

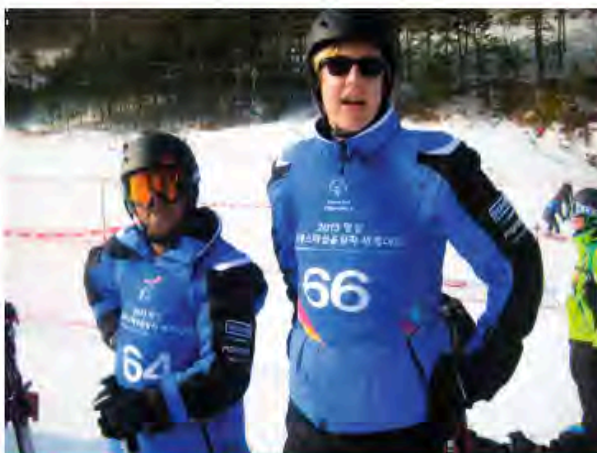
Special Olympics International

In the late 1950s and early '60s, when Eunice Shriver Kennedy travelled through the United States to visit several institutions for people with intellectual disabilities. The conditions during those days were terrible. There was no special education, no physical activity and certainly no opportunity to play sports. During her visits she left an indelible mark for life and she knew that she had found an area of enormous need where she could focus her life's work and energy.

In 1958, she received phone calls from two separate parents who told her that they could not get their children into summer camps. The children had intellectual disabilities and were not welcome. Spurred by those calls, she started a camp – Camp Shriver in her own yard, for 75 children. Her children were involved in helping with the activities and recruiting volunteers. Soon, there were five more camps around the country and, by 1968, 40 camps nationwide. They began recruiting professional athletes and physical educators to raise the quality of programs, and established coaching standards.

These camps helped form the nucleus that led to Special Olympics. In 1968, the first Special Olympics Games were held at the Soldier Field in Chicago. Mayor Daley, was leaning over to her after she declared the Games open, and whispering in my ear, "Eunice, the world will never be the same." He was right.

Almost fifty years later, a large part of the world sees people with intellectual disabilities as people who can learn, perform, contribute and change our lives for the better. Special Olympics have played a strong role in leading that change, and we will continue to play a leadership role in opening the eyes and hearts of the rest of the world.



The Special Olympics Cyprus was established in 1986, and is a member of the Special Olympics International and the Cyprus Olympic Committee. It is recognized by the Cyprus Olympic Committee, as a sports organization for people with Intellectual Disability. It is a non-profit organization and carries out its activities with the voluntary contribution of its members.

The costs for the organization and participation of athletes in various activities both in Cyprus and abroad are covered by funding from the Cyprus Sports Organization, the Cyprus Olympic Committee, the Charitable Association of Cyprus Police Torch Run and private companies and organizations.

Special Olympics Cyprus Federation

Today, Special Olympics Cyprus is extended at a National Level. Over 600 athletes with intellectual disabilities and severe learning disabilities train in athletics, swimming, cycling, football, Basketball, artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, bowling, floor hockey, skiing and events for severe intellectual disable i.e., Motor Activity Training Program. Recently, Special Olympics Cyprus focused in the development of the Unified Sports.

Important reference should also be made to other programs such as Young Athletes Program, which refers to children between the ages of 02-07, the Healthy Athlete Program, Athlete Leadership Program (ALP'S), but also the occupational rehabilitation program.

Special Olympics Cyprus, thanks to the tireless efforts of the volunteers, the annual funding from the Cyprus Sports Organization and the continued support of sponsors, manages to achieve significant changes in the society, increase awareness and create conditions for equal opportunities for people with Intellectual Disabilities. In the year of 2015 Special Olympics Cyprus Association became a Federation.





Nowadays, Special Olympics is well known World Organization with 2,500,000 registered athletes.

Special Olympics transform lives through the joy of sport, every day, everywhere. We are the world's largest sports organization for people with intellectual disabilities: with more than 4.5 million athletes in 170 countries – and millions more volunteers and supporters. We are also a global social movement.



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