# **UNIFIED**



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# **Mission**

Special Olympics Georgia provides 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 the sharing of gifts, skills and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.



Special Olympics Georgia, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, is supported by donations from individuals, events, community groups, corporations and foundations. Special Olympics Georgia does not charge the athletes' families to participate. The state offices are located at 4000 Dekalb Technology Parkway, Building 400, Suite 400, Atlanta, GA 30340 and at 1601 N. Ashley Street Suite 88, Valdosta, GA 31602. 770-414-9390. www.specialolympicsga.org

#### **Letter from CEO and Board Chairman**



Dear Supporters,

Working out, practicing sports, and playing together will surely bond a team. When those players see they are more alike than not, friendships bloom. Unified Sports – the program that brings together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team– is like no other.

Special Olympics Georgia (SOGA) offers 20 sports in unified competition on the state level. We've seen athletes bond as friends and spread the word. This resulted in 7,526 Unified Partners in the SOGA program, the highest number in our history. We believe Unified Sports is an impactful way to teach people with and without intellectual disabilities about their similarities.

Thanks to you, we've been able to not only strengthen the quality of our sports competitions, but also to create opportunities for the community as a whole to compete and see for themselves the importance of fostering inclusion. We continue to demonstrate that when we work together all can be good.

In March, SEC women's basketball fans stood up and cheered as they watched a unified team of athletes passing the ball, attempting shots and trying their best. In December, a flag-football unified exhibition game highlighted athletes during the SEC football tournament. And during the SEC Championship game between Auburn and Missouri, an autographed Game Day Ball was presented to SOGA on the field by SEC Commissioner Michael Slive.

This annual report focuses on a more unified community of athletes, students, teachers, law enforcement officers, civic leaders and professional athletes, all of whom improve life for our athlete population, and for the community, too. We invite you again to help us break through barriers so that everyone can see that sustaining a safe and inclusive environment is for the good of us all.

#### Sincerely,



Georgia Milton-Sheats CEO



Bryan Brum Chairman of the Board





# "Some people still don't see that Special Olympics is real sports."

-Carol O., Cobb County Parent and Coach

# Unified Sports Participation Growth

1,089 children and adults without intellectual disabilities competed alongside SOGA athletes at state games and helped shatter stereotypes in 2013. They are called Unified Partners.

Find out how you can be a unified partner at <a href="http://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/unified-sports/">http://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/unified-sports/</a>

### **Unified by Inspiration**



Matthew Buffkin Finds a Voice in Sports

Between issues with autism and a profound hearing impairment as a young boy, Matthew Buffkin found himself destroying items at home and being out of control when he couldn't express himself in another way.

"He couldn't tell me what happened at school but would act out," says his Mom Hiedi Conklin of Warner Robins.

They went from school to school until he found the right teachers who also got him involved in Special Olympics. "We wanted him to work with other people and have life experiences with people like him," she says of the now 22 year old.

A strong athlete, his Mom says he could have played on the high school's baseball team, but his distractions would have been too disruptive for the team. This year, Matthew will graduate from Houston County High School with the discipline and the capability to be part of a team.

"He knows he is loved," she says. "There's a community of support."



**Lillian Mitchell Thrives with Sense of Team** 

When Lillian Mitchell heard the word "Olympics" at dinner before the Sochi Games, she quickly said, "What? Am I going to be on TV tomorrow?"

That was one of the family's most endearing moments in Special Olympics. Recognition might be what Lillian loves the most about Special Olympics, says her Mom Kea Mitchell.

After each Gainesville local competition, 11-year-old Lillian Mitchell looks forward to wearing her medals to church the Sunday after competition and seeing herself on the school's TV channel on Monday. The 2014 State Winter Games was her first games. She competed and won a silver medal.

In the weeks leading up to any games, Lillian will say, "I got a Special Olympics T-shirt and we're all going to wear the same shirt." "It's been a great outlet for her where we see her thrive, succeed and feel confident," Kea says.

"As a family, Special Olympics has been the opportunity to cheer Lillian on. And we haven't had that with Lillian. Just like she cheers for her brother," says Kea.



**Rudolpha Barron Surpasses Expectations** 

Born a month early in 1978 in the Virgin Islands with the cord wrapped around Rudolpha Barron's neck, she turned blue but was revived to life. The next few years seemed to be "normal." Then teachers noticed a delay in learning and tests concluded that Rudolpha would never learn to read or take care of herself.

But, Rudolpha's Mom Hyacinth Richards refused to believe it and treated her no differently from her siblings. She became a member of the St. Thomas Junior Fighters and graduated high school with a diploma. On a teacher's recommendation, she began competing in Special Olympics.

"I was among people like me, doing things and going places that most 'normal' people either could never or would never do," Rudolpha says. She moved to Atlanta, became a Global Messenger and met another athlete who she dated and eventually married in 2007. She was selected for Team Georgia's volleyball team for the World Games in Ireland. "I am defined by my abilities not my disabilities," she says.

## **Unified by Inspiration**



**Louis Maxwell Breaks World Records** 

Louis Maxwell broke the Special Olympics World Record when he lifted 710 pounds at the Tennessee State Competition, a USA PL competition that has a Special Olympics and open division.

"It was his personal best and the most weight any of us who have been working with Special Olympics have seen lifted," says Coach Todd Youngblood. Louis, 33, was also the top deadlifter for the event.

Louis always lifts in the open class outside of Special Olympics and has never placed lower than third.

Training five mornings a week with his teammates and coaches at the Kay Center in Peach County, Louis also gets a workout with the center's lawn service and helps maintain 60 sites. Someday, he wants to be in the Strongest Man Competition and travel around the world.

Now, Louis says he's putting another athlete through training and helping him work up to his own personal best.

"It's not about first place all the time. It's not the place you come in, it's how you did and how you feel about it. I don't care if I come in 12th place."



Samantha Allgire Overcomes Odds

Samantha Allgire's life is a miracle. She was born with a defect called encephalocele, which caused a large hole on the back of her skull. Fluid and brain tissue had pushed outside of her skull. She has a twin, Ellie, who does not have disabilities.

Months after she was born, surgeons removed the sac that looked like a balloon; took apart her skull and rebuilt it with a transplant.

"We thought she would die," says her Mom Miki Allgire. Health issues continued for Samantha, now 10, as cerebral palsy developed on her left side, which also impaired her vision. She showed symptoms associated with autism. Today, she is in special education classes and competes in Special Olympics in Savannah.

Blessings have come in the form of teachers, church families and volunteers. With the help of Samantha's physical therapists, she began roller skating at age 4 and now plays tennis.

"I never thought she would be an athlete," Miki says. "She isn't fast or coordinated but that's okay. We wanted her to feel like she's part of something. She gets to cheer for the other athletes and they cheer for her."





Read more athlete stories at <a href="http://www.specialolympicsga.org/">http://www.specialolympicsga.org/</a>
stories-2/athlete-stories

#### **Unified in Good Health**



The Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Program provides health education and preventative services, identifies potential health problems and provides referrals.



The Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Initative includes several disciplines: Fit Feet, FUNfitness, Health Promotion, Healthy Hearing, Opening Eyes and Special Smiles.



# **Healthy Athletes**













Last year, 1,124 athletes received free health screenings, education, equipment, and community referrals during five state games.

Learn more about what the Healthy Athletes Initative offers athletes at <a href="http://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/leadership-programs/">http://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/leadership-programs/</a>



AutoTrader.com has been a generous supporter of SOGA for 10 years through year-round financial and volunteer support.



Every March, GEICO hosts a Road Race and/or Walk to benefit SOGA, raising more than \$700,000 cumulatively.



UPS provides financial support to help SOGA serve more athletes at state games and year-round. UPS employees and their families volunteer to serve meals at State Summer Games each year.



The Coca-Cola Company generously supports Special Olympics Georgia through monetary and product donations. It also provides hands-on volunteer assistance during our state competitions and hosts various events for our athletes.



The Law Enforcement Torch Run involves more than 1,000 officers who take part in a 1,000-mile, two week relay to pass the "Flame of Hope" across the state.

Without our sponsors and dedicated partners, we would not be able to provide sports opportunities for the athletes. Sponsors helped more athletes than ever before achieve goals by helping cover expenses of sports training and competition.

Read sponsor testimonials at <a href="http://www.specialolympicsga.org/sponsors/sponsor-testimonials">http://www.specialolympicsga.org/sponsors/sponsor-testimonials</a>

## **Unified in Teaching and Learning**



\*During my first year as a special education teacher, I attended my very first certification clinic. This was the beginning of something great . . . something inspiring . . . something that continues to bring joy to my soul. The excitement created by the athletes' competitive spirit is sometimes overwhelming. After each sporting event, I'm just as tired as the athletes, but I feel good just knowing it has been worth every minute. Nothing compares to seeing the smiles that light up their faces as they receive their awards. Coaching Special Olympics athletes is a priceless gift that I'm glad to share."

-Cynthia S., Local Coordinator Heard County Special Olympics



Learn how you can be a Special Olympics coach at <a href="http://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/coach">http://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/coach</a>

# **SOGA** by the Numbers

**State Games Athlete Attendance** 6,702



State Games Volunteer Attendance 4,213



25



**Registered Athletes** 

26,702



Certified Coaches

4,131

#### **Statement of Activity**

for the year ended December 31, 2013 Support and Revenue

	Support and Contributions	\$3,962,230
	In-kind Contributions	\$254,209
	Special Events	\$1,111,508
	Other Income	\$267,512
Tot	al Unrestricted Support and Revenue	\$5,595,459
Expenses		
	Sports Training	\$1,428,393
	Field Services	\$1,552,432
	Public Education	\$177,802
	Public Relations	\$162,322
	General Administrative	\$221,875
	Development	\$663,843
To	tal Expenses	\$4,206,667

#### **Memorable Accomplishments in 2013**

- 76 coaches trainings were offered, attended by 411 coaches, 7 Unified Partners, and 31 athletes, five of which became assistant coaches.
- •SOGA secured the first SEC Women's Basketball athlete exhibition game during half-time at the UGA and LSU game. At the men's Auburn vs. Missouri SEC Football Championship, SOGA was awarded the game's coaches autographed football.
- •SOGA's documentary "The Love of the Games," created by Emmyaward winning Image Masters, aired on Fox TV stations statewide.

- •Over the Edge event raised over \$186,000, surpassing the goal of \$111,000 by \$75,000.
- At the Annual Worldwide LETR Conference, the Georgia LETR program was awarded the Emerald Award for raising over \$750,000 in 2013. Almost \$500,000 of the total was brought in by Publix Super Markets selling torch icons at local Georgia Publix Stores.

## **Unified in Community**



The Polar Plunge raised \$106,074 from folks not being afraid of the chilly waters of Lake Lanier.



Over the Edge raised \$186,000 and featured 125 brave souls who rappelled down a 20-story building.



The Law Enforcement Torch Run remains SOGA's largest fundraising effort.



SEC fans at the Women's Basketball Tournament cheered for Rockdale athletes at half-time game.



Each year, youth partners learn leadership skills and take on projects to help foster respect in schools.



At each State Games, Knights of Columbus members present colors for SOGA at Opening.

#### Join Us Next Time . . .

Over the Edge, April 26, Atlanta
State Summer Games, May 30-June 1, Atlanta
Duck Derby, August 8, Marietta
State Masters Bowling, August 22-24, Warner Robins
Shoot for Champions, September 25, Douglasville
State Fall Games, October 10-12, Gainesville
State Horse Show, October 10-12, Gainesville
Bob Busse Golf Tournament, November 3, Atlanta

#### The Champion's Society Protects Athletes' Futures

The Champion's Society members are the guardians who protect our athletes' future. By providing for Special Olympics in their will or other estate planning today, members of The Champion's Society guarantee the long term success of Special Olympics and our athletes. There are no membership fees or minimum gift amounts to join The Champion's Society, and the size of your gift is kept confidential. If you have already left Special Olympics in a bequest or other planned gift, in order to ensure that we receive the gift you intend for us and so that your wishes for your gift are honored, we hope you will let us know. For more information about how you can become a member of The Champion's Society, please contact Connie Grandmason at 866-690-3951 or cgrandmason@specialolympics.org.

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William M. Harris Family Foundation

Bill Hassell Kurt C. Heckert Suellen Heintz

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Chuck Kenwright Keynect LLC

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Lilburn Police Department

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Brian & Shawna Mahony

Michael Mansour Marietta Wrecker Marketing Alliance Group Marquis at Mt. Zion

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Clint Mattson
Brad McCahill

Bridget McCarthy, Coca-Cola Refreshments

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McDonald's of Warner Robins & Byron

Thomas McGrath
Wendee McGuffee
Jeremy McLaughlin
Leianne M. Messina-Brown
Midtown Athletic Club
Mike Powell Photography

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Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC

Jerry L. Murdock Steve Murrin

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PS Energy Group Inc Quality Wine & Spirits Inc.

Kevin Race. Inslev & Race LLC

Realan Foundation James P. Reed Thomas J. Regan, Jr. Kelley Rhinehart Caren Richardson

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Risk Placement Services Inc.

Robyn Romano Jenae Rose Sara Rosenbaum

Mike Ruen, DCT Industrial

James Ryden, Space Center Inc.

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K.C. Shannon Lauren Shantha

Sherry Management LLC Mark & Joyce Shoemaker

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SITA

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Snellings Walter Insurance Agency Southern Rivers Energy Trust Inc. Sparkles Family Fun Center

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Eileen Thanner, The Coca-Cola Company

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Tilted Kilt

Towns Public Affairs LLC Triad Advisors Inc. Troup County Saddle Club

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Michael Twiner, Planners and **Engineers Collaborative** Matthew Underwood Universal Tennis Academy US Bank-Matching Gift

US Foods Todd Valentine Chris Van Meter

Vaughan Foundation Inc.

Jeff Vaughn

Vogel Family Foundation Inc.

Wal-Mart #614 Wal-Mart #937 Wal-Mart #1314 Wal-Mart #1586 Wal-Mart #1766 Wal-Mart #2941 Wal-Mart #3611 Wal-Mart #4436 Wal-Mart #5786 Alex Ward Andrea Ward

Warner Robins Police Department

Tracy Weller R. Todd Wickliffe Melody Wilder **Andrew Williams** Vincent Williams Michael Wilson

Winder Police Department

Jeane Withorn

Matt Woods

Amber York

Mike Wolf, French Wolf & Farr Investment Advisors

Wood Family Foundation

Cara Workman WorldPay Employees **Darvl Worley** Aimee Wright Jennifer Wuergler Wvndham

Youth Service Fund Inc.

#### \$500-\$999

8IGHT Action Tapes Inc. Active Network Inc. Gray Adams, VMware Adecco

Aetna Foundation Albany ARC

Allan Vigil Ford Lincoln F. Scott Allen Marshall Allen Audrey L. Andersen Wayne Anderson

The Andersen Company

Arcade Police Department

ARCO Design Build Construction

Arke Systems

Artisan Partners Limited Partnership

Blaine Austin Wade D. Austin

#### \$500-\$999 (cont'd)

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Barrett Investment Enterprises Michael & Mindy Barringer

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Beer Creek Bicycle Co.

Carla Berg

Samantha Bergeron Deborah A. Blankenhorn

Samuel Boles Leigh Bridgman Mike Briggs

Walter M. Broomershine

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Duvall Brumby, Yates Insurance Agency

Connie Bryans

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Dominos Pizza Catherine Dorn

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Jonathan & Diane Durden

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Billy Hooks

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Jack W. Johnson
Katrina Johnson

The Joseph Charitable Trust

JP Morgan
Debbie Kalish
Larry F. Kay
Frederick Keeney
Dr. Terry V. Kelley
Sarah K. Kennedy
Kids II Foundation
Kent Kirbow

Scott Jones

Knights of Columbus #8376 Knights of Columbus #13161

Michael Kopp Kroger Ronald Kuenkler

Kunal Properties Inc.

Stephen Klein

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#### \$500-\$999 (cont'd)

La Societa` Italiana Samuel Lambert Lambert High School

Law Bike LG Electronics

Lickety Split Ice Cream William C. Lincicome Robert Lindner

William & Barbara Lipe

Joseph Losurdo
Bill Lundstrom, Arcapita
Luxe Land Design LLC
M C L Detachment 647
Lindsay Macaluso

Macon ICE Khanh Mai

Marietta Golden "K" Kiwanis Foundation Inc.

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Mobile Communications of Dekalb

Michael Mobley

Morningstar Foundation Inc.

Multivision Inc. Kimberely Murdoch Muscogee County Prison

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Newnan Police Department

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Matching Gift Program United Distributors

United Way of Northeast Florida

United Towing Verizon Wireless James B. Voyles Wal-Mart #520 Wal-Mart #548 Wal-Mart #615 Wal-Mart #658 Wal-Mart #669 Wal-Mart #745 Wal-Mart #1363 Wal-Mart #1400

Wal-Mart #1400 Wal-Mart #3401 Wal-Mart #3609 Wal-Mart #3775 Wal-Mart #5482 Wal-Mart #5709 Wal-Mart Distribut

Kaye P. Watts

Elena Weaver

Wal-Mart Distribution Center #6061 Drew Waters

J & J Welding James & Anastasia Wermert Christopher Westbrook Gregory S. Westbrook Livia Whisenhunt Ernest P. White

Whitfield County Sheriff's Office

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Richard C. Zath

Ralph B. Wynn Robert Yellowlees Stephanie Yoshimura



# **THANK YOU!**

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