

HAMILTON COUNTY

**Special  
Olympics**  
Ohio



# Special Olympics Hamilton County TORCHBEARER

FALL 2016 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.

## Get Fit For Sport!

*By: Lindsay Bartsch*

Approximately 1-3% of the global population has an intellectual disability; 4.7 million participate in Special Olympics. Of this 4.7 million athletes, approximately 89% of athletes are overweight or obese.

Health is not just a concern by Special Olympics but an epidemic across the globe. Special Olympics is addressing this issue within our athlete population by creating a global movement to promote the Healthy Athlete. Our athletes are training to become the best competitor that they can be. We support this effort in turn by engaging and giving our athletes the tools to become their healthiest self.



Special Olympics Hamilton County (SOHC), in partner with LADD, Inc., has become active in this endeavor by re-implementing our Get Fit for Sport program. The trial program, which began this September, consisted of an 8-week, book-end, style program where the athletes participated in discussions and workouts each week. The topics of discussion ranged from basic healthy habits, heart rate & blood pressure, hydration, fitness basics, nutrition, and mental wellness. Our workouts consisted of circuit training, walking, yoga, strength, and flexibility. Each week at the beginning of class the athletes would weigh in; on weeks 1, and 7 the athletes had their blood pressure checked. The athletes also had their measurements taken during week 2.



As we wrapped up our final week on November 3rd, we checked in on the athlete's progress with weight, measurements, and blood pressure. Awards were presented and one final review of the topics let us engage the athletes in these important conversations once more.

The future of the Healthy Athlete is up and coming, but rest assured will be a part of the world wide Special Olympics movement and mission. SOHC plans to grow these programs in many communities around Hamilton County to engage all of our athletes to show them that their health is their greatest wealth.

# Letter From the SOHC Advisory Committee President

Dear Friends,

Did you know that Special Olympics Hamilton County (SOHC) is not subsidized by Special Olympics Inc. or affiliated with United Way? That means we are totally dependent on donations, personal contributions and corporate sponsorship from the local community to serve the over 1,800 local children and adults with intellectual disabilities in Hamilton County.

Special Olympics is THE reason many individuals with special needs have friends, social activities, and team membership. Their ability to participate with peers in social activities and sports become limited as other kids' skills advance at a greater pace. Special Olympics sponsored events and programs have enabled our athletes to develop confidence, competence, and pride in their accomplishments.

I am writing this letter to you today because the demand for our programs continues to grow, and we need increased funding to successfully support our athletes. The 20+ programs we offer are free of charge to all participants and are only made possible through the generosity of those in the local community. **There is no other funding source.**

While we're extremely proud of our efforts and successes over the past several years, we have critical needs in 3 areas:

Young Athletes Program - designed to get our young athletes moving and socializing

Healthy Athletes Program - helping school age athletes transition to adulthood - learning how to stay active, eat healthy and socialize

Program Expansion - growing current programs (many of which are at capacity), and adding new sports like cycling and flag football

In order to meet these changing demands, SOHC needs to raise an additional \$30,000 this year. With your donation we can meet the needs of our Special Olympians. Please say YES to your local Special Olympians and consider making a gift today. Any gift, no matter the size, will make a difference in the lives of many.

***Thank you for being a Champion!***

**Anne C. Knodle**

Special Olympics Hamilton County  
Advisory Committee President & Parent



*“Our goal is for all persons with intellectual disabilities to have the opportunity to become useful and productive citizens who are accepted and respected in their communities.”*

# Volunteer Spotlight: Carrie Strawser

By: Angela Holman

Five years ago Carrie retired from teaching in South Eastern Ohio, and moved to Cincinnati. With the extra time on her hands she wanted to find something to occupy her time and give back to her new community. After hearing about Special Olympics Hamilton County's success at the State Summer Games on the local news, she headed into the SOHC office with a completed volunteer interest form!

Her first SOHC volunteer experience was as a volleyball coach. She has since volunteered with the Young Athletes Program and is currently a swim coach and a unified bowling partner. Carrie says working with the athletes is the best part of being a volunteer with the SOHC, "Being able to see athletes progress, and seeing their face when they've realized their success is what makes it all worth it!"

Carrie has been to the State and National Special Olympics games on multiple accounts as a coach, a unified partner, and a chaperone. Last year at the National Bowling Tournament she and her partner Jill won second place! Volunteering with the SOHC has given Carrie purpose, and she says, "There is nothing better than helping an SOHC athlete set and accomplish their goals."

Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for Special Olympics Hamilton County Carrie! We are so grateful to call you a friend in the local community!

If you are interested in volunteering please reach out to Assistant Program Director, Lindsay:

[lindsaybartsch@specialolympics-hc.org](mailto:lindsaybartsch@specialolympics-hc.org)



# Welcome to the Advisory Committee!

By: Jim O'Connell

**At the recent SOHC Committee Retreat, it was recommended that we increase its membership. The SOHC by-laws allow up to 21 persons to be members of the Committee of Trustees. While the Committee has never been at maximum size, it was felt that 12 members were not enough to carry out the new growth plan that the Committee decided to adopt for 2017. This story will introduce 3 new members that have joined in 2016:**

Alyson Lee	Carolyn Ross	Deb Schubert
<p>Alyson works for News – America, Inc. in their marketing services arm. Her reason for wanting to join the SOHC Advisory Committee is that she wants to give back in a tangible way, particularly with our population. She has 2 young girls of her own and feels that now is the time to participate. Her question to herself was, "If not now, when?"</p> <p>While Alyson was sought for her marketing savvy, she's found her real love is working on fund raising, and she has already raised money on her own for the SOHC!</p>	<p>Carolyn is a mother of an SOHC athlete, and has been a contributing member to the SOHC for over ten years. She helped found the nonprofit Beau Vita a nonprofit providing day programs to individuals with intellectual disabilities.</p> <p>As someone who has experience reaching out to sponsors, and building fundraisers from scratch, we are excited to have Carolyn on board as a contributing committee member!</p>	<p>Deb works at P&amp;G, in Marketing and External Relations. Her interest in SOHC comes from having worked on the P&amp;G/Special Olympics program for nearly 20 years of her career. As a mother of an adult son with Asperger's syndrome, Deb knows first-hand the challenges of raising a special child.</p> <p>Deb wanted to get involved with something that was "not about me". Deb's natural enthusiasm will be appreciated and in her role helping to stage SOHC various events!</p>

# David Tripathy –SOHC’s Michael Phelps

By: Mollie Wheeler

Coming off of the heels of the Rio Olympic Games and Michael Phelps’ retirement from swimming, it’s fitting that in this Athlete Spotlight, we feature swimmer David Tripathy. In fact, you could say that David is SOHC’s very own Michael Phelps.



David has always loved the water, but until he took swim lessons at the age of 12, he was limited to doggy paddle. However, once he learned how to swim, he joined the Special Olympics program, and that’s when “he found something he could excel in”, according to his coach, Anne Knodle. He joined the Blue Ash team in 2009 and hasn’t looked back since. “He got a lot of encouragement and just flourished in the water,” said his mother, Dede Rowe.

David is a very competitive person and he poured his heart and soul into swimming. He practiced extremely hard and watched the other swimmers, learning from them and following their stroke. At practice, Coaches Anne Knodle and Carrie Strawser have the athletes swim a series of 25s of backstroke. After that series, they can choose to swim their favorite stroke. “This allows the swimmers to try every stroke”, said Knodle. And David did just that! While he can swim all of the strokes quite well, David’s favorite is butterfly.

David initially picked up Fly by watching the other athletes. However, once he started watching YouTube videos of Michael Phelps, the incredible swimmer we know today was born. Coach Knodle recalls one meet in particular when David swam a 50 Fly. A high school swimmer and his coach were timing David’s race. When David finished the race, they both looked at their watches in amazement and the coach told his swimmer, ‘he just beat your 50 Fly time’. “When David swims it is a thing of beauty”, says Knodle. “Like Michael Phelps, David is built to swim – tall, long arms and legs and broad shoulders – and he has the drive to excel.” While the gold medals David has won at both the Hamilton County and Ohio meets are his prized possessions, his goal is to go to the U.S.A Special Olympics Games and then on to the S.O. World games.



David’s success isn’t just limited to the pool, however. As a high school senior in 2015, David won the OHSAA Courageous Student Award. The award is presented to a student who has overcome great adversity in a positive way, and has displayed tremendous courage, leadership and sportsmanship. “That was a huge honor”, said David.

When he’s not in the water or working as a Courtesy Clerk at Kroger, David can typically be found with people. David moved to his own apartment at LADD’s Victory Parkway campus in mid-August, and he hosts other LADD residents to a Sunday football watching party each week. He also enjoys going to movies with friends.

If you would like to catch David Tripathy and the rest of the SOHC swim team in action, join us at the State Aquatics meet December 3-4 at Ohio State University, or check out the SOHC website for the Spring swim meet at Princeton H.S. on April 29th.

## DONATE

Special Olympics Hamilton  
County’s Giving Tuesday!

Now through November  
29th you can make an  
online donation by going  
to the SOHC website and  
clicking on the Giving  
Tuesday icon at the  
bottom of the homepage!  
[specialolympics-hc.org](http://specialolympics-hc.org)



# SOHC Community Partners:

By: Angela Holman

There are many ways to get involved with Special Olympics Hamilton County. Whether it is long term as a coach, volunteering at a one-day event, making a donation or simply being a fan and cheering on local athletes with intellectual disabilities. A couple of our Corporate Partners went above and beyond and created their own event to give back to the SOHC!

## 84.51

Last year 84.51° employees nominated SOHC to be one of the eight charities supported through 84.51's Degrees of Giving Program. The biggest draw 84.51° saw in working with SOHC was the ability to work side by side with the great athletes we support. When employees get to spend time with athletes, they really start to understand that the athletes disabilities don't mean they are limited, but rather they strive differently, they learn to adapt, and more of the time they prove they are better athletes than us!

Every 10 weeks the Engineering team at 84.51° dedicates a half day to give back to the community. They partnered with Degrees of Giving to plan the SOHC Fun Day. The SOHC Fun Day was held at Saint Ursula Academy, and brought together local students with special needs to play in fun activities all afternoon.

Caroline Keating (84.51°) said, "You really cannot appreciate and understand the athletes of SOHC until you work with them. They are just like us, and are more willing to adapt than we are. The athletes have a real appreciation for fun and play. The day really let us take a step back and enjoy laughter, play and have fun – which is something SOHC offers to athletes on a daily basis."

Another great part of Fun Day was how much fun everyone had. Numerous teachers, students from Saint Ursula, and 84.51° employees said they had a great time. We are so thankful for to call 84.51° a Corporate Partner, and look forward to many more Fun Days to come!



## Pep Promotions

Every year Pep Promotions hosts a Supplier Summit with their core suppliers to give a business update, present awards, and the following day has always been a golf outing. Pep hosted its first annual golf outing in 2010 and over the course of six years they have been able to donate \$640,000 to organizations in the community. In 2016 Pep Promotions was able to donate \$140,000 to local nonprofits. This year Special Olympics Hamilton County was selected as a benefiting charity, and we could not be more grateful.

The goal in the 2016 Golf Outing was to find organizations that Pep could grow a partnership with outside of just the golf outing. SOHC gave Pep Promotions that opportunity to volunteer at several events throughout the year.

Derek Kroeger (Pep Promotions) said, "Without a doubt my favorite part (of the Golf Outing) is the check presentation at dinner. To be able to present these amazing organizations with a check that can make a difference in someone's life is such a rewarding experience. It really brings all the hard work that the committee has done the past several months to life."

Thank you Pep Promotions for being a truly amazing Corporate Partner, we are excited to continue to grow our partnership!



# SOHC College Olympics

By: Katie Arce

On October 26, 2016 at 6pm, over 170 people gathered in Tangeman University Center at the University of Cincinnati for a truly remarkable evening. 22 teams made up of 5 students (per team), 32 Special Olympics athletes and 32 volunteers came together to celebrate the Second Annual College Olympics.



The College Olympics is a fun way to raise money and support Special Olympics athletes in the Cincinnati Community! Organizations and students from the University of Cincinnati created a team and competed in fun, whacky games on campus. Not only did teams get to meet some of our Special Olympians, but they also had the opportunity to create relationships and new friendships as they competed together!



*“Let me win. But if I cannot win. Let me be brave in the attempt.”*



This event is 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 we were able to raise over \$1,200 that will directly benefit SOHC athletes as they continue to go for the gold! The University of Cincinnati athletic program prides itself in being “One-Team” and this event creates the opportunity for Special Olympics Hamilton County to be included in that One-Team mind set.



The Second Annual College Olympics was truly a great success and we cannot wait to see it grow within the next few years. Thank you so much to the event sponsors and volunteers from The Student Athlete Advisory Committee, Sigma Alpha Epsilon and Alpha Phi Omega! We appreciate your partnership and look forward to continuing to expand the College Olympics for years to come!

# Upcoming Fundraisers



## SOHC Golf Outing

September date TBD  
 TPC River's Bend, Maineville  
 1:00 p.m. - Shot-gun start



**Champions Ball**  
*Winning with Special Olympics*  
 Saturday, April 2017  
 Location TBD

## Cincinnati Corporate Olympics

Wednesday, July 12, 2017  
 Fountain Square, Cincinnati  
 Noon to 1:30



## Polar Plunge of Greater Cincinnati

On February 4, 2017, you can Jump into the Fun at Joe's Crab Shack at Newport on the Levee for the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Special Olympics Polar Plunge event...you won't regret it or forget it!

SOHC will have a team called the "SOHC Freezecats". Come join our team for lots of fun!

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. Join us chickens as we cheer on our fellow Freezecats!

If the Special Olympics Hamilton County team raises \$6,000, Janet Smith and some other people will dress up like chickens in support of all the jumpers and do the chicken dance. So Spread the word to be "Freezin for a Reason!"



Freezin' For A Reason

## 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.**



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