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Special Olympics PA Combines Winter Games and Indoor Winter Games into a Series of Virtual Events

Tune in from Friday, March 5th to Saturday, March 13th

(Norristown, PA – March 4, 2021) - Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) is excited to introduce its [Virtual Winter Games](#), a series of online events held from Friday, March 5th to Saturday, March 13th. SOPA's two annual winter competitions – Winter Games and Indoor Winter Games – were combined to form the Virtual Winter Games, presented by Highmark. This competition will celebrate the success of nearly 800 SOPA athletes and coaches who have been training and competing in at-home floor hockey skills and the Fitness Heptathlon.

The Fitness Heptathlon is SOPA's newest competition that provides participants with the opportunity to select seven different fitness exercises in which to train over a 10-week period. Participants are divisioned, earn points based upon their performance improvement level in each exercise, and are given awards based on their composite score.

Everyone around the state is invited to celebrate the successes of SOPA athletes by tuning in to the various virtual events that will be hosted on SOPA's [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) channels. The schedule of events for the Games includes:

Friday, March 5th at 7:30 p.m. – Competition Highlights
Friday, March 12th at 7:30 p.m. – Competition Highlights
Saturday, March 13th at 5 p.m. – Awards Celebration
Saturday, March 13th at 7 p.m. – Victory Dance

In addition to the schedule of events listed above, the Virtual Winter Games features an Olympic Village that offers a variety of fun activities to do at home such as Escape Rooms, word searches, coloring sheets and hidden objects. Other virtual activities include a series of health sessions presented by WellSpan. These sessions focus on a variety of topics, from sleep and emotional health, to nutrition, to yoga and more. The goal of these sessions is to provide education to help athletes and volunteers maintain their health and wellness.

Traditionally, SOPA's Winter Games are held at Seven Springs Mountain Resort in Seven Springs, PA and hosts more than 300 athletes and 135 coaches for three days of competition in alpine skiing, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Likewise, Indoor Winter Games typically hosts approximately 950 athletes, coaches and staff/officials from across the



Commonwealth for two days of competition in floor hockey, figure skating, speed skating and bowling. However, due to the pandemic, both events have been combined to virtually celebrate athletes' winter participation in the [Commit to Fit](#) initiative, an overarching campaign for the fitness and training opportunities currently available.

The Fitness Heptathlon falls under SOPA's Commit to Fit initiative that enables athletes to remain connected and engaged while at home. Special Olympics is the largest global public health organization dedicated to serving people with an intellectual disability (ID). Because people with ID are 2X as likely to be obese, 5X as likely to have diabetes, and their life expectancy is reduced by an average of 16 years, SOPA's mission is to help its athletes lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

The Virtual Winter Games, presented by Highmark, is sponsored by Sheetz, Law Enforcement Torch Run, Knights of Columbus, Energy Transfer, WellSpan Health, Explore York and ABC 27.

About Special Olympics Pennsylvania

Special Olympics Pennsylvania provides year-round training and competition 16,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities in a variety of Olympic-type sports, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community. For more information on how the movement inspires greatness, visit our web site at <https://specialolympicspa.org/>.