

# Benefits of Participation in Special Olympics Georgia



*You can make a significant impact on the lives of  
27,110 Special Olympics Georgia athletes...*

- Special Olympics Georgia contributes to the **physical, social, and psychological development** of people with intellectual disabilities.
- Special Olympics Georgia provides a **safe arena for peer interaction**. Often, after students leave the school system, they also leave their peer network. Opportunities and events to network with peers are limited. Such isolation can ultimately hinder the development of social skills and those skills needed to work or live independently.
- Participation in Special Olympics **promotes healthy, active lives** among a segment of individuals who are **more likely to face obesity** and related health problems than the general population.
- It provides an opportunity for **health care and health education** through a series of screenings offered in conjunction with the State Games and includes hearing, vision, oral health, podiatry, nutrition and physical therapy. Professionals who volunteer gain an understanding in serving a population who is definitely **underserved by the medical community**. Important services like **free** prescription eye glasses are provided during these screenings called “Healthy Athlete Initiatives.” In 2016, 792 athletes benefited from our Healthy Athletes screenings.
- A study conducted by the University of Massachusetts Boston and the University of Utah found that **52% of Special Olympics athletes are employed**, while only 10% of the general population of adults with intellectual disabilities are employed. This contrast demonstrates how important Special Olympics Georgia is to people with intellectual disabilities.
- Through successful experiences in sports, athletes **gain confidence and build a positive self-image**, which carries over into the classroom, the home, the job, and the community.
- Involvement with Special Olympics Georgia **strengthens families**, causing a richer appreciation of talents, and promoting greater support between the Special Olympics athletes, siblings, and parents.
- The **community** at large – through observation and participation – **is united** in understanding people with intellectual disabilities in an environment of equality, respect, and acceptance.