



MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of **Special Olympics Louisiana (SOLA)** 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 sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS OATH: Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.

Special Olympics Louisiana

- ❖ SOLA began its involvement in 1968 with 11 athletes from Belle Chasse State School (now Metropolitan Developmental Center) competing in the 1st International Special Olympics Games in Chicago.
- ❖ SOLA offers education, leadership, health, family, training and sporting programs throughout the year.
- ❖ Recently, SOLA implemented the Project Unify program to reach out to school aged youth to break down the barriers of stereotypes. At the end of 2009, over 40,000 students had been introduced to our programs.
- ❖ Currently more than 13,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities in Louisiana participate in various Olympic-type sports. Presently, participants compete in 16 sports and are offered over 30.
- ❖ Approximately 120,000 people with intellectual disabilities in Louisiana qualify but are not participating in one or more of our programs.
- ❖ The Young Athletes Program serves ages 2-7. The competitions begin at age 8 and with no upper age limit.
- ❖ Various SOLA statewide competitions are held annually. Athletes must first qualify at an area meet to attend these State events. Currently there are over 4 state events held in various cities throughout the state.
- ❖ SOLA athletes also participate in approximately 100 local and area competitions annually, and approximately 90 different training schools are held each year for the coaches who participate.

Special Olympics International

Special Olympics athletes are divided to compete based on gender, age, and ability level. All activities reflect the values, standards, traditions, ceremonies, and events embodied in the modern Olympic movement.

- ❖ Special Olympics is sports in its truest form. The rules accommodate all levels of athletic ability.
- ❖ Everyone's a winner. Athletes can earn gold, silver or bronze medals or fourth through eighth place ribbons.
- ❖ Founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, sister of President John F. Kennedy, in 1968.
- ❖ Special Olympics exists in all 50 states and over 175 countries. There are approximately 3.1 million athletes participating worldwide.
- ❖ Thousands of Special Olympics competitions in both summer and winter sports are held in communities throughout the world each year.
- ❖ Training and competition opportunities are offered to every athlete regardless of gender, age or ability.
- ❖ The world's largest public health organization serving people with intellectual disabilities.
- ❖ The fastest-growing grass-roots volunteer movement on the planet.

Pat Carpenter Bourgeois – President and CEO

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