



Special Olympics
**Unified Champion
Schools®**

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MISSOURI UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2022

HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome back! Your school can be a Unified Champion School this year by implementing all three components of an inclusive school: Unified Sports, Inclusive Youth Leadership and Whole School Engagement.

Please help us celebrate and support your school by filling out our 10 question [back to school survey](#).

Share pictures and reports from your school's inclusive events this year by tagging Special Olympics Missouri on social media and sending an email to thomas@somo.org.

All schools are invited to compete in Special Olympics Unified eSports league or scrimmages this fall for free. Schools selecting Mario Kart 8 league will get two free copies of the game and will compete at 3 p.m. CST on Wednesdays with teams of two Special Olympics athletes and 2 Unified partners. Limited free Nintendo Switch bundles can be applied for. Schools selecting Rocket League can download the game for free on a PC or console and will choose if they want to compete at 3 p.m. CST or 5 p.m. CST on Thursdays with teams of two Special Olympics athletes and one Unified partner. Scrimmages are an option for teams who prefer flexible scheduling or extra practice. Sign up by Sept. 16:

<https://help.playvs.com/en/articles/6342191-national-unified-esports-league-for-high-schools-fall-22>



Special Olympics North America (SONA) Move Challenge is back and better than ever! The six-week fitness challenge will run Sept. 26 through Nov. 6 and allow athletes and Unified partners to track their minutes of physical activity for a coveted spot on the leaderboard. Participants may sign up as individuals (Special Olympics athletes only), doubles pairs (Unified or traditional), or teams (3-10 individuals, Unified or traditional).

Important dates:

Registration Closes: 9/21

SONA Move Challenge: 9/26 - 11/6

Contact Krista Evans our Health and Development manager at evans@somo.org to participate.

Changing the world is a team sport.



95% of liaisons reported **increased participation** of students with intellectual disabilities (ID) in school activities, leading to more **inclusive attitudes** school-wide



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NEW RESOURCES



Check out Special Olympics Missouri's Unified Champion Schools [Website](#) and [Toolkit](#) for practical next steps your school can take to implement the three components of a Unified Champion School.

[High 5 for Fitness](#) is a set of video and visual support resources for youth ages 8 – 21 to help students take control of their own fitness by making healthy choices. Fit kids feel good and have lots of energy because their bodies are strong and healthy. High 5 is designed to increase knowledge and awareness of healthy behaviors, and engage students in physical activities to improve flexibility, strength, and endurance. High 5 offers an inclusive approach to teaching students with and without intellectual disabilities that can be used within a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program. The High 5 resources are differentiated for ages 8-11, 12-14, and 15-21. Check out the link above for free resources and an educator's guide.

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/.

Consider hosting a Unified sports competition at your school for local, school-based Special Olympics Missouri Unified teams to join in. Contact SOMO to choose a sport, set a date, and get support with event supplies such as medals, bracketing, and banners. Popular sports for school-based Unified teams include bocce and flag football in the fall, bowling and basketball in the winter, athletics (track and field) and volleyball in the spring.

Young Athlete Program (YAP) is a great way for high school students to have a positive impact on younger students in your district. YAP is for children ages 2-7 with and without intellectual disabilities to learn motor skills, social skills and get exposure to sports. Connect with the SOMO team to receive training for executing a one day or series event with your students.

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 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 in person or via Zoom please reach out to me at thomas@somo.org.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Statewide

September 10th Virtual Rocket League Unified One Day Tournament

September 16th Registration Deadline for fall Unified Esports league for schools

September 21st Registration Deadline for SONA Move Challenge

September 26th Fall Esports League and Sona Move Challenge start

October 7th - 9th State Outdoor Games

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

St. Louis Metro Area - contact Jocelyn Diehl (diehl@somo.org) (314)-961-7755

September 11th STLM Area Bocce Tournament

September 16th STLM Area Golf Tournament

September 17th STLM Area Flag Football Tournament

October 17th Jefferson County Local Bowling Tournament 10am-12:30pm
School teams invited, lunch provided, register by September 28th

Central Area – contact Tim Schuster (schuster@somo.org) (573)-635-1660

September 18th Tennis Clinic at Capital City HS

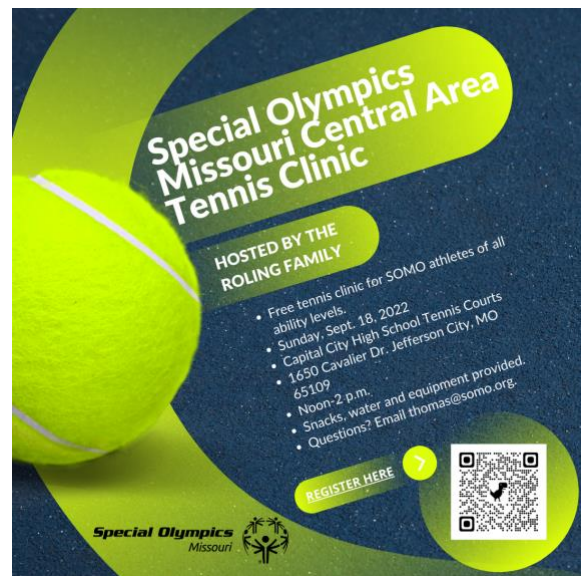
September 30th Carrollton Local Track Meet

October 8th 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. See flyer on last page.

October 12th Odessa Local Track Meet

October 15th Strikers for SOMO Fundraiser
\$120 per team of 4 Unified partners and 1 athlete

October 21st South Callaway Local Track Meet



Training for Life Campus, Jefferson City – contact Susan Shaffer (shaffer@somo.org) (573)-635-1660

October 8th Medfest at State Outdoor Games-opportunity for free athlete physicals, eye screenings AND FREE GLASSES, if needed.



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Kansas City Area - contact Meg Ward (ward@somo.org) (816)-535-9610

- September 1st KC/ North Area Tennis Tournament
- September 6th Belton Texas Roadhouse Fundraiser
- September 16th Golf Clinic
- September 17th Dare to Dream Golf Tournament
- September 21st 4-week Pickle Ball Clinic
- September 25th Dog Yoga Clinic
- September 25th Young Athletes Program
- October 11th All Abilities Fantasy Camp at Chiefs Kingdom
- October 13th Fall Party
- October 29th Picture Me Perfect Art Crawl
- November 5th KC Metro Area Bowling Tournament

North Area – contact Todd Stutzman (stutzman@somo.org) (816)-233-6232

- September 1st KC/ North Area Tennis Tournament
- November 5th Area Bowling Tournament Chillicothe
- November 12th Area Bowling Tournament St. Joseph

Southeast Area – contact Scott Williams (swilliams@somo.org) (573)-339-6733

- November 19th Area Bowling Tournament Cape Girardeau

Southwest Area – contact Jana Fornelli (fornelli@somo.org) (417)-624-5505

- September 14th Unified Intramural Flag Football at Missouri State University
- September 28th Unified Recreational Bocce at Ozark High School
- November 8th Area Bowling at Sunshine Lanes
- November 10th Area Bowling at Sunshine Lanes
- November 13th Area Bowling at Sunshine Lanes
- November 17th Area Bowling at 4th Street Bowl
- November 18th Area Bowling at 4th Street Bowl
- Flag Football Tournament at TLC campus for School based teams TBD



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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 experiences I had led me to become a Special Educator for four years 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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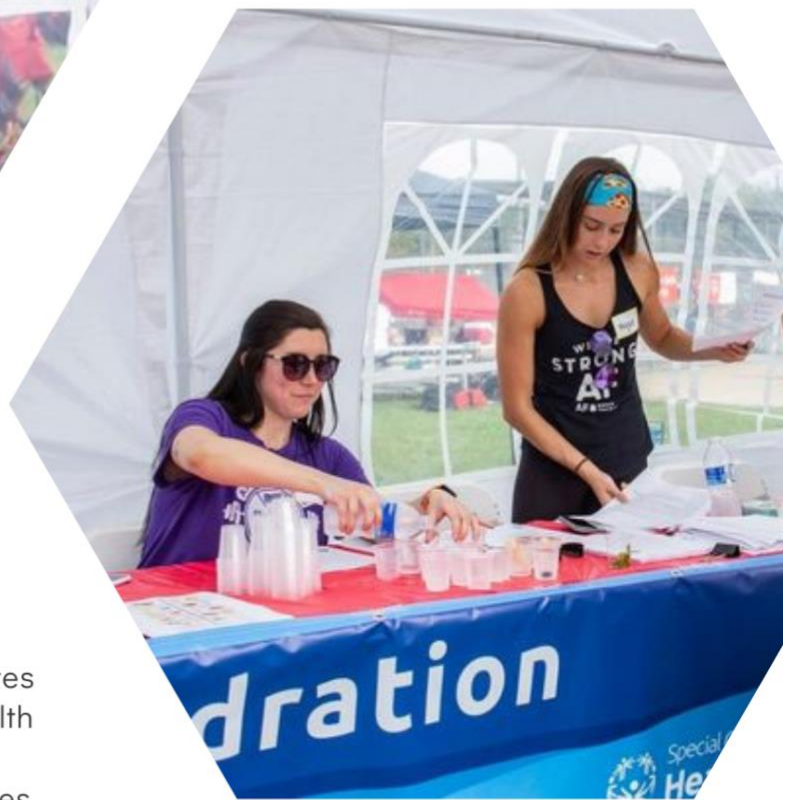


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Student Group Volunteer Opportunity



Sports Zone at State Outdoor Games

Sports Zone is an opportunity for athletes to participate in fitness education, health screenings and take breaks between competitions at the State Outdoor Games. Your student group could help by running a booth to engage with athletes, give encouragement and provide a fun experience. Students may run an existing booth or design their own activity.

Ideas: Inclusion Pledge, SMART Goals, temporary tattoos, carnival games, karaoke and water or snack distribution.

Saturday, October 8th
9am-2:30pm

Binder Sports Complex
Ball Fields
400 Binder Lake Rd
Jefferson City, MO 65109

Contact Emma Thomas
at SOMO to sign up.



thomas@somo.org



573-469-7832



www.somo.org