
2025

ANNUAL REPORT



***Special
Olympics
Alberta***



OUR 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



OUR 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.

OUR VALUES

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

Empower
EXcellence
RespeCt
DivErsity
IncLusion

MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

This year has been one of tremendous growth and inspiration for Special Olympics Alberta.

We came together in Grande Prairie for the Provincial Summer Games, where the city welcomed hundreds of athletes, coaches, and families. The energy across every venue was unforgettable - a celebration of skill, determination, and friendship, highlighting the powerful role sport plays in building inclusive communities.

We made an important step in Truth and Reconciliation by hiring our first Indigenous Engagement Coordinator with funding from the Government of Alberta. This role is already helping us strengthen relationships, create opportunities, and ensure Indigenous athletes and communities feel welcomed and supported.

We grew our athlete numbers, driven by innovative partnerships and the impact of Unified Sport in schools. More young people are learning the value of inclusion through shared experiences, and more families are discovering the friendships Special Olympics brings.

Each new athlete reminds us our work is meaningful and expanding.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated volunteers. From coaches and officials to organizers and fundraisers, their passion ensures every athlete can succeed and shine.

We give thanks to our staff whose professionalism, creativity, and tireless effort make success possible. They embrace challenges, innovation, and keep our mission front and center.

At the heart of it all are our athletes, who inspire us daily with their courage, determination, and joy. They embody the Athlete Oath: "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." These words remind us that bravery, effort, and heart matter most.

Together, with athletes leading, volunteers giving generously, staff working passionately, and partners supporting us, we are building a stronger and more inclusive Alberta.



Caroline Barham
Chair, Board of
Directors



Sue Gilchrist
Chief Executive
Officer



Laura LaPeare
Athlete
Representative

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[BOARD OF DIRECTORS](#)

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ALBERTA PROGRAMS

Special Olympics Alberta offers programs to individuals with intellectual disabilities through three major streams; Community Sport Programming, Partnership Programs, and Unified Sports.

Our collective impact reflects the strength and inclusivity of our entire community. By looking at all streams together, we gain a fuller picture of how many athletes, programs, and partners are connected through our shared mission—and how far our reach truly extends.

3,885

number of athletes
registered total

298

number of programs offered
total



AFFILIATES & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS



AFFILIATES & COMMUNITIES:

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

2,832

number of athletes
registered in community
programs

1,190

number of volunteers

SPORTS AND PROGRAMS:

WINTER SPORTS

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

SUMMER SPORTS

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

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Special Olympics Alberta's Partnership Programs connect with Provincial Sport Organizations, community groups, Indigenous communities, and recreation providers to expand inclusive sport opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. By offering resources, coach training, and support, the program helps partners deliver tailored, accessible programming – especially for children, youth, and athletes in underserved or remote regions.



PARTNERSHIPS:

COMMUNITIES WITH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

- Calgary
- Drumheller
- Edmonton
- Leduc
- Lethbridge
- Red Deer
- Spruce Grove
- St. Albert



PARTNERS

- VANTAGE
- DARTS
- Fliteway Figure Skating Club
- March of Dimes
- Edmonton Pickleball Club
- Leduc LINX Connect Centre
- YMCA of Lethbridge - Cor Van Raay YMCA
- New Age Services
- Parkland Fusion FC
- Red Deer Pickleball Club
- Sportball Edmonton
- St. Albert Pickleball Club
- YMCA of Northern Alberta
- Rhythmic Gymnastics Alberta
- Alberta Gymnastics Federation
- Skate AB NWT NU
- Kids Run Wild
- Ad Astra Athletic Academy
- Centennial Figure Skating Club
- Adaptabilities
- Pickleball Alberta

[Click Here To Learn More:](#)

[PARTNERSHIPS](#)

219

number of athletes
registered in partnership
programs

21

number of partnership
programs

UNIFIED SPORTS



Unified Sports is driven by the relationship between Special Olympics Alberta and School Sport Alberta. Over the past 10 years, we've made significant strides in creating opportunities for all students to participate in school sports like Bocce, Cornhole, Basketball, and Track, with inclusion and belonging leading the way. In the 2024/2025 school year, we hit a record 30 events with over 1600 students participating across the province. Looking ahead, we aim to support schools in starting Unified Sports earlier, offering new opportunities like floorball and providing equipment to schools with limited resources. We are also committed to hosting the Unified Sports Conference, with over 60 teachers and administrators attending—our biggest step yet in growing Unified.

834

number of athletes registered in Unified Sports programs and events

30

number of Unified Sports programs and events

78

number of schools that participated in Unified Sports programs and events

[Click Here To Learn More:](#)

[UNIFIED SPORTS](#)

2025 PROVINCIAL SUMMER GAMES



The 2025 Special Olympics Alberta Provincial Summer Games were proudly hosted by the City of Grande Prairie from July 11 to 13, bringing together athletes from across the province for a celebration of sport and inclusion. Over the course of three exciting days, athletes showcased their talents in ten summer sports, filling venues with energy, determination, and unforgettable moments.

From thrilling finishes to heartfelt displays of sportsmanship, the competition was nothing short of inspiring. Each event highlighted the dedication and resilience of the athletes, who gave their all in pursuit of personal bests and podium finishes. Some athletes were lucky enough to qualify for Team Alberta 2026 and will represent the province at the National Games in Medicine Hat next August. The 2025 Provincial Games left a lasting impact, highlighting the inclusive power of sport.

“The most wonderful part of these Games is seeing the joy of the athletes”

- provincial games spectator

695 number of athletes who attended Provincial Games

314 number of coaches and volunteers who attended Provincial Games

19 number of affiliate communities that attended Provincial Games

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[SOA PROVINCIAL GAMES](#)



SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD WINTER GAMES

The 2025 Special Olympics World Winter Games took place in Turin, Italy from March 8–15 this year, and Team Canada did an amazing job representing our country on the world stage. Alberta proudly sent 12 athletes to the games, who brought home 20 medals. The event featured competition in all of our official winter sports, and we are incredibly proud of everyone who contributed to making these games a success for Team Canada.



Brett Garth, an Alberta athlete, expressed his excitement about representing Team Canada at the 2025 World Winter Games, saying, "I am so happy to be with Team Canada. My family is so proud of me." He made an impressive impact at the Games, winning three bronze medals and showcasing his determination and talent on the international stage.

ALBERTA MEDAL COUNT

3

Gold Medals

5

Silver Medals

12

Bronze Medals

ATHLETE AMBASSADORS



Darby Taylor

Darby is a passionate Special Olympics Alberta athlete who found confidence and belonging through sport. Once struggling to keep up, he now competes nationally, builds lasting friendships, and inspires others with his story.



Damion Chiodo

Damion is a Special Olympics Alberta athlete who found confidence and friendship through sport. As a Health Messenger, he launched *Accessible Athletics*, a podcast encouraging athletes to stay active, and enjoy the journey.



Elisabeth Baril

Lizzy is a dedicated athlete from Red Deer who stays active through Special Olympics Alberta and values the strong sense of community it brings. She's passionate about highlighting the unique strengths of people with disabilities.



Madison Bailey-Borges

Madison is a Special Olympics Alberta athlete and Health Messenger who gained confidence, made friends, and inspires others to celebrate every athlete's unique abilities.

This year, Special Olympics Alberta hired four incredible athletes to serve as Ambassadors, and have spent the year sharing their inspiring stories and experiences with communities across the province. Through this role, our Ambassadors have connected with others, promoted inclusion, and raised awareness about the impact of Special Olympics. This is the pilot year of the program, with plans to continue and grow it in the years ahead.



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[ATHLETE AMBASSADORS](#)

VOLUNTEER IMPACT

Since joining Special Olympics Alberta as a volunteer in 2021, Makenna MacWhinnie has made a powerful impact through her passion for inclusion and her deep connection to the athletes she coaches. Inspired by her childhood friendships with two boys with autism, Makenna was drawn to Special Olympics as a way to give back –and she’s now being recognized in a big way.

Makenna was recently honoured with the Coach of the Year award at the Special Olympics Alberta Annual Awards, and she’s also been named the official Athletics Next Gen Coach for Team Alberta 2026. In this new role, she will help train and support athletes heading to the Special Olympics Canada Summer Games in Medicine Hat. For Makenna, it’s all about building trust and confidence: “We’re not just teaching sports—we’re helping athletes grow as people,” she says. Her dedication continues to shape the future of Special Olympics, one meaningful connection at a time.

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[BECOME A VOLUNTEER](#)



LETR

The Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR®) is the largest grassroots fundraiser and awareness movement for Special Olympics worldwide. In 2025, Alberta LETR® continued its strong support, hosting meaningful events across the province, including seven Polar Plunges that inspired communities to get #FreezinForARReason.

A highlight was the Final Leg Torch Run for the 2025 Special Olympics Provincial Summer Games. On July 11, led by the Grande Prairie District Conservation Horses, 14 Alberta LETR members and 11 Special Olympics Grande Prairie athletes proudly carried the Flame of Hope through the city streets, and culminating in the lighting of the cauldron—a moment celebrating courage, determination, and the spirit of inclusion.

We extend heartfelt thanks to all Alberta LETR members for their unwavering dedication to Special Olympics Alberta athletes, whose support is felt both on and off the field.



22

number of 2025 LETR events

\$357,913

LETR funds raised



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[ALBERTA LETR](#)

ANNUAL AWARDS

Each year, Special Olympics Alberta proudly presents its annual awards to celebrate members of the Special Olympics community who demonstrate exceptional dedication and embody the spirit of the organization.

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[ANNUAL AWARDS](#)



Madison Cyr
Athlete of the Year



Victor Siu
Athlete of the Year



Leonka Kaluha
Athlete Community
Excellence



**Jacob Forsyth &
Carter Lemiski**
Rising Star Coaches
of the Year



**Makenna
MacWhinnie**
Coach of the Year



**Mary-Ann
Stewart Lind**
Coach of the Year



Nicole Sather
Fundraising
Volunteer of the
Year



**Wilma
VandenDool**
Volunteer of the
Year



**Team Wetaskiwin
Floor Hockey**
Team of the Year



Sunny Deol
Golisano Health
Leadership Award



Michael Dougan
Athlete Lifetime
Achievement Award



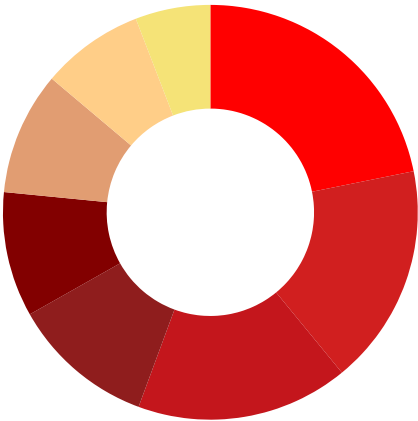
**Denis & Sandy
Boisselle**
Volunteer Lifetime
Achievement Awards

FINANCIALS

July 1st, 2024 - June 30th, 2025

REVENUE

- \$516,408** National Sponsors
- \$407,874** Alberta Gaming, Liquor & Cannabis
- \$391,791** Events & Fundraising
- \$264,682** Foundation Income
- \$230,537** Government Funding - Provincial
- \$226,864** Government Funding - Federal
- \$189,377** Interest & Investment
- \$138,451** General Donations



TOTAL: \$2,365,984

EXPENSES

- 
- \$1,119,247** Affiliate Services
 - \$341,174** Sport Programs
 - \$140,194** Provincial Games
 - \$130,202** Fund Development
 - \$126,197** Partnerships
 - \$106,409** Law Enforcement Torch Run
 - \$93,660** Unified Programs
 - \$75,925** Communications
 - \$34,108** Administration
 - \$23,470** Alberta Games, Liquor & Cannabis
 - \$21,073** Amortization of Capital Assets
 - \$20,510** Amortization of Intangible Assets

TOTAL: \$2,232,169

SPONSORS & DONORS

CORPORATE SPONSORS

GOLD

- Empire Company Limited
- Funding Innovation
- Gregg Distributors
- Rogers Charity Classic
- Silvertip Golf Resort
- Special Olympics Canada Foundation
- Tim Hortons
- Volvo Cars Edmonton

SILVER

- Blue Spruce Acorn Fund at Calgary Foundation
- Brookfield Properties
- Calgary Old Time Hockey Players Association
- Friends of Ken King
- Kiwanis Club Calgary
- Norma Gordon Investments
- QV Investors Inc
- Sentinel Storage
- Wayne Gretzky Foundation

BRONZE

- A Hans Professional Corporation
- Accurate Networks
- Arundel Capital
- Belay Advisory
- Big Al's Texturing Ltd
- Brownlee Law LLP
- Buchanan Barry LLP
- Canadian Urban Ltd.
- Crosstown Collision
- Dougs Place Strathcona
- Evans Trucking
- Grey Eagle Resort & Casino
- Inkless Engraving
- Leading Edge Physiotherapy
- Lethbridge Hurricanes Hockey Club
- Long View Systems
- Muttart Foundation
- Okotoks Curling
- Olympia Trust Company
- Onyx Realty
- Park Indigo
- Rebel Heart Trucking
- Reich Law
- Spolumbos Fine Foods & Deli
- Springs Servicing & Heating
- TC Energy
- The Muttart Foundation
- Tuxedo Source for Sports
- Universal Dental Laboratories
- Whitten LLP
- Wolfe Cadillac Calgary
- Wolseley
- Woodridge Ford Lincoln

FRIENDS & FAMILY

GOLD

- Armin & Ingrid Elhert
- Charlene & Bill Clarke
- Cody & Rhonda Snyder (Bullbustin)
- Dave Bumstead
- Don & Lynn Ross
- Garry & Veronica McCulloch
- John Pinsent
- M. Backlund
- Mike Duff
- Russell Family
- William Clark

BRONZE

- Alan Murphy
- Barbara Giba
- Barbara Stratton
- Benjamin Spademan
- Brent Molesky
- Darren Milne
- Deborah MacPherson
- Doris Bonora
- Gregory S Johnston
- Gurdeep Gill
- Hector Zhang
- Janice Moser
- Jennifer Mendieta
- John Slade
- Juan Liverant
- Kurt Pedersen
- Laurie Lemieux
- Mark Houston
- Michael Evan
- Michael Tabachniuk

SILVER

- Bonnie Chetner
- Cheryl Bernard
- Don MacDiarmid
- Doug Rae
- John & Barb Taylor
- Sheilagh Ross

- Mr. D. Mitchell Williams
- Philip Strong
- Ryan Shannon
- Sue Gilchrist
- Warren Greenbank

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Special Olympics Alberta



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2025