



# SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

**AUGUST 2022**

## HIGHLIGHTS

It is back to school month, which means it is back to sports month! The team at Special Olympics Missouri is excited to have school back in session so that our school based Unified teams can get back to competing! Now is the time to contact Area Directors to start a Unified team or set up your competition schedule for the coming year.

Getting started:

1. Contact your local area director and SOMO Unified Champion Schools.
2. Determine the sports you will implement this year:
  - a. Track & Field, Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Flag Football, Unified PE, Young Athletes Program, Motor Activities Training Program, Unified Fitness.
3. Identify a coach for your team and have them get certified before practices and competitions start. <https://somo.org/coach/>
4. Recruit Special Olympics Athletes.
5. Recruit Unified Partners.
6. Submit teammate forms to Area Director.
7. Secure a facility and set a team schedule.
8. Hold regular practices and competitions.

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"Intelligence plus character—that is the true goal of education."

— Martin Luther King

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## RESOURCES

<https://somo.org/ucs/>

Want to find more ways to engage your students with inclusion? Check out Unified Classroom for easy to implement lessons on identity, teamwork, empowerment, leadership, appreciation and so many more valuable topics! Lessons are differentiated for all abilities and grade levels and include objectives and standards.

[www.generationunified.org/unified-classroom](http://www.generationunified.org/unified-classroom)



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## **HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?**

SOMO is hosting events all around the state, and we are looking for volunteers! If you would like information on events you and your students can volunteer at check out [somo.org/volunteer/](https://somo.org/volunteer/).

Consider hosting an inclusion revolution. This one-day Unified event where students with and without intellectual disabilities play together breaks down barriers, educates students on the importance of inclusion, and provides a meaningful experience for all participants. We would love to support you as we work together towards building whole school engagement.

Young Athlete Programs (YAP's) are a great way to work with younger schools in your district. YAP is for those 2-7 with and without intellectual disabilities where we play games to work on motor and social skills, as well as introduce them to our sports that we offer year-round. We meet once a week and this can be done either during the school day, or after school. For more information or if you are interested please feel free to reach out to me, we are excited to help you get things started!

## **NATIONAL BANNER PROGRAM**

A Special Olympics Unified Champion School has an inclusive school climate and exudes a sense of collaboration, engagement and respect for all members of the student body and staff. A Unified Champion School receiving national banner recognition is one that has demonstrated commitment to inclusion by meeting 10 national standards of excellence. These standards were developed by a national panel of leaders from Special Olympics and the education community.

The primary activities within these standards include: [Special Olympics Unified Sports®](#) (where students with and without disabilities train and compete as teammates), Inclusive Youth Leadership and Whole-School Engagement. Banner Unified Champion Schools should also be able to demonstrate they are self-sustainable or have a plan in place to sustain these activities into the future.

## **SCHOOL VISITS**

Want practical ideas for becoming a more inclusive school? I am looking forward to traveling the state visiting different schools and learning about all of the great things you are doing to promote inclusion. My goal is to provide you more information on the three standards and what more you can do to be on pace to achieve national banner status. If you would like to meet, please reach out to me at [thomas@somo.org](mailto:thomas@somo.org).

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**St. Louis Metro Area** - contact Jocelyn Diehl ([diehl@somo.org](mailto:diehl@somo.org)) (314)-961-7755

August 20<sup>th</sup> St. Louis Metro Area Tennis Tournament

August 20<sup>th</sup> Francis Howell Local Softball Tournament

September 11<sup>th</sup> STLM Area Bocce Tournament

September 16<sup>th</sup> STLM Area Golf Tournament

September 17<sup>th</sup> STLM Area Flag Football Tournament

**Central Area** – contact Tim Schuster ([schuster@somo.org](mailto:schuster@somo.org)) (573)-635-1660

August 10<sup>th</sup> Central Area Tennis Tournament

August 11<sup>th</sup> Central Area Golf Tournament

August 27<sup>th</sup> Central Area Bocce Tournament

September 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Super Hero Bocce

Fundraiser, \$120 per team of 4, sign up by August 15<sup>th</sup>

September 30<sup>th</sup> Carrollton Local Track Meet+

**Kansas City Area** - contact Meg Ward ([ward@somo.org](mailto:ward@somo.org)) (816)-535-9610

August 13<sup>th</sup> KC/ North Area Bocce Tournament

August 20<sup>th</sup> Jimmie's Miles for Medals

September 1<sup>st</sup> KC/ North Area Tennis Tournament

September 16<sup>th</sup> Fall Golf Clinic

September 17<sup>th</sup> Dare to Dream Golf Tournament

Fundraiser, \$125 per golfer, sign up by August 30<sup>th</sup>

September 25<sup>th</sup> Dog Yoga Clinic

September 25<sup>th</sup> Young Athletes Program

**North Area** – contact Todd Stutzman ([stutzman@somo.org](mailto:stutzman@somo.org)) (816)-233-6232

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August 13<sup>th</sup> KC/ North Area Bocce Tournament

September 1<sup>st</sup> KC/ North Area Tennis Tournament

**Southeast Area** – contact Scott Williams ( [swilliams@somo.org](mailto:swilliams@somo.org)) (573)-339-6733

**Southwest Area** – contact Jana Fornelli ( [fornelli@somo.org](mailto:fornelli@somo.org)) (417)-624-5505

August 8<sup>th</sup> SW Area Golf

August 19<sup>th</sup> Night at the Ballpark at Hammons Field- Pre Game Athlete Parade

**Training for Life Campus** – contact Susan Shaffer ( [shaffer@somo.org](mailto:shaffer@somo.org)) (573)-635-1660

October 7<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> State Outdoor Games

Teams who have competed in an Area or Regional competition in bocce, golf, softball, or tennis can come compete in State Outdoor Games in Jefferson City.

October 8<sup>th</sup> Sports Zone and Strong Minds

Binder Sports Complex, 9am-2pm

Volunteer opportunity for students to host games and booths for athletes during downtime between competitions. Contact [thomas@somo.org](mailto:thomas@somo.org).

## **MESSAGE FROM ME**

With first-hand experience on all sides of Special Olympics Unified Schools, I am uniquely equipped to support you in starting or growing your Unified Champion Schools program. I grew up in Kansas City and attended Park Hill School District. In 2010, I moved to Oklahoma and attended Owasso High School and became a Unified partner for the district's Unified Bocce Team. The inclusive

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experiences I had led me to become a Special Educator and a Unified Club Co-Sponsor for the same school. As our coaches incorporated inclusive youth leadership opportunities within the club and facilitated student led whole school engagement, we became a National Banner Unified Champion School. I would love to meet you and support your next steps toward being a more inclusive school.



**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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Unified Champion Schools Manager

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