



2024

Annual Report

**Special
Olympics**
Alberta





Mission

Our mission 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.



Vision

Our vision is an inclusive world for all, driven by the power of sport, through which people with intellectual disabilities live active, healthy, and fulfilling lives.



Values

The SOA team EXCELS together, and our actions reflect our values.

- E- empowerment**
- X- excellence**
- C- respect**
- E- diversity**
- L- Inclusion**

Message from our Leadership



We are delighted to present the Special Olympics Alberta Annual Report for 2023/2024, a year that has been defined by exceptional performances, growing opportunities, and unwavering community support.

One of the highlights of this year was Team Alberta's incredible participation at the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games in Calgary. Our athletes demonstrated unparalleled skill, determination, and camaraderie, proudly representing our province and embodying the true spirit of Special Olympics. Their success on and off the field of play continues to inspire us all, showcasing the power of sport to unite and empower individuals of all abilities.

This spring, we were equally thrilled to see over 1,000 athletes competing in 15 qualifying events hosted by our incredible affiliates across 10 sports. These events provided meaningful competition for athletes from all over the province and set the stage for those advancing to the 2025 Special Olympics Alberta Summer Games in Grande Prairie. We are immensely grateful to our Affiliates who worked tirelessly to make these opportunities possible.

As part of our effort to enhance the athlete and volunteer experience, we conducted a series of surveys this year, with over 800 athletes and

volunteers providing valuable feedback. We're proud to report 91% of our athletes said that they would recommend Special Olympics Alberta as a great place to be. And we're equally proud to report that 91% of our volunteers said they would recommend volunteering with Special Olympics Alberta to others. These results are a reflection of all our leaders – from programs, communities, and the province – who work hard to create a positive, empowering, and inclusive environment for everyone involved.

We want to extend our deepest appreciation to our volunteers who are the backbone of Special Olympics Alberta. From coaching and organizing programs to fundraising and supporting our athletes on every step of their athletic journey, your dedication ensures that our programs thrive. You are the heart of our movement, and because of you, we are proudly entering our 45th year of operations. Together, we continue to create a world where every individual, regardless of ability, is given the chance to shine.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to Special Olympics Alberta. We look forward to the next year of growth, achievement, and celebration.



Deb MacPherson

Chair, Board of Directors
Special Olympics Alberta



Sue Gilchrist

Chief Executive Officer
Special Olympics Alberta



Laura LaPeare

Athlete Representative
Special Olympics Alberta

[Click here for information on our Board of Directors](#)

Affiliates and Programs



2,906

NUMBER OF ATHLETES

1,235

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Affiliates

- Airdrie & District
- Bow Valley
- Brooks
- Calgary
- Camrose
- Drumheller
- Edmonton
- Foothills
- Grande Prairie
- Lacombe
- Lakeland
- Leduc
- Lethbridge
- Lloydminster
- Medicine Hat
- Olds & District
- Red Deer
- Spruce Grove & District
- St. Albert
- St. Paul
- Stettler
- Strathcona County
- Vegreville
- Wetaskiwin
- Wood Buffalo

Sports and Programs

Summer Sports

- 10-Pin Bowling
- Athletics
- Basketball
- Bocce
- Golf
- Outdoor Soccer
- Powerlifting
- Rhythmic Gymnastics
- Softball
- Swimming

Winter Sports

- 5-Pin Bowling
- Alpine Skiing
- Cross Country Skiing
- Curling
- Figure Skating
- Floor Hockey
- Speed Skating
- Snowshoeing





Special Olympics Canada National Winter Games

78

NUMBER OF MEDALS WON BY TEAM ALBERTA AT NATIONAL GAMES

95

NUMBER OF ATHLETES WHO ATTENDED GAMES

43

NUMBER OF COACHES/ MISSION STAFF AT GAMES

The Special Olympics Canada National Winter Games took place in Calgary, Alberta, from February 27th to March 2nd, 2024. Team Alberta showcased their incredible talent and determination, competing in every sport and earning an impressive 78 medals. The event not only celebrated the athletes' achievements but also fostered a spirit of inclusion and community. Looking ahead, the next National Games will be the Special Olympics National Summer Games, set to be hosted in Medicine Hat, Alberta, in the summer of 2026.



[Click here for more information on the 2024 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games](#)



Athlete Excellence

Meet Damion Chido, one of Special Olympics Alberta's talented athletes. Damion has been training and competing with Special Olympics for the past eight years and he believes that being part of this organization has not only helped him become a better athlete but has given him the confidence to be more independent and disciplined in pursuing his goals.

Over the past year, Damion has achieved significant milestones, including serving as an athlete ambassador at the 2024 National Winter Games in Calgary. He also hosts and produces his own podcast, "Accessible Athletics," which raises awareness and spreads information about accessibility in sports.

As a Games Ambassador, Damion represented Alberta on a national level through Global News Interviews and on location interactions at the games sporting events. This role allowed him to connect with fellow Special Olympics athletes and others

who contribute to the organization. "It was an honor to be a part of the games and share what it means to be a Special Olympics athlete with the greater Calgary community," shared Damion.

Athlete health and wellness is an area of passion for Damion, and his involvement with Special Olympics Alberta is what inspired him to launch his own podcast, "Accessible Athletics." This podcast is a great platform for Damion to share his experiences with sport, promote inclusion in athletics, and provide valuable information about how to stay healthy as an athlete with an intellectual disability.

When asked what message he wants to share with others about inclusive sport, Damion said: "To my fellow athletes, I would say that it does not matter what disability you have, just go out there and be you. Compete to the best of your ability and go have fun!"

"It was an honor to be a part of the games and share what it means to be a Special Olympics athlete with the greater Calgary community"

– Damion Chido

[Click here to listen to Damion's podcast](#)



Volunteer Impact

This past season, Blain Fuller completed his 35th year volunteering with Special Olympics Alberta. Over the years with SOA, he has coached Floor Hockey, Bocce, Bowling, and Swimming in the Wetaskiwin community.

This year, Blain accepted the position of Team Alberta Floor Hockey coach and attended the 2024 National Winter Games in Calgary with his team. Coach Blain shared, “The most enjoyable part of coaching at the games was the relationships we built – from my team and their families to the staff and volunteers at the events.” Experiencing the games as a coach allowed him to bond with his athletes and engage in competitive sport on a national level. “For sure the athletes had an incredible experience. Calgary put on a show that was incredible.”

Coaching has always been a passion for Blain Fuller. He began coaching with community sports clubs before getting involved with Special Olympics Alberta, which has deepened his appreciation for inclusion in sports. His favorite part of coaching athletes with intellectual disabilities is witnessing them achieve their personal goals and forming lasting connections.

The message Coach Blain would like to share about Special Olympics Alberta is: “There are so many opportunities in Special Olympics to grow and develop for everybody – athletes, coaches, leaders, management, team building. The list could go on. Come check it out, and you will see what Special Olympics can do for you.”

“The most enjoyable part of coaching at the games was the relationships we built – from my team and their families to the staff and volunteers at the events.”

– Blain Fuller

[Click here for more information on our volunteer milestones](#)



LETR®

The Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR®) is the largest grassroots fundraiser and public awareness movement for Special Olympics globally. This year, the Alberta LETR® continued its outstanding support, organizing numerous fundraising events across the province. A key highlight was the National Final Leg for the 2024 Special Olympics Canadian Winter Games. From February 23–27, the Flame of Hope was carried in 14 Torch Runs through cities and towns across Alberta, by a team of law enforcement officers from 10 provinces and one territory, led by Special Olympics Athlete David Hall.

The Final Leg Torch Running Team also took part in four Polar Plunges over three days, championing the #InclusionRevolution and generating excitement for the Games. Their journey, captured in an inspiring video, culminated at the 2024 Opening Ceremonies, where the Flame of Hope arrived in true Alberta fashion, escorted by officers and horses from the Calgary Police Service Mounted Unit.

We extend our deepest thanks to the Alberta LETR® for making this year unforgettable and for their continued commitment to supporting our athletes and sports programs across the province.

17

TOTAL NUMBER OF 2024 LETR® EVENTS

\$277,001

LETR® FUNDS RAISED



[Click here for more information on LETR®](#)

2024 Awards



Every year, the athletes, coaches, and volunteers of Special Olympics Alberta put in tremendous effort and dedication. To honor their commitment to our organization, we proudly present annual awards. As we celebrate this year's achievements, we encourage everyone to keep an eye out for potential nominees for next year's awards. Here are the award recipients for the 2024 Annual Awards:



Jenny Murray
Athlete of the Year



David Nicholson
Athlete of the Year



Jake Weismantel
Athlete Community
Excellence



Damion Chiodo
Athlete Community
Excellence



Jori Hansen-Young
Rising Star Coach
of the Year



Jalesa LeBel
Coach of the Year



Teena Wilks
Coach of the Year



Lynda Jesse
Fundraising Volunteer
of the Year



Shawn Jesse
Volunteer of the Year



Calgary Comets
Team of the Year



Neil Ivan
Athlete Lifetime
Achievement Award



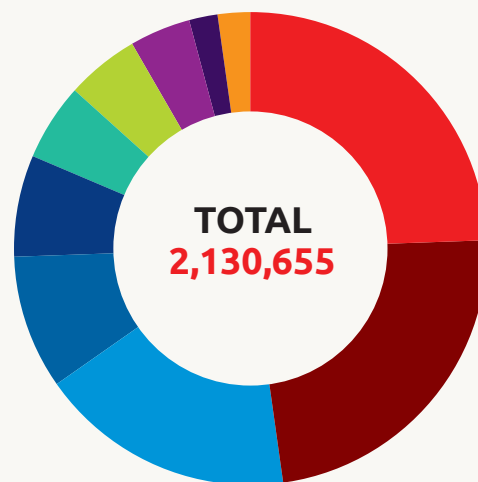
Lynn Price
Volunteer Lifetime
Achievement Award



Financials

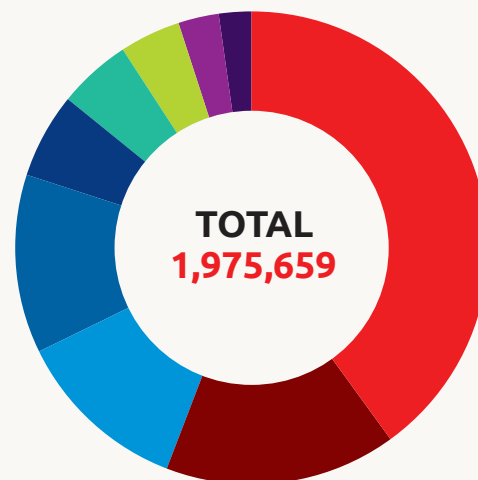
Revenue

- 458,565 National Sponsors
- 434,769 Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission
- 256,747 Events
- 236,749 Foundations
- 214,097 Government Funding – Provincial
- 190,529 General Donations
- 172,888 Interest
- 133,121 Government Funding – Federal
- 33,190 Other Income



Expenses

- 791,547 Affiliate Services
- 318,027 Sports Programs
- 243,254 Team Alberta
- 235,757 Fund Development
- 112,688 Unified Programs
- 93,502 LETR
- 76,324 Communications
- 62,187 Alberta Gaming, Liquor & Cannabis Commission
- 42,373 Administration



Sponsors and Donors



Corporate

Gold

Gregg Properties Ltd. (Gregg Distributors)
Silvertip Golf Resort
The Matt & Betty-Jean Baldwin Foundation
Volvo of Edmonton

Silver

Gateway Toyota
Muttart Foundation
ScotiaMcLeod Charitable Foundation (Terry Jantz)
Tacada
The Allan & Sally Sawin Foundation

Bronze

Belay Advisory
Brownlee LLP
BTG Ventures Ltd
(Mia Gunter Memorial Cup)
Calgary Sport & Social Club
Canadian Urban Ltd.
Carmacks Enterprises Ltd.
Cast Supply Inc
CCI Mechanical LTD.
CIBC Wood Gundy
(Ayden Harty Group)

Crosstown Autobody
Dairy Drive-Inn Limited (Doug Rae)
Doug's Place Strathcona
Edmonton Exchanger
Edmonton Sport & Social Club
ENX Inc
Gregor, Jason / Just a Game
Productions
Leading Edge Physiotherapy
LGM Financial Services Inc
Milk Jar Candle Co.

River Cree Resort & Casino
Royal Mayfair Golf Club
Suggitt Publishers
Trojan Industries Inc.
United Rentals of Canada Inc.
Universal Dental Labs
Wayne Gretzky Foundation (Canada)
Westlock Powersports & Marine
Witten LLP

Friends & Family

Gold

Dan & Nicole Basso
Estate of Linda
Marie Audette
Estate of Malcom
Arnold Booth

Inga Ehlert
James Struthers
John Pinsent
Mike Duff

Norma Gordon
Robert Campbell

Silver

Benjamin Spademan
Bonnie Chetner
Corrie Redl
Darren Milne
Teresa Blimkie

Bronze

Alan Murphy
Bonnie Chetner
Brent Nolesky
Daniel Yeung
David Moore
Don Kwas
Don MacDiarmid
Dustin Lamontagne

Eileen Kraft
Heather Mackay
James Hall
Jason Chimera
Justin Ball
Kam Dhanoya
Kendra Shorter
Lisa Poole

Lisa Sadd
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