nephew, who is also part of SOHC. Tripathy is a 2015 OHSAA Courageous Student Award winner and works as a Courtesy Clerk at Kroger. Travis plays clarinet in the community band and hopes to be employed in child or elderly care someday.

There are many reasons our SOHC athletes are excited to compete in Seattle, however one thing is certain. They all want to "bring home the gold". "I'm ready for the USA Games in July," said Tate. "I'm so happy I'm in it, and I'm looking forward to more great things coming to SOHC".



SPECIAL OLYMPICS
USA GAMES
SEATTLE 2018



Special Olympics Hamilton County will be the recipient of a grant of \$15,800 from the Robert H. Reakirt Foundation (PNC Bank, Trustee). These funds will support both the Ski Day and the Ski Club. The Ski Day brings about 150 school age children and 60 volunteers to help teach the children the basics of skiing. The Ski Club consists of about 20 special needs children and youth with 21 non-special needs partners. This program allows children to learn a new sport that they can enjoy for years to come and join peers to compete against other special needs skiers. Thanks so much to the Robert H. Reakirt Foundation and its trustees at PNC Bank!

Letter From the SOHC Advisory Committee President



As a parent of a Special Olympian, Coach and Board member, I have had many occasions to be proud of our athletes, programs and organization. It is with great pride that I announce that we have 4 athletes from Hamilton County selected to compete at the Special Olympics USA Games in Seattle, Washington in July of 2018. Kim Schobert, Brian Tate, Rachel Travis and David Tripathy have all excelled in their respective sports and have earned the right to participate in this national competition.

While they represent the best of what Special Olympics Hamilton County has to offer, it is not the athletes alone that have made this possible. It is the valuable support of our donors that has allowed these athletes to achieve these great heights. A trip all the way to the Great Northwest is not free. So we are asking for your help to make sure we can get Kim, Brian, Rachel and David to Washington this coming July. You can do so by making a donation to SOHC.

They need your help and I know you will be there for them!

SOHC is not subsidized by Special Olympics, Inc. or affiliated with United Way. That means we are dependent on donations, personal contributions and corporate sponsorships from our community.

So, by making a donation to SOHC (using the handy envelope attached in this newsletter), you will not only be helping to get our USA Games athletes to Seattle, you will be ensuring that all of our athletes will continue to be able to play sports, express the joy of achievement, make new friends and learn to contribute to the community.

Thank you for being a Champion!

Anne C. Knodle
Special Olympics Hamilton County
Advisory Committee President & Parent

Congrats to Our USA Games Athletes!

Kim Schobert—Bocce



Kim Schobert joined Special Olympics in 2012 and has competed in aquatics, bowling and bocce. Schobert lost her father in that same year and says that SOHC really helped overcome the subsequent depression. “Meeting new friends really helped,” she says. Schobert is looking forward to the USA Games because she is excited to travel, meet new friends and “get a medal!” In addition to her formidable bocce skills, she also likes to crochet, solve puzzles, shop, and work on her computer.

David Tripathy—Aquatics



Twenty year-old David Tripathy learned to swim at age 13 and has been loving it ever since. Tripathy says, “I found something that I am really good at and that makes me feel really good about myself.” He also enjoys playing basketball and tennis but swimming is where he really excels. “This been a goal of mine for many years,” he says, “It’s a dream come true!” When he isn’t in the pool or working his day job at Kroger, he enjoys spending time with his family and friends.

Brian Tate—Softball



When he is not being a husband and a father or working full-time at RBI Solar, Brian Tate likes to play basketball and softball. As a freshman at Woodward High School, Tate made the varsity basketball squad. But, it is his skill at softball that has propelled him to a spot on the Team Ohio Softball Team for the USA Games. Being an athlete has become something of a family affair as Tate has a nephew who competes through Special Olympics, and for whom Tate does whatever he can do to support. He says of the USA Games that he is looking forward to “meeting new people and bringing home the gold!”

Rachel Travis—Aquatics



The accomplishments that Rachel Travis has racked up over just the last couple of years are far too numerous to list here but among them are graduating high school, receiving a Director’s Award for her participation in marching band (clarinet) and earning multiple gold medals at the Special Olympics Ohio aquatic meet. She is “fun and energetic” and loves being around people. In addition to swimming for SOHC, she also swims with the Blue Ash YMCA. Travis is “ecstatic” about going to the USA Games and is honored to be a part of the team.

Did You Know?

You can support SOHC while shopping? You can through the Amazon Smile program! When shopping on Amazon.com, select Special Olympics Hamilton County (it will show up as Special Olympics Ohio: Cincinnati) as your charity of choice and 0.5% of your purchase will benefit local Cincinnati athletes with intellectual disabilities!



amazon
smile

Flag Football with the Bengals' Giovanni Bernard

By: Jim O'Connell

The Cincinnati area has long been a hotbed for football. Whether high school, college or the Bengals, fans of all ages come out and support their teams. With all this excitement, did you ever wonder why football has not been a part of Special Olympics programming?

Well you need not wonder any longer. In January of 2017, the National Football League Foundation (NFLF) and Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI) announced a partnership under the banner of the NFL's PLAY 60 campaign. PLAY 60 is the league's youth health and wellness initiative designed to get kids across the country active for 60 minutes a day. The Cincinnati Bengals, under the auspices of Special Olympics Ohio (SOO), have partnered with Special Olympics Hamilton County (SOHC) to deliver this program locally. As a part of this collaboration, the Bengals and the NFLF have provided both footballs and flag belts for use by our athletes, along with a financial grant to bring the program to life.

Beginning last August, SOHC teams of young adults began training in preparation for the annual State Flag Football tournament. While new to the sport, the team's enthusiasm and drive led it to a 4th place finish among the 14 teams that participated. Well done SOHC!

In addition, Giovanni Bernard, star Bengals running back, participated with SOHC at its first school age skills day. Held October 24 at Harrison High School, 5 schools comprising 60 athletes participated. Skills practiced included throwing, catching, running pass routes and agility training. Bernard spent the day with the athletes as they used their newly learned skills to scrimmage against each other and play the game.

Now that flag football is an official SOI sport, SOHC and the Bengals look forward to continuing the program in 2018 and beyond.

According to Bernard, "It's really cool to see all of these kids with so much energy. They are super excited to be here and have their first season of flag football. I'm enjoying every second of it. Just seeing the smiles on their faces is pretty cool." The Bengals community relations representative, Alex Simons, adds "The Bengals are proud to have played a role in helping SOHC kickoff its first season of flag football. We're inspired by the athletes' enthusiasm for the sport and look forward to building on our partnership with SOHC next year."



SOHC Community Partners: Cincinnati International Wine Festival

By: Ken Coggeshall

Since its inception in 1991, the Cincinnati International Wine Festival has given \$5.3 million to local charities. This total includes more than \$35,000 given to SOHC since 2005. At this year's Cincinnati International Wine Festival, SOHC was once again thrilled to receive a generous grant from the organizers of the event.

Founded by former Heidelberg Distributing Company President Russ Wiles, the Festival is an annual event that promotes the wine industry and raises funds for local charities to support programs in the arts, education, health and human services.

"We are so pleased to know that our grant provides vital funding for the Special Olympics to ensure it can continue to cultivate athletic and courage-building opportunities for those with intellectual disabilities in our community," says Wine Festival Executive Director Debbie Dent. "It is our distinct pleasure to translate Cincinnati's love for wine into support for this amazing cause."

This year's gift of \$4,000 was received by long-time SOHC volunteer Jill Barlion (pictured on the left with Ms. Dent). These funds will be used to help send our athletes to State and National competitions in the coming year.

We appreciate the Cincinnati International Wine festival for being such a generous and reliable partner!

The 2018 Festival will take place March 8-10. Buy tickets at winefestival.com.



Volunteer Spotlight: Flag Football

By: Ken Coggeshall

In its first season, SOHC flag football got off to a great start, thanks in large part to a group of committed and enthusiastic volunteers - coaches D.J. Barnett, Jeremy Haycraft and Lindsey Low and University of Cincinnati student volunteers Graham Bartsch, Cory Harbatkin and Jakob Snyder. All of them put in extra time and effort and led the SOHC flag football team to a fourth place finish in the State Tournament.



"Words can't describe how much fun I had every week with the athletes," said Coach Barnett. "The coaches were great too! I met some really great people and I can't wait to do it again. The season went by fast but hopefully next year we can have even more people give football a shot."

Each Wednesday for 12 weeks, this terrific corps of volunteers led the a team of more than 15 players through drills and plays, teaching football fundamentals and strategy. All this practice culminated in the team competing on November 4th in the State Tournament in London, Ohio.

The success of SOHC programs depends on volunteers like these.

And if the commitment of this group is any indication, flag football has a bright future in Hamilton County.

Thanks gang! We look forward to another successful season in 2018!

New Employee Welcome:



**Ken
Coggeshall**

**Director of Fundraising
and Marketing**

Ken is a Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) with more than 13 years of experience in non-profit fundraising. He has raised money and awareness for such organizations as The National Democratic Institute in Washington, D.C., The Dayton Art Institute and most recently the Children's Home of Cincinnati.

Ken brings to his new role a passion for community service and athletics. "I am thrilled to be working with SOHC," says Ken. "Special Olympics is an internationally known and respected organization that brings so much joy and enrichment to people's lives."

Prior to his career in fundraising he spent 10 years as a licensed social worker. Ken golfs, bikes, lifts weights and occasionally runs, (although he really doesn't like to run). He played football for six seasons, including one as a semi-pro with the now-defunct Dayton Cowboys.

In addition to sports, Ken enjoys books, music, movies and cooking. He lives in Madisonville with his wife Mary and their new puppy Bertram.

SOHC College Olympics

By: Madeline Adams

On October 25, 2017 210 athletes, students and volunteers gathered in Tangeman University Center at the University of Cincinnati for an annual event that wows students every year. Thirty teams (5 students per team), along with 30 Special Olympics Athletes and 30 volunteers came together to celebrate the Third Annual College Olympics.

The College Olympics allows the University of Cincinnati's students to raise money and awareness for Special Olympics. In addition to our generous sponsors Sigma Alpha Epsilon, the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, and Phi Sigma Kappa, teams from many different organizations came out to compete in some whacky games. Not only were teams able to meet some of the SOHC staff, they were able to compete alongside Special Olympics athletes.

Athlete Sheryl Fairbanks said that her favorite part of College Olympics was "the balloon popping game, where I had to pop a balloon only using my butt and a chair."

The games create a great way for college students to cultivate new involvement with SOHC, while learning how to be even more engaged throughout their college career and beyond. This year's event raised over \$1,500 that will directly benefit SOHC athletes. This is the most money the College Olympics has raised to date and the hope is that it will continue to grow each year.

The Third Annual College Olympics was a great success. Thank you so much to everyone involved including Kandid Boutique who put together some terrific raffle prizes. We could not have done this without the involvement of the Cincinnati community and are looking forward to next year's event!



Upcoming Fundraisers



Freezin' For A Reason

Polar Plunge of Greater Cincinnati

On February 17, 2018, you can Jump into the Fun at Joe's Crab Shack at Newport on the Levee for the 18th Annual Special Olympics Polar Plunge event...you won't regret it or forget it!

Important: This year we need for you to identify your team as being part of Hamilton County. So when you sign up and create your team name use the format Teamname-SOHC. So for example if your team name is Whackadoodle, you would register it as Whackadoodle-SOHC.

To sign up, go to:

<http://www.specialolympics-hc.org/benefits-donations/polar-plunge/>

Click "Register Here" 2) click to Agree to the terms 3) Join a team 4) Choose "Special Olympics Hamilton County" 5) Create a username and password 6) Donate & 7) Share with all of your friends.

Don't like the thought of jumping in cold water in February? You can be a "Chicken" and still raise money for Special Olympics.

Spread the word to be "Freezin' for a Reason!"



Evening for Champions

Going for the Gold

Saturday, May 5, 2018

Schiff Conference and Banquet Center
Xavier University



Cincinnati Corporate Olympics

Wednesday, July 11, 2018

Fountain Square, Cincinnati

Noon to 1:30



The Piggest Raffle Ever!

For just \$5 you can help Special Olympics Hamilton County and be entered to win a \$10,000 cash (\$5,000 to winning ticket holder and \$5,000 to the charity who sold the ticket)

*All \$5 will be donated to
Special Olympics Hamilton County!*

You can purchase a ticket by visiting <http://www.piggestaffle.com/> and selecting

Special Olympics Hamilton County.

If you are participating in any of the Flying Pigs events, you can also raise money online for SOHC! Just go to: getmeregistered.com/FPMDonations And get started!



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