

# How to Communicate with Our Athletes through Social Media

***Special Olympics***  
*Pennsylvania*



# Introduction



- **Session Facilitators:**

- Nicole Jones, Senior Director of Marketing & Communications
- Wenona Sutton, Marketing Communications Manager
- Tarre Apreala, SOPA Athlete and Global Messenger

- **Topics of discussion will revolve around:**

- Limitations of communicating with our athlete population.
- How to use social media as a way to create improved communications.
- How some Local Programs use social media to communicate.
- Step-by-step instructions on how to get started using Facebook.
- Social media best practices and SOPAs social media policy.
- Q & A

# Communicating with Our Athlete Population



- Many athletes do not respond well to phone/e-mail messages, however they are very active on Social Media.
- The need to develop social media strategies was a topic voted for during the 2014 and 2016 Athlete Congress.
- Athlete Survey Results:
  - 38 athlete responses representing 17 local Programs
  - 87% use social media
  - Facebook was the highest used medium that a majority checked at least once a day
  - Many were satisfied with the social engagement that their local Programs did provide (if applicable), but those whose did not use social were in favor of its use
  - Athletes also felt that Social Media should be used as a tool to help recruit more athletes, get more people to volunteer at sectional and state events, and that more programs should become more involved on Twitter

# How Social Media Can Help Programs/Athletes Better Communicate

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# Facebook Pages Versus Facebook Groups



- **Facebook Pages**: Enable public figures, businesses, organizations and other entities to create an authentic and public presence. Unlike personal profiles, Facebook Pages are visible to everyone on the internet by default. You, and every person on Facebook, can connect with these Pages by becoming a fan and then receive their updates in your News Feed and interact with them.
- **Facebook Groups**: Are the place for small group communication and for people to share their common interests and express their opinions. Groups allow people to come together around a common cause, issue or activity to organize, express objectives, discuss issues, post photos and share related content.

# Facebook Pages Versus Facebook Groups (Cont.)



- Facebook Pages:
  - Privacy: Page information and posts are public and generally available to everyone on Facebook.
- Facebook Groups:
  - Privacy: In addition to a public setting, more privacy settings are available for groups. In secret and closed groups, posts are only visible to group members.
    - Audience: You can adjust group privacy to require members to be approved or added by admins.
    - Communication: In groups, members receive notifications by default when any member posts in the group. Group members can participate in chats, upload photos to shared albums, collaborate on group docs and invite members who are friends to group events.

# Facebook Groups Privacy Settings



## What are the privacy settings for groups?

When you [create a group](#), you can choose 3 privacy settings: **Public**, **Closed** and **Secret**. The table below shows who can [join these groups](#) and what people can see about them.

	<b>Public</b>	<b>Closed</b>	<b>Secret</b>
Who can join?	Anyone can join or be added or invited by a member	Anyone can ask to join or be added or invited by a member	Anyone, but they have to be added or invited by a member
Who can see the group's name?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see who's in the group?	Anyone	Anyone	Only current members
Who can see the group description?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see the group tags?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see what members post in the group?	Anyone	Only current members	Only current members
Who can find the group in search?	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see stories about the group on Facebook (ex: News Feed and search)?	Anyone	Only current members	Only current members

If you're an admin of a group, learn how to [change the privacy settings](#) of your group.

# State/Local Program Facebook Group Examples

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# Athlete Leadership Secret Group



- A place for all interested SOPA athletes to interact with one another and connect with the Athlete Leadership (AL) Coordinator.
- Used to inform athletes about upcoming AL University sessions, Input Councils, online surveys, newsletter issues, Global Messenger speeches, #WellnessWednesday facts and more!
- More than 180 members
- Athlete friend requests to Jelsea Schrob to join.

# Lehigh County Closed Group



Special Olympics Lehigh County  
Closed Group

Join Group

Join this group to see the discussion, post and comment. [+ Join Group](#)

MEMBERS 186 Members

DESCRIPTION  
This FaceBook group is for athletes, coaches, volunteers and par... See More

CREATE NEW GROUPS  
Groups make it easier than ever to share with friends, family and teammates. [Create Group](#)

CREATE NEW GROUPS

Members (186) [See All](#)

Friends

 Tarre Apreala	 Harry Michael	 Tonbara Apreala	 Daniel Kirkland	 Ann Marie Klipple	 Nicole Seng
 Sylvia Seibert	 Jeffrey Hall	 Karen Ford			

- A group is for athletes, coaches, volunteers and parents/caregivers of athletes.
- Used to communicate practice times, cancellations, special events, etc.
- More than 180 members.
- Tarre Apreala will discuss the benefits associated with participating in a closed group as opposed to a general Facebook page.

# Potter/Venango Forrest Public Groups



Special Olympics Pennsylvania of ...  
Public Group

Discussion Members Photos Files

Search this group

Join this group to post and comment. [+ Join Group](#)

### RECENT ACTIVITY

**Gail Harris Ayers**  
June 2 · Coudersport

Today's softball was canceled due to the weather. Visited the campus store and then went to the Olympic Village and enjoyed all the activities and free food. Opening ceremonies about to begin...high fives and autographs from the Penn State sports teams.



### MEMBERS

59 Members



**DESCRIPTION**  
The mission of sports training a...

**CREATE NEW G**  
Groups make it to share with frie teammates.

### RECENT GROU



**CREATE NEW G**



Special Olympics Pennsylvania V...  
Public Group

Discussion Members Photos

Search this group

Join this group to post and comment. [+ Join Group](#)

### RECENT ACTIVITY

**Miki No**  
July 24 at 3:54pm

Hi had fun yesterday in it

Like Share

3

Seen by 24

View 2 more comments

James Dawn Novak Yes it was

### MEMBERS

81 Members



**CREATE NEW GROUPS**  
Groups make it easier than ever to share with friends, family and teammates. [Create Group](#)

### RECENT GROUP PHOTOS

See All



- More than 50 – 80 members
- Used to communicate practice schedules, share images, etc.



# Philadelphia Public Page vs. Public Group Page



The screenshot displays two Facebook entities side-by-side. On the left is the 'Special Olympics Pennsylvania - Philadelphia' Public Page. It features a profile picture with the Special Olympics logo, a cover photo with the quote 'ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE. TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH.' by Helen Keller, and a navigation menu with options like Home, About, Events, Photos, Likes, Videos, and Posts. On the right is the 'Special Olympics Philadelphia' Public Group. It has a cover photo of a group of athletes and staff, a 'Public Group' label, and navigation tabs for Discussion, Members, Events, Photos, and Files. The group page also shows a 'Write Post' section, a 'RECENT ACTIVITY' post by Britt Kleine, and a 'MEMBERS' list with 469 members.

The Facebook page provides content for a broad audience; whereas, the Facebook group – in this case – stimulates more athlete communications.

# How to Create a Facebook Group

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# Steps on how to create a group



1. Create a Facebook Group in association with an existing Facebook profile or page. For directions on how to create a Facebook page, review our “SOPA Social Media How-To Guide” handout – also available via our online Resources.
2. Click in the top right of the Facebook page and select Create Group. \*\*\*

3. You will then see this lightbox. Name your group.

A screenshot of the Facebook interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation links for 'Nicole', 'Home', and 'Find Friends'. A dropdown menu is open in the top right corner, showing options like 'Create Page', 'Create Group', 'Your Groups', 'Create Ads', 'Advertising on Facebook', 'Activity Log', 'News Feed Preferences', 'Settings', 'Log Out', 'Help', 'Support Inbox', and 'Report a Problem'. The 'Create Group' option is circled in red. Below the navigation bar, a 'Create New Group' lightbox is displayed. The 'Group Name' field is filled with 'SOPAs Facebook Group' and is also circled in red. The 'Members' field is empty. The 'Privacy' section shows 'Public' selected, with 'Closed' and 'Secret' options also visible. At the bottom of the lightbox are 'Cancel' and 'Create' buttons.

# Steps on how to create a group



4. I am naming my group “SOPAs Facebook Group.” This name can be whatever you want & you can change it later. Make the group name memorable and searchable -- so people can find it.
5. You are required to add at least 1 friend to the group before you can create it. If you don't you will get an error message.
6. You'll now need to decide what privacy setting you want your group to have.

**Create New Group**

Please add at least one friend to your group.

Group Name

Members

**Privacy**

**Public**  
Anyone can see the group, its members and their posts.

**Closed**  
Anyone can find the group and see who's in it. Only members can see posts.

**Secret**  
Only members can find the group and see posts.

[Learn more about groups privacy](#)

# Steps on how to create a group



7. If you have fewer than 250 members you'll be able to change the settings as you see fit. But as soon as your groups grows to over 250 members, you can only change an Open group to Closed or Secret -- and a Closed group to Secret. You won't be able to change the privacy again after this.
8. After you choose your privacy setting, click the "Create" button.

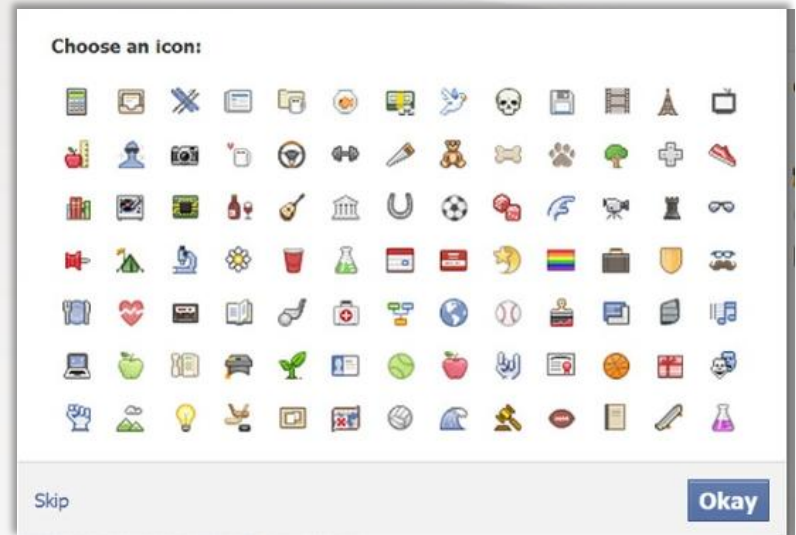
A screenshot of the Facebook 'Create New Group' form. The form is titled 'Create New Group' and contains several fields and options. The 'Group Name' field is filled with 'SOPAs Facebook Group'. The 'Members' field is empty and contains the placeholder text 'Enter names or email addresses...'. Below the 'Members' field is a 'Favorites' section with a checkbox labeled 'Add this group to your favorites.' which is currently unchecked. The 'Privacy' section has three radio button options: 'Public' (with a globe icon), 'Closed' (with a lock icon), and 'Secret' (with a lock icon). The 'Closed' option is selected. Below the 'Privacy' section is a link that says 'Learn more about groups privacy'. At the bottom right of the form are two buttons: 'Cancel' and 'Create'. The 'Create' button is highlighted with a red circle.



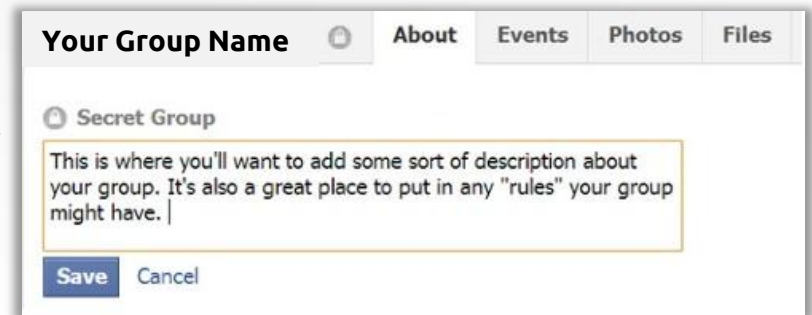
# Steps on how to create a group



9. Facebook will now give you the option to choose from a wide array of creative graphics for your icon/avatar. This is completely up to you and bears no significance as far as Facebook is concerned. But if you've created many groups or have multiple groups in your favorites, you'll want to choose an icon you can easily identify.



10. Complete the "About Section." Your about section is important. It gives prospective members an idea what your group is about and can display any "rules" you may have about the group.



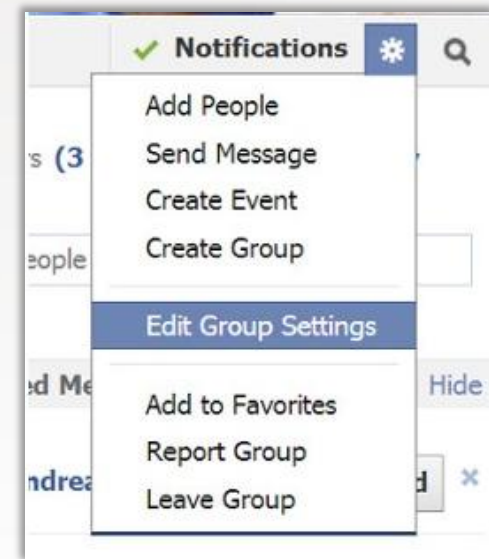
# Steps on how to create a group



11. Choose image settings. You are given the 3 options here:

- Use images from group members (will show a maximum of the last 8 active members)
- Use a photo already in the group
- Upload a photo

12. Next you'll want to edit the group settings. You do this by clicking on the gear icon & then clicking "Edit Group Settings." Once on the edit page, you'll have many options to change.



# Steps on how to create a group



## 13. Items you can change:

- Group Icon
- Group Name
- Privacy Settings
- Membership Approval --  
Do you want to let anyone  
add members or should  
only you be able to?

A screenshot of a Facebook group creation settings page. The page title is "Scott's Secret Group" and it has tabs for "About", "Events", "Photos", and "Files". There are "Notifications" and "Search" icons in the top right. The "Group Name" field contains "Scott's Secret Group". The "Privacy" section has three options: "Open" (selected), "Closed", and "Secret". The "Membership Approval" section has two options: "Any member can add or approve members." (selected) and "Any member can add members, but an admin must approve them.". The "Group Address" field has a "Set Up Group Address" button. The "Description" field contains the text: "Hey guys! I said I wanted to do some 'secret' stuff with ya'll a while back and haven't followed through with it.. Time to follow through." Below the description is a note: "Potential members see the description if privacy is set to open or closed." The "Posting Permissions" section has two options: "Only members can post in this group." (selected) and "Only administrators can post to the group.". The "Post Approval" section has one option: "All group posts must be approved by an admin." (unchecked). A "Save" button is at the bottom.

# Steps on how to create a group



14. Set a Group Address -- Here you'll have a chance to give the group a custom URL as well as an email address where people can email the group directly.
15. When you're done you'll see something like this:
  - Group Address:  
[SOPAs.Facebook.Group@groups.facebook.com](mailto:SOPAs.Facebook.Group@groups.facebook.com)
  - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SOPAs.Facebook.Group/>

### Set Up Group Web and Email Address

Enter a name that will become the email and web address for your group:

@groups.facebook.com

Emails sent to this address will go to all group members. If you want people to find your group, give them the web address: facebook.com/groups/.

# Steps on how to create a group



16. You can change:

- Your description, posting permissions (decide if only admins can post or if members can as well), and/or post approval (require that all posts be approved by an admin before going live).

17. Once you're done & happy with the settings, click "Save".

18. Invite others & Spread the Word!

19. Extra Features:

- **Notifications** - As an admin you should probably turn the notifications on to receive all updates when anyone posts.
- **Events** - A feature probably not used often enough in Groups is Events. Inside the group you can create events that only members can see & RSVP for.
- **Files** - Inside groups you can share files of any kind as well as create Documents which group members can add to & collaborate on.

# Facebook Best Practices and Organizational Policies

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# Best Practices

- **Develop Strategy**
  - This is like entering a marathon, not a sprint-you have to have a plan and commit to the long haul
  - Be sure you have a reason to do it, not just because it is one possible solution
- **Social Media and Its Maintenance**
  - Will require different amounts of time to keep current
  - Monitor the page often
  - Consider soliciting the help of an Athlete Leader and their Mentor – Baseline education will be offered via SOPAs Athlete Leadership University
- **Generate Content**
  - That is pertinent to the athletes and encourages engagement
    - Events, cancellations and rescheduling
    - Sports and special events
    - Training and competition results
    - Athlete Leadership and encouraging posts/images
- **Respond to Users**
  - Good, bad and ugly...try to respond to everyone!

# Social Media Standards and Etiquette



- Be Responsible
- Be Accountable
- Consider Your Audience
- Bring Value
- Pick your Battles and Accept Your Mistakes
- Be Respectful
- Protect Confidential and Copyrighted Information



# Social Media Policy



- The purpose of this policy is to define social media, as well as establish procedures for creating an overall social media presence
- The policy is designed to assist SOPA employees, interns, volunteers and athletes engaged in social media on behalf of the organization on a state and/or local program level
- The policy establishes the legal, policy, and institutional implications of opening and maintaining social media accounts in an official capacity

# Social Media Policy (Cont.)



- The policy applies to any pre-existing or proposed social media networking websites established by a representative of Special Olympics Pennsylvania on a state and local program level
- This means a SOPA social media participant who, in an official capacity and on behalf of the Special Olympics:
  - Opens a social media account in the name of SOPA
  - Posts SOPA content on a social media account opened in the name of Special Olympics
  - Speaks or claims to speak on behalf of the SOPA on a social media account
  - Responsible for overseeing and maintaining an official Special Olympics presence on a social media site

# Social Media Policy (Cont.)

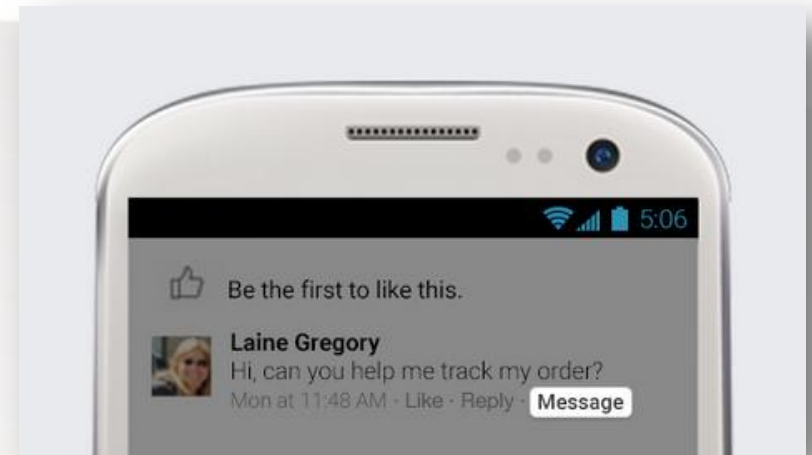


- Responding to fans on Facebook and Twitter is essential in maintaining a strong online presence.
- It is important to reply to both positive and negative comments.
- Here are a few response guidelines for negative comments:
  - Notify Nicole Jones to let her know the situation and advise the best way to respond
  - NEVER delete a volunteer/athlete comment
  - Acknowledge complaints publicly letting other guests know you're handling the situation
  - Respond privately to sensitive questions

# Social Media Response Tools

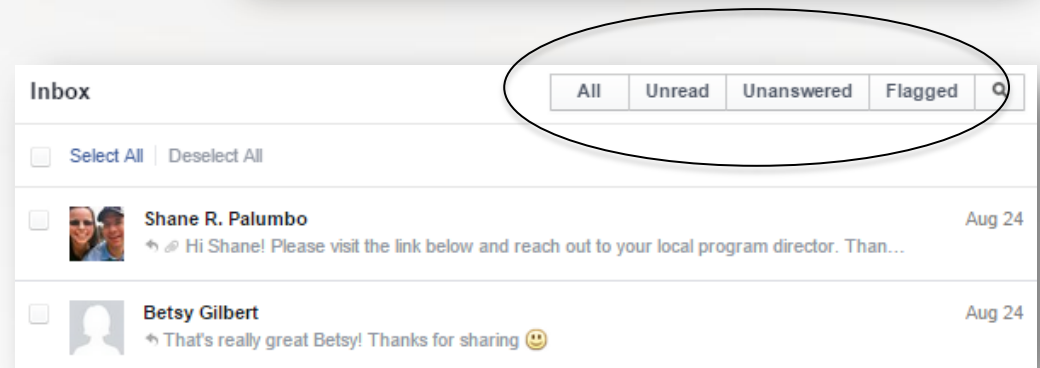


**Reply to comments privately with a message:** Page admins will be able to reply to public comments with a private message, helping them solve private customer requests more efficiently.



## General inbox options

- Unanswered
- Unread
- Flagged



# SOPA Tools & Resources

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# Online Access to Docs & Tools Via our Website



Documents & tools available at [www.specialolympicspa.org](http://www.specialolympicspa.org).

Special Olympics Pennsylvania

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## LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

**Leadership Conference 2016**  
Special Olympics Pennsylvania's 2016 Leadership Conference will be held from September 10 - 11 at the Penn State Conference Center & Hotel in State College, PA. The Conference, designed to provide ongoing training... [More](#)

1 2 3 4

### In the News

**SOPA Athletes Compete in Unified Sports All-Star Soccer Match**  
MLS WORKS and ESPN hosted a Special Olympics Unified Sports All-Star soccer match on Tuesday, July 26th for the third consecutive year featuring Special Olympics All-Stars representing 18 MLS clubs from the U.S. and Canada. Among the participants were Special Olympics... [More](#)

**Special Olympics Helps Athletes Lead Rewarding Lives**  
The Special Olympics experience fills a critical need in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and the demonstration of competence to themselves, their families and the community. The... [More](#)

- Volunteer Center**
- SOPA Gear Store
- Success Stories
- Law Enforcement Torch Run

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**DONATE**

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### Volunteer Center

- Monthly Update
- General Orientation
- Vsys Tips & Info.
- Resources

Sports Offered

- Training Schools
- Protective Behaviors
- Concussion Training

If you would like to become a volunteer, please review the volunteer opportunities we have available on our [Get Involved](#) web page.

**leadership**  
motivation + discipline  
dedication & excellence  
american heart

Special Olympics PA's 2016 Leadership Conference will be held from September 10 - 11 at the Penn State Conference Center & Hotel in State College, PA. [Register via Vsys Today!](#)

**NEW SOPA VOLUNTEERS**  
Volunteer Opportunities

HELP US REACH ONE MORE PERSON  
**DONATE**

News Letter Sign Up  
Enter your email address below to receive our News Letter and other updates.  
 **Sign Up**

Special Olympics P...  
7,502 likes

Click on the **Volunteer Center** button on our homepage to access our Vsys Tips page, Resources and more!

# Staying Well Informed



The Monthly Update is a tool to enhance communication between Special Olympics Pennsylvania's state office and its volunteer program management team members. **Around the beginning of each month, an email update will inform volunteers of the latest news available and accessed via our SOPA website.** Just visit our Volunteer Center and click on Monthly Update!

**Use the Monthly Update to stay “in-the-know” about any additional resources or general organizational information.** As tools are added to the SOPA Dropbox, they will be announced in the Monthly Update.

A screenshot of the Special Olympics Pennsylvania website. The header features the Special Olympics logo and the text "Special Olympics Pennsylvania". Navigation links include "About Us", "Sports &amp; Competitions", "Events Calendar", "Special Programs", "Fundraisers", "Ways to Help", and "Local Programs". A search bar is present with a "Search" button. Below the navigation is a large image of a crowd with their hands raised. The "Monthly Update" section is highlighted, containing the text: "The Monthly Update is a tool to enhance communication between Special Olympics Pennsylvania's state office and its volunteer program management team members. Around the beginning of each month, an email update will inform volunteers of the latest news available and accessed via this page." A sidebar on the right lists various roles: "Monthly Update", "General Updates", "Athlete Leaders", "Competition Coordinator", "Database Coordinator", "Family Coordinator", "Fund Raising Coordinator", "Manager", "Outreach Coordinator", "Public Relations Coordinator", and "Special/Sanctioned Events".

(<http://www.specialolympicspa.org/monthly-update>).



# Questions & Answers



- Q & A
- Handouts
- Contact Information
  - Nicole Jones – [njones@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:njones@specialolympicspa.org)
  - Wenona Sutton – [wsutton@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:wsutton@specialolympicspa.org)
  - Online Resources page – <http://www.specialolympicspa.org/resources>



# Thank you!

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