



Special Olympics
Saskatchewan

2025-2026 Annual Report

September 27, 2026



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At a Glance

2025-2026 Board of Directors

Laurie Carpenter, Chair

Rhonda Penno, Vice Chair

Corey Hadden

Carrie Hanwell

Robin McNeil

Tyler Kowalski

Carl Paulhus, Athlete Representative

Terry Shalley, Knights of Columbus Designate

Communities & Districts

Lakeland

Melfort, Nipawin, Prince
Albert

Northern Sport

La Ronge & Districts

Parkland Valley

Yorkton

Prairie Central

Humboldt & Districts

Regina Sport

Regina

Rivers West

Battlefords & Districts,
Kindersley & Districts,
Meadow Lake,
Unity & Districts

Saskatoon Sport

Saskatoon

Southeast

Estevan, Weyburn

Southwest

Moose Jaw, Swift Current

Mission

Special Olympics Saskatchewan is dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with an intellectual disability through sport.

Vision

Our vision is that sport will open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities and create inclusive communities all over the world.

Values

Inclusion

We foster inclusive communities.

Diversity

We honor what is unique in each individual.

Empowerment

We give everyone the opportunity to pursue their full potential

Respect

We operate in an environment of cooperation, collaboration, and dignity.

Excellence:

We elevate standards and performance.

**Let me win.
But if I cannot win,
let me be brave in the attempt.**

*Special Olympic
athlete's oath*



Message from the Board Chair

“Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”

Most of us recognize these words as the Special Olympics Athlete Oath. Yet for those who have had the privilege of spending time with Special Olympics athletes, we know it is far more than an oath—it is a way of life. It reflects courage in the face of challenges, determination in the pursuit of goals, and an unwavering belief in possibility.

The mission of Special Olympics is to unleash the power of the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sport. That mission comes to life every time you witness an athlete competing, celebrating with teammates, encouraging others, or simply enjoying the moment. The joy of sport, the value of friendship, and the importance of inclusion are visible in everything they do.

The impact of Special Olympics extends far beyond medals and competitions. Through sport, athletes gain confidence, discover their strengths, and develop the courage to pursue opportunities they may never have imagined possible. Family members find support. Communities become more inclusive. Volunteers gain perspective. And all of us are reminded of what can be achieved when people are given the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Together, we help create opportunities, break down barriers, and foster a culture of acceptance and belonging. When you witness the accomplishments of Special Olympics Saskatchewan athletes, it is impossible not to be inspired. They challenge us to think differently, to appreciate what truly matters, and to recognize the incredible potential that exists in every individual. Each experience is reinforcement of what makes our organization so special: it changes lives – not only for athletes, but for everyone involved.

Special Olympics reminds us that success is not measured solely by victories or medals. Success is found in courage, perseverance, growth, and the willingness to keep trying.

And perhaps that brings us back to the Athlete Oath:
“Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”

Thank you,
Laurie Carpenter



“ Message from the **Executive Director**

As I reflect on the 2025–2026 year, I am filled with gratitude for the athletes, volunteers, coaches, families, partners, and supporters who make Special Olympics Saskatchewan such a remarkable organization.

Throughout the province, our athletes continue to inspire us with their courage, determination, and commitment. Through sport, they build confidence, develop leadership skills, create lasting friendships, and demonstrate the power of inclusion every day.

As I complete my first year as Executive Director, I have had the privilege of seeing firsthand the impact of the partnerships that make our work possible. I am deeply grateful for the continued support of the Saskatchewan Law Enforcement Torch Run, the Knights of Columbus, Tim Hortons, and the Empire Family of Brands. Their generosity helps create meaningful opportunities for athletes across Saskatchewan.

This year, I am especially proud that 63 Team Saskatchewan athletes earned the opportunity to represent our province at the 2026 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games in Medicine Hat, Alberta. Their dedication and perseverance embody the spirit of Special Olympics.

I also extend my sincere thanks to our incredible volunteers. Whether coaching, fundraising, planning programs, or supporting events, your commitment makes everything we do possible.

Together, we are creating a more inclusive Saskatchewan where everyone has the opportunity to belong, contribute, and reach their full potential.

Thank you for believing in our athletes and for being part of the Special Olympics movement. I look forward to another year of growing opportunities and changing lives through the power of sport.



With gratitude,
Rhae-Ann Holoien
Executive Director
Special Olympics Saskatchewan

Making an Impact 2025-2026



1032

Registered
Athletes



131

Programs
Offered



15

Active
Communities



289

Coaches and
Volunteers

Winter Sports

5-Pin Bowling

Alpine Skiing

Cross Country Skiing

Curling

Figure Skating

Floorball

Floor Hockey

Speed Skating

Snowshoeing

Summer Sports

10-Pin Bowling

Athletics

Basketball

Bocce

Golf

Power-lifting

Rhythmic Gymnastics

Soccer

Softball

Swimming

Retrospective!

Special Olympics Summer Games (2024-2025)

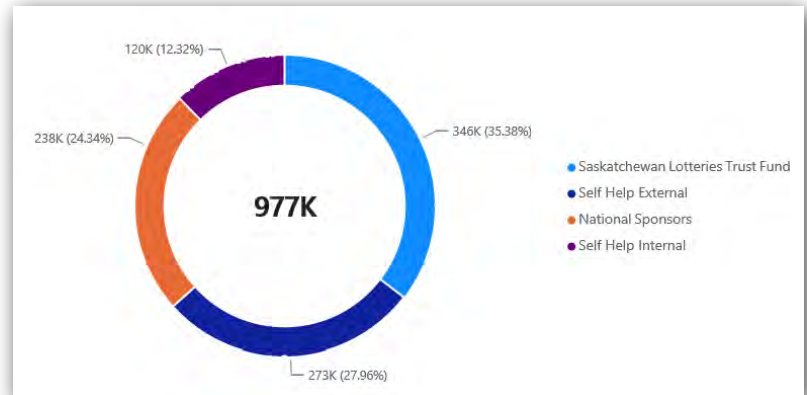
The 2025 Special Olympics Saskatchewan Summer Games brought together 198 registered athletes from 12 communities to compete in events held throughout May and June 2025. Competition was hosted across Regina, Swift Current, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg, providing athletes with opportunities to showcase their skills, achieve personal bests, and build lasting friendships in an inclusive and supportive environment. Sports featured at the Games included 10-pin bowling, soccer, softball, swimming, bocce, golf, power-lifting, athletics, basketball, and rhythmic gymnastics. The Games were made possible through the dedication of coaches, officials, volunteers, host communities, and supporters whose commitment helped create a memorable experience for every athlete.

Statement of Operations

For Year Ended June 30, 2026

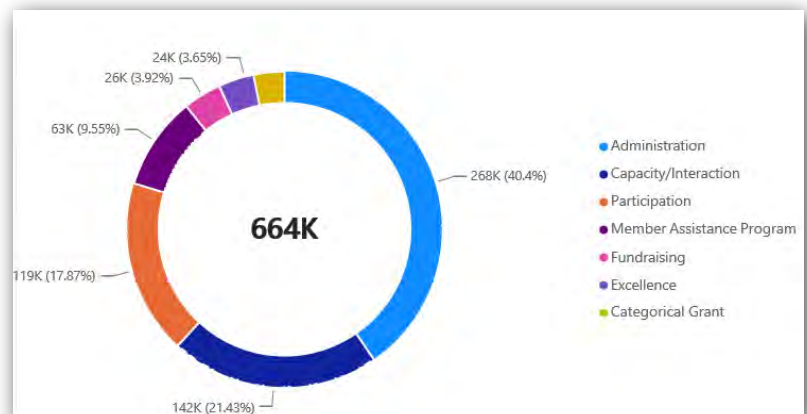
REVENUE

National Sponsors	237,759
Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund	345,621
Self Help External	273,119
Self Help Internal	120,320
Total	976,819



EXPENSES

Administration	268,227
Capacity/Interaction	142,249
Participation	118,638
Member Assistance Program	63,402
Fundraising	26,010
Excellence	24,257
Categorical Grant	21,098
Total	663,881



What We Do

Community Programs

Community programs offer both recreational and competitive opportunities for athletes across the province of Saskatchewan across a variety of sports and programs. Through these programs and events, athletes can improve their overall health and wellbeing while learning new skills, gaining confidence, and making new friends.

Winter Sports

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

Summer Sports

10-Pin Bowling
Athletics
Basketball
Bocce
Golf
Power-lifting
Rhythmic Gymnastics
Soccer
Softball
Swimming

Active Start

A family-centered youth program for children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 to 6. Through the program, children learn basic motor skills such as walking, running, jumping, and throwing in a fun and safe environment.

FUNDamentals

A continuation of the Active Start Program for athletes aged 7 to 12 (participation in Active Start prior to registering in FUNDamentals is NOT required). This program transitions from basic movement skills to basic sport skills while maintaining an atmosphere of fun and meaningful interaction.



Special Olympics Unified Sports®

Special Olympics Unified Sports® joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team, helping to create an inclusive sports environment and break down barriers. Unified Sports offers the opportunity to improve sport-specific skills, gain valuable competition experience, make new friends, and gain a heightened awareness of the social existence of peers facing different obstacles. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding. Unified Sports are primarily offered in schools across Saskatchewan and includes bocce, cornhole, and 3 x 3 basketball.

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® Program is offered by chapters across the world to help address barriers and challenges that individuals with intellectual disabilities often face when trying to access healthcare which often lead to significant health disparities and health issues.

Volunteer health professionals help conduct screenings and educate participants to detect and prevent some of these health issues. In addition to the important benefits this program has on athlete wellbeing, Healthy Athletes also gives health professionals an opportunity to work with and learn from patients with IDD, creating a more inclusive healthcare system.

What We Do



Athlete Opportunities

Competitions

Athletes have the opportunity to compete at the provincial, national, and world levels through Special Olympics. The games are a chance to showcase their skills, build confidence, and create lifelong memories.

Provincial Games

Provincial Games are held every two years and bring together athletes from across Saskatchewan to compete in a variety of sports. These Games celebrate achievement, sportsmanship, and inclusion while providing athletes with the opportunity to be selected to represent Team Saskatchewan at the National Games.

National Games

National Games are held every two years, alternating between summer and winter sports. Athletes from every province and territory come together to compete at the highest level within Canada. For many athletes, participating in the National Games is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and eligible athletes may also be considered for selection to Special Olympics Team Canada.

Special Olympics World Games

The Special Olympics World Games represent the highest level of competition in the Special Olympics movement. Held on a four-year cycle for both summer and winter sports, a World Games event takes place every two years. The Games bring together thousands of athletes from around the world to compete while promoting inclusion, friendship, and the abilities of people with intellectual disabilities on a global stage.

Highlight: 2026 National Summer Games Training Camp

From June 5–7, 2026, Special Olympics Saskatchewan athletes attended a training camp in Regina for the 2026 National Summer Games. Sixty-three Team Sask athletes came together to strengthen team connections, refine their skills, and prepare mentally for the competition ahead. The camp focused on mental preparation, sport-specific training, and teamwork, ensuring athletes were well prepared for the 2026 National Summer Games in Medicine Hat.

Year In Review - Highlights

The 2026 Saskatchewan Winter Games

From February 15th - 21st, more than 1,500 athletes, coaches and officials gathered in the neighbouring northwestern communities of Meadow Lake and Flying Dust First Nation to share in the thrill of competition and camaraderie on the provincial stage. Upwards of 500 community volunteers helped welcome thousands of visitors to the area during the seven days of Games competition.



RESULTS

Bowling Teams

Team	Placing
 Regina	Gold
 Prairie Central	Silver
 South West	Bronze
 South East	4
 Rivers West	5

Team Regina

Orihanna Barry, Tate Kennedy, Brayden McNeill, Mitchell Jackson Phillips, Mirela Puskar

Team Prairie Central

Maria Bergerman, Jordon Dierker, Carla Hueser, AJ Tarnowski, Lauren Weigel

Team South West

Jordan Michael Angus, Casey Hopps, Brianna Irene Luciak, Calvin Schaaf, Bradley Robert Allen Volk

Team South East

Daameon Budney, Justin David De Roos, Vernon Ernst, Robin Stelter, Leah Whitrow

Rivers West

Great Bobbee, Teejay Kenneth Hogan, Xavier Hudson, Anna Walsh

Bowling Individual Female

Name	Placing
 Mirela Puszkur	Gold
 Orihanna Barry	Silver
 Robin Stelter	Bronze
 Carla Hueser	4
 Katherine St Amand	5
 Lauren Weigel	6
 Leah Whitrow	7
 Maria Bergerman	8
 Anna Walsh	9
 Brianna Irene Luciak	10
 Greta Bobbee	11

Bowling Individual Male

Name	Placing
 Jordon Dierker	Gold
 AJ Tarnowski	Silver
 Bradly Robert allen Volk	Bronze
 Casey Hopps	4
 Tate Kennedy	5
 Justin David De Roos	6
 Daameon Budney	7
 Calvin Schaaf	8
 Xavier Hudson	9
 Jordan Micheal Angus	10
 Vernon Ernst	11
 Brayden McNeill	12
 Mitchell Jackson Phillips	13
 Teejay Kenneth Hogan	14

Year In Review - Highlights

Unified Sports Regina Year End Invitational
SOS was honoured to attend the 2025-2026 Regina Year End 3X3 Basketball Tournament.

Division 1 – Competitive
Thom, Balfour, Martin, Scott

Division 2 – Player Development
Riffle, Johnson, Leboldus, Knoll, Campbell, Thom, Greenall

Division 3 – Recreation
Riffle, Johnson, Leboldus, Knoll, Campbell, Thom

Unified Flag Football Try-It

On June 16th, 2026, Special Olympics Saskatchewan partnered with several local high schools to host a Flag Football Try-It-Day at Thom Collegiate, introducing students to the sport in an inclusive and supportive environment.

Regina Youth Flag Football generously loaned equipment to run the event. Students went through different offensive and defensive skill stations to learn fundamentals of flag football, all while building confidence and strengthening team connections.

This was the first Unified Flag Football event hosted by Special Olympics Saskatchewan. It is an example of new and exciting opportunities that can be made available to athletes through the Unified Sports program.



Community Events & Try-It-Days

To help introduce potential athletes to available sports and programs, Special Olympics Saskatchewan visited several communities to attend local events and host Try-It-Days.

I Can Games Turtleford

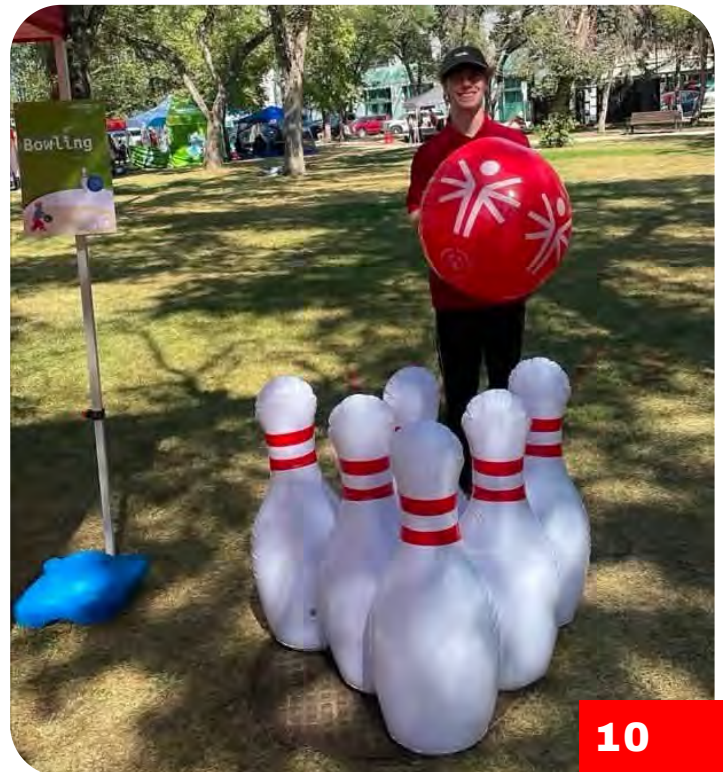
On June 3rd, 2026, Special Olympics Saskatchewan was invited to participate in the fifth annual I Can Games hosted in Turtleford by the Northwest School Division. Over 250 students from Turtleford and surrounding communities participated in the event. The I Can Games gives children with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities. Special Olympics Saskatchewan ran stations for bocce and cornhole. Students rotated through the stations, giving them the opportunity to experience each game. Other stations at the event included a petting zoo, floor hockey, high jump, a bubble station and more.



Try-It-Day Prince Albert Catholic School Division

On June 10th, 2026, Special Olympics Saskatchewan partnered with the Prince Albert Catholic School Division to host a Try-It Day at the Alfred Jenkins Field House. More than 50 students participated, rotating through seven activity stations, including floor hockey, cornhole, and an obstacle course.

Year In Review - Highlights



Athlete Profile: Taylor Barth

For the past five years, Taylor Barth has been an active member of the Special Olympics, embracing opportunities to grow both as an athlete and as a person.

One of the biggest lessons Taylor has learned is that there is no such thing as “normal.” Through his experiences, he has come to understand that everyone is different, and those differences should be celebrated rather than hidden.

A standout moment in Taylor's Special Olympics journey came at the National Games in Calgary in 2024. Competing against strong opponents, Taylor achieved a memorable victory by winning a gold medal, a moment he describes as his proudest accomplishment in sport.

Taylor also identified representing Special Olympics Team Canada at the 2025 World Games in Turin as a tremendous honor. He saw it as an opportunity to represent Canada with kindness, respect, and peace. Taylor won gold in M08 intermediate giant slalom and M06 intermediate slalom race. In addition to his achievements at the World Games, Taylor was the recipient of the Sask Sport Male Athlete of the Year Award.

Through advocacy and personal experiences, Taylor hopes to challenge misconceptions about individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And wants others to recognize that athletes with disabilities are people first. Taking the time to learn about each person as an individual, understanding their abilities, and appreciating their unique stories can make a meaningful difference in creating a more inclusive and accepting community.

Beyond competition, the Special Olympics has taught Taylor the value of teamwork and working together toward a common goal. These lessons have helped shape his approach both on and off the playing field.



Volunteer Impact

Volunteers are the heart of Special Olympics Saskatchewan. Every practice, competition, fundraising event, committee meeting, and athlete achievement is made possible by the dedication of coaches, officials, board members, event volunteers, and community supporters who generously give their time and talents.

Their commitment creates opportunities for athletes to develop skills, build confidence, foster friendships, and experience the joy of belonging. We extend our sincere gratitude to every volunteer whose passion and service help create a more inclusive Saskatchewan where athletes can reach their full potential.

Volunteer Profile: Rick Sanden



Rick Sanden has been a dedicated volunteer with Special Olympics Saskatchewan, making a lasting impact through his commitment to athletes and the organization. His passion for inclusion, leadership, and willingness to support Special Olympics at every opportunity has helped strengthen programs and create meaningful experiences for athletes across the province.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions, Rick was named the recipient of the Jim Thompson Volunteer of the Year Award from Special Olympics Canada. This prestigious award honors volunteers who have made a significant contribution to the Special Olympics movement and reflects the tremendous dedication Rick has shown throughout his years of service.

2024-2025 SOS Award Winners

Athlete of the Year
Rachael Muntain

Team of the Year
Saskatoon Co-Ed Soccer

Coach of the Year
Val Kirk

Volunteer of the Year
Ella Mathews

Shining Star Award
Joey Sheikh

Unsung Hero Award
Patricia Simmons

Junior Coach/Volunteer of the Year
Brooklyn Grimard

Athlete Lifetime Dedication Award
Melvin Degestein

Honorary Life Member
Rick Sanden

LETR Outstanding Service Award

Unified Sports Spotlight
Warman High School

Volunteer Development Opportunities

2025 Coaches Symposium

From October 17–19, coaches from across Saskatchewan gathered in Swift Current for the 2025 Special Olympics Saskatchewan Coaches Symposium. The annual event provided opportunities for learning, collaboration, and sharing best practices to strengthen programs and support athletes throughout the province.

A highlight of the weekend was a keynote presentation by former NHL and WHL coach Cory Clouston. Cory spoke about the importance of achieving balance in life and coaching. His message emphasized the value of physical wellness through proper nutrition, exercise, and sleep, as well as mental wellness through self-awareness and mindfulness.

Participants also took part in an interactive session led by Jesse and Sian from Movement Cave in Moose Jaw. The symposium featured discussions on the continued growth of floorball in Saskatchewan. Coaches also received updates on Team Saskatchewan's preparations for the 2026 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games in Medicine Hat.



Leadership Conference

May 22-24th, 2026, Special Olympics Saskatchewan hosted the Leadership Conference in Saskatoon. This year's theme was 'Carry the Flame'. Volunteers attended sessions run by Darci Lang, Darren Lang, and Greg Gilhooly.

Darci Lang's session was Lead the 90% which covered prioritization, handling personal and family life, and relationships and interactions with coworkers and colleagues. Greg Gilhooly spoke about governance in sport law, which touched on transparency, board governance, and identifying and navigating conflicts of interest. Darren Lang's session was Staying Up in an Upside-Down World, where he spoke about modern leadership challenges, handling mental health, and introduced the "Chill and Choose" principle to conference attendees.

Fundraising Initiatives

The Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR®) is the largest grassroots fundraiser and awareness movement for Special Olympics worldwide. In 2025-2026, Saskatchewan LETR® continued its strong support, hosting meaningful events, including the Truck Convoy and Truck Pull, Polar Plunges, Cops and Crepes, and Cops, Pops and Pizza.

LETR POLAR PLUNGE

Both Saskatoon and Regina proudly hosted Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) Polar Plunges in support of Special Olympics Saskatchewan. These exciting community events brought together 55 brave participants who took the plunge to raise awareness and funds for athletes with intellectual disabilities. This event was made possible through the incredible support of participants, donors, volunteers, sponsors, and law enforcement partners.



2025 LETR Truck Convoy and Truck Pull

The convoy began at the SaskTel Centre in Saskatoon and participants traveled south to Chamberlain for a brief pit stop before continuing to the Turvey Centre in Regina, arriving around noon. Following the convoy participants, supporters, and volunteers gathered for a BBQ lunch and an exciting Truck Pull event where teams competed to see who could pull the cab of a semi truck the fastest.

LETR Cops and Crepes

On May 2 and 3, 2026, law enforcement volunteers with LETR worked alongside Special Olympics Saskatchewan athletes, engaging with attendees, collecting donations, and assisting with serving coffee and water at Cora Breakfast and Lunch locations in Saskatoon and at Lebowski's Kitchen and Lounge in Regina.

Dunk Tank

The Saskatoon Police Service organized a **dunk tank** in July 2026 to raise money for programs and Special Olympics athletes.



Tim Hortons

In January 2026, Tim Hortons partnered with Special Olympics programs across Canada with the return of the Special Olympics Donut. The Special Olympics Donut allowed people to show support of athletes with intellectual disabilities with 100% of proceeds going straight to local districts. The Tim Hortons in Saskatchewan helped raise more than \$25,000 with the funds going directly to Special Olympics Saskatchewan.



Knights of Columbus

Special Olympics Saskatchewan was honoured to receive a generous donation from the Knights of Columbus during their 2026 Annual General Meeting. Knights of Columbus from across the province donate and raise money for our athletes.

For more than 50 years, the Knights of Columbus have been dedicated supporters of Special Olympics Saskatchewan through both fundraising and volunteerism. Their ongoing

generosity helps provide athletes with intellectual disabilities access to quality coaching, training opportunities, competitions, and inclusive sport experiences. We are deeply grateful for their continued partnership and commitment to empowering athletes across Saskatchewan.

SOS Provincial Lottery

This year, Special Olympics Saskatchewan facilitated a province-wide 50/50 Lottery, giving people across Saskatchewan the opportunity to support inclusion while having a chance to win. Proceeds from the lottery help ensure children, youth, and adults with intellectual disabilities can continue to access quality sport programs in communities large and small across the province.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, the Provincial 50/50 Lottery raised money that goes back to each community. Athlete Shane Haddad came by to draw the winning ticket and Brian C. took home the winning prize.



Empire Family of Brands Campaign

From June 11 to 21, the Empire Family of Brands Campaign raised funds to support athletes with intellectual disabilities across Canada. Through this national in-store fundraising initiative, customers at participating Sobeys, Safeway, and IGA locations in Saskatchewan were invited to donate \$2 at checkout. Empire also matched donations up to \$500,000 nationally, increasing the impact of every customer contribution and helping create more opportunities for Special Olympics athletes to learn, and thrive. The campaign is one of Special Olympics Saskatchewan's largest annual fundraising initiatives and requires significant planning and support. The store managers were exceptional hosts and several locations went above and beyond by organizing events such as barbecues alongside the campaign, helping to increase community engagement and support. \$59,681.96 was raised by participating locations in Saskatchewan.



This year, Special Olympics Prince Albert athlete Rhyker Evan-Menzies was selected as one of the 2026 Empire Family of Brands athlete ambassadors for this campaign. Evan's story was shared on a provincial level, with his photo appearing on promotional displays in all participating stores. Rhyker got to share his Special Olympics journey with all of Saskatchewan and represent fellow athletes with pride.

2028 Can-Am Police-Fire 2028

At the end of our 2025-2026 year, it was announced that Special Olympics Saskatchewan is the beneficiary of the 2028 Can-Am Police-Fire Games. Any proceeds from the 2028 Games that surpass their fundraising goal will support Special Olympics Saskatchewan programming across the province.

There is also a long and proud relationship between Special Olympics and first responders. Whether it's the Law Enforcement Torch Run, community fundraising, or cheering from the sidelines, first responders have stood beside Special Olympics athletes for decades. We are excited to work together over the next two years to elevate inclusive sport, strengthen community connections, and celebrate athletes of all abilities.



The Games are scheduled for August 13-19, 2028, and will be coordinated in partnership with The City of Regina, Regina Police Service, Regina Fire, Saskatchewan RCMP, Saskatchewan Marshals Service, Tourism Regina, Sask Health, The Province of Saskatchewan, and the Regina Hotel Association.

Sponsors



Staff

Rhae-Ann Holoien
Executive Director

Harvey Gibson
Marketing & Development Coordinator

Anna Oliver
Director of Community, Programs & Operations

Lucas Faye
Assistant

Emmanuel Ezeji
Finance & Operations Coordinator

Adrien van Dyke
Youth & Health Coordinator

Robbie Bomboir
Maintenance