



# Mission, Vision & Values: SOPA's Focus on Fitness

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Pennsylvania





Health & Fitness  
Advisory  
Committees

Performance  
Stations

Games  
Organizing  
Committee

Athlete  
Engagement at  
fitness-related LETR,  
fundraising events  
and initiatives

Code of  
Conduct

SO FitNow

Health &  
Fitness  
Coordinators

Seasonal  
Fitness  
Opportunities

SOPA's  
Talk Show

Year-Round  
Fitness  
Opportunities

Healthy  
Food  
Offerings

# SOPA Fitness Strategy

## GOAL

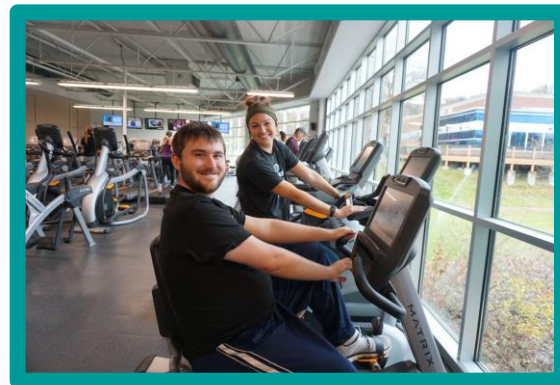
ATHLETES ARE:  
HEALTHIER,  
MORE FIT,  
LIVE LONGER  
LIVES

# Why is fitness important?



- Adults with intellectual disabilities have a higher rate of developing obesity vs. general population
- 38.3.3% vs 28%
- Higher prevalence of morbid obesity

Hsieh K, Rimmer JH, Heller T. Obesity and associated factors in adults with intellectual disability. J Intellect Disabil Res. 2014 Sep;58(9):851-63.



# How to be fit?



- Assess their current level of fitness
- Make fitness FUN
- Build into all practices
- Start small and vary the activities
- Find what they love
- Incorporate motivating MUSIC

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# How to be fit?



- Develop challenges
- Workout partners
- Healthy motivators
- Celebrate small accomplishments
- Set short term goals
- Discuss benefits but don't lecture

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# State-Level Activation



- Add a fitness focus to the SOPA Code of Conduct.
- Invite fitness professionals to speak at or share fitness content during SOPA's Talk Show.
- Create or expand Games Organizing Committee roles that focus on health and fitness.
- Develop a Health and Fitness Advisory Committee.

# Develop a Family Advisory Group State-Level Activation



## How to Best Support and Involve Families

- Health and Fitness Family Advisory Group
- Parents and siblings from all 9 regions
- Meet once a month
- **Purpose:** Understand how to best engage family members in supporting athlete fitness goals. What resources and help can SOPA provide?



# Athlete Engagement in LETR & Special Events State-Level Activation



- Involve more athletes in Law Enforcement Torch Run
  - Augment their fitness training like SONA Move Challenge
- Create more participation opportunities for athletes in special events like UNCathlon and corporate fitness challenges!



# Region/Local-Level Activation Offer Fitness Opportunities - Year Round



## Athlete Performance Training

- **GOAL:** help ensure athletes become healthier, more fit and live longer lives.
- **ACTIVATION:**
  - FALL: at least one training site in all local programs.
  - END OF 2024: 75% of athletes participating in practice that incorporate Athlete Performance Training.
- **IMPLEMENTATION:**
  - Coaches at practice.
  - Athletes and their families/caregivers at home.
- **PROCESS:** Education, Exertion, Evaluation

# Region/Local-Level Activation Offer Fitness Opportunities - Year Round



- **Education:**
  - Coach led instruction during every practice and encouragement for athletes to follow program and track progress during the week at-home.
  - RESOURCES: Coach Education Guide and Athlete Guide.
- **Exertion:**
  - Practice Planning, Active Practice that pushes athletes to their limits.
  - At-home training at least 5 days per week.
- **Evaluation:**
  - Collection of Health and Fitness Metrics to track the well being of our athletes.

**REGISTER TO PARTICIPATE** by clicking YES on your Site Registration Form, visit SOPA website or contact Michelle Boone, [mboone@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:mboone@specialolympicspa.org) for more information.

# Region/Local-Level Activation Offer Fitness Opportunities - Year Round



## Unified Fitness With and Without Equipment

- **GOAL:** help ensure athletes become healthier, more fit, live longer lives and develop meaningful relationships.
- **ACTIVATION:**
  - FALL: Rollout to Unified Champion Schools.
  - 2022: Rollout statewide.
- **IMPLEMENTATION:**
  - On your own (not coach run), training 2x/week, good supplement to your training season and great off-season program.
- **RESOURCES:**
  - Guidebooks that provide entire training program as well as nutrition, hydration and wellness education.

# Region/Local-Level Activation

## Offer Fitness Opportunities - Seasonal



### SONA Moves Challenge

- Nationwide 8-week movement challenge to see how many minutes of exercise participants can complete each week.
- Great compliment to all of the other activities athletes participate in - as it all can count towards weekly minutes of exercise/movement.
- **PARTICIPATION:**
  - Individual, doubles (Unified or traditional) and team options.
- **ACTIVATION:**
  - The SONA Move Challenge runs September 13 – November 7. Sign-up today!

# Region/Local-Level Activation Offer Fitness Opportunities - Seasonal



## Fitness Heptatlon

- Awaiting further direction from SONA on future of program.
- Needs further development in GMS to manage the scoring.
- If SONA supports, SOPA will consider adding as a Winter Sport offering.



# Region/Local-Level Activation

## Redefine Health & Fitness Coordinator role



- A Health and Fitness Coordinator is an athlete committed to promoting healthier lifestyles for athletes, Unified Partners, coaches and families.
- After Athlete Leadership University, Health and Fitness Coordinators with the support from their Mentors will be expected to host a year-round health and fitness club.

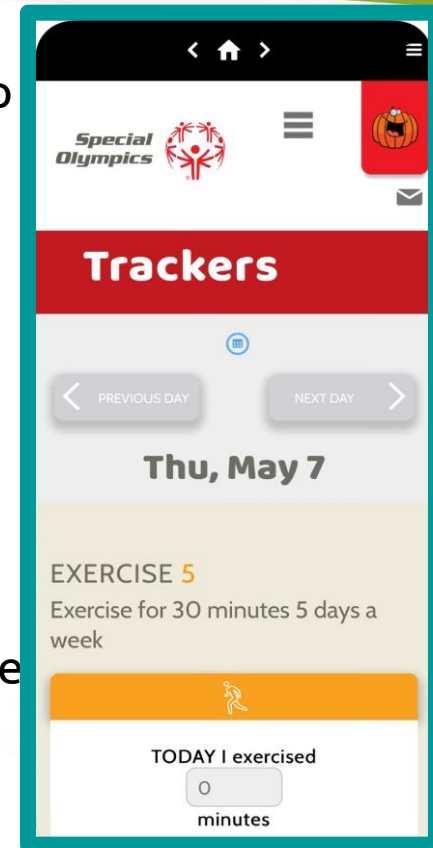


# Region/Local-Level Activation

## Deploy SOFit Now



- Special Olympics has an app called SO FitNow to help participants stay fit.
- Accessible features through SO FitNow:
  - User Profile (Health Data)
  - Lifestyle Survey
  - Tracker
  - Challenges
  - Resources
- Working with Special Olympics to further develop the app's functionalities.



# Region/Local-Level Activation Offer Performance Stations



- Performance Stations will be on site at sports venues throughout the event.
- Performance Stations will focus on educating and promoting the importance of fitness to athletes, volunteers and families.
  - Topics will include, competition readiness such as stretching, encouraging hydration and proper nutrition prior to events, and motivation techniques like goal setting.





# Region/Local-Level Activation

## Increase Healthy Food Offerings



- Include food costs when budget planning
- Determine areas that impact food budget
  - Team picnics
  - Travel for events
  - End of season parties
  - Banquets
- Create healthy menus
- Price menu items & build budgets to include healthy options
- Follow the budget & improve the health of your athletes!

# Region/Local-Level Activation Increase Healthy Food Offerings



## Finding Resources for Healthy Food Offerings

- Start with your menus
- Build your budgets
- Develop a customized Case for Support
- Visit your stores (retailers and wholesalers)

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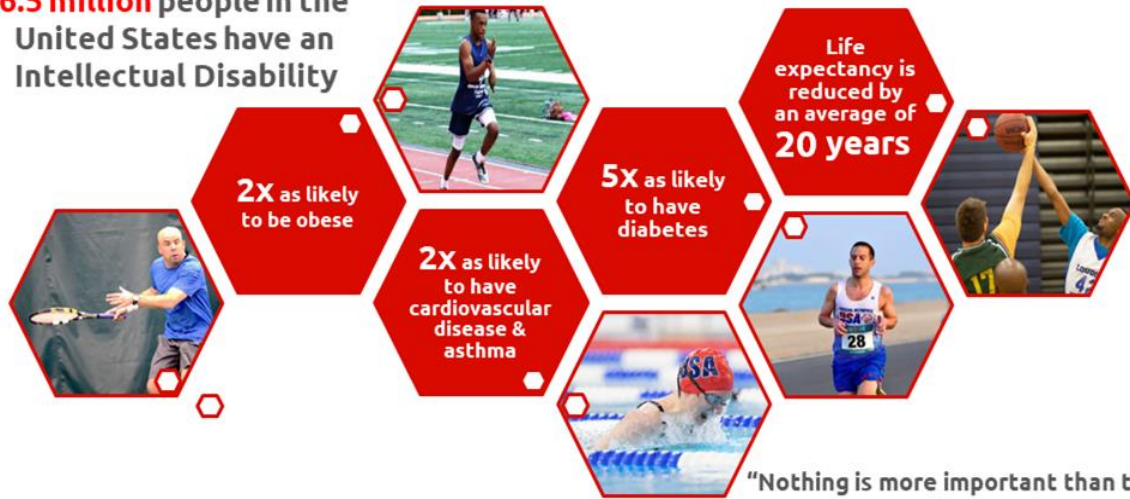


# Region/Local-Level Activation

## Increase Healthy Food Offerings



**6.5 million** people in the United States have an Intellectual Disability



**"Nothing is more important than the answer to this question: Are our athletes getting healthier and fitter with a chance to get better and win?"**

-Tim Shriver  
Chairman

Special Olympics International

# Region/Local-Level Activation Increase Healthy Food Offerings



## Case for Support (1 page ONLY)

- Share the BIG PICTURE
- Offer a SOLUTION (at least part of one)
- Be specific
- Clarify \$s and ITEMS you are seeking (in-kind is often easier)
- HEALTHIER OPTIONS are the GOAL



# Drop your questions into the Q&A!





# Thank you!

Questions? Contact  
[chammell@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:chammell@specialolympicspa.org)

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