



***Special
Olympics***
New Jersey

Strategic Plan 2017-2021

2017 Board of Trustees

CHAIRPERSON

Maria Fischer

Hinkle, Fingles, Prior & Fischer
Attorneys at Law



**Special
Olympics**
New Jersey

1st VICE CHAIRMAN

Michael L. Ostrowsky

Bressler, Amery & Ross

2nd VICE CHAIRMAN

D. Nicholas Miceli

TD Bank

SECRETARY

Joseph Ritzel

Day & Zimmermann

TREASURER

Thomas H. Comiskey

M&T Bank

Chief Robert Belfiore, Retired

NJ Law Enforcement Torch Run

Colleen Ciecura

SONJ Athlete

Dr. Theresa Purcell Cone

Rowan University - Retired

Danica Dilligard

Ernst & Young, LLP

Fred Graziano

TD Bank

Jim Holmes

PVH Corporation

Greg Matteo

Jones Lang LaSalle

Ronald L. Perl

Hill Wallack LLP

John Price

Glassboro Partners, Inc.

Patti Smith

Krauter & Company

Tom Sullivan

Princeton Partners, Inc.

Barbara Wallace

Twp. of Washington

Peter Wenger, MD

Princeton Sports & Family Medicine

Charles Wimberg

Atlantic City Electric

Tom Varga

Metrographics

Jennifer Velez

RWJBarnabas Health

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Heather Andersen

Special Olympics New Jersey

Introduction

As Special Olympics New Jersey (SONJ) approaches its 50th anniversary the Board of Trustees and staff are looking to the future to further advance the mission of Special Olympics.

In July 2016, a strategic planning process was initiated with support from the Board of Trustees, detailed involvement from the staff and input from stakeholders representing various facets of the organization.

The result of that process is this five-year strategic plan, which is designed to be a living document that is reviewed and revised regularly to ensure evolving opportunities are considered. The plan reflects SONJ's shared core values and consists of:

- A 2021 vision for Special Olympics New Jersey
- The six principle objectives essential to ensuring the vision is a reality
- Specific goals to achieve each principle objective, including initial action plans
- A process to review, measure and assess programs and update the plan regularly

****Special Olympics New Jersey retained consultants from The Pharos Group to oversee and guide the 2017-2021 Strategic Planning Process.*



Special Olympics New Jersey Strategic Plan

MISSION:

The mission of Special Olympics 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 the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

VISION:

Special Olympics New Jersey will foster inclusive communities for people with and without intellectual disabilities through innovative sport, health, wellness and leadership opportunities for Special Olympics athletes, their families and society as a whole.

CULTURE OF SAFETY AND AWARENESS:

As we look forward to continue to advance our mission over the next five years, Special Olympics New Jersey will be committed to providing safe environments for its athletes, volunteers and all other constituent throughout all facets of the organization.



CORE VALUES

- Innovation:** To promote an organizational culture that seeks new ideas and advances the mission of Special Olympics.
- Excellence:** The standard measure for superior execution and outcome of every dimension of activity and service conducted by Special Olympics New Jersey.
- Integrity:** To execute the mission of Special Olympics with a commitment to transparency, honesty and the highest ethical conduct.
- Respect:** A commitment to the value of each and every individual and an acknowledgement of their unique talents and achievements.
- Inclusion:** To connect people of all abilities by creating opportunities with a purpose of building lasting relationships, rooted in mutual respect and acceptance.



KEY TERMINOLOGY

SONJ - Special Olympics New Jersey

Unified Champion Schools:

Unified Champion Schools brings youth with and without intellectual disabilities together through education and sports to create school communities of acceptance and respect. Powered by an engaged youth community, Unified Champion Schools integrate three components, Unified Sports, Inclusive Youth Leadership and Whole-school to increase athletic and leadership opportunities that bring students of all abilities together as teammates, classmates and friends.

NJSIAA - New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association:

The governing body of high school athletics in New Jersey. In 2015, Special Olympics New Jersey signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the NJSIAA to partner together to increase Unified sports in New Jersey high schools.

MATP - Motor Activity Training Program:

The Motor Activity Training Program is designed to prepare athletes with severe or profound intellectual disability, including athletes with significant physical disabilities, for sport-specific activities appropriate for their abilities.

Transitioning Athletes:

Athletes of any age who are moving from one development skill level to another. Typically these include Young Athletes™ progressing from gross motor skills to sports-related skills, or other athletes who may transition from competitive sports to more recreational activities.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Youth Sports Standards:

Competition based standards from sports organizations outside Special Olympics rules. These include, but are not limited to, US Youth Soccer, Little League Baseball and Softball, etc.

Governing Sports Organizations:

Sports organizations outside of Special Olympics who have established rules for youth sports. i.e. US Youth Soccer, Little League Baseball and Softball, etc.

Stakeholders:

A person or group with an interest or concern in something, especially a business. Special Olympics New Jersey stakeholders include, but are not limited to, athletes, families, Unified partners, school youth leaders, volunteers, coaches, SONJ staff and sponsors.

SOI - Special Olympics, Inc.

PRINCIPLE OBJECTIVES

- I. Increase educational and awareness opportunities for all stakeholders to create the best environment for our athletes to succeed.**
 - A. Create and sustain resources that will allow for greater acceptance and respect towards individuals with intellectual disabilities.**
 - i. Establish resources that incorporate a better use of analytics from local and national statistics to better understand and enhance programs.
 - ii. Establish procedures to capture, catalog and circulate impact stories about our athletes and programs.
 - iii. Increase professional development and Unified partner trainings through education and engagement with sponsors, partners and educational institutions.
 - iv. Advance inclusive youth engagement by creating resources for sustainable, school-based youth leadership, Youth Summits and whole school engagement initiatives.
 - B. Develop and sustain consistent information throughout all facets of the organization.**
 - i. Create an online general orientation that serves as an introduction to SONJ.
 - ii. Create new and also better utilize existing resources to disseminate standardized information and materials.
 - iii. Provide and maintain consistent, updated information in a designated resource area.
 - iv. Institute staff and Area volunteer trainings to establish a better flow of information.
 - C. Increase sport, health and fitness education for athletes, coaches, families and health care professionals.**
 - i. Provide quality health and fitness-related information and resources to stakeholders through online and in-person presentations.
 - ii. Educate engaged and interested healthcare professionals on the needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

II. Provide a continuum of quality program opportunities for all athletes and Unified partners throughout different stages of involvement.

- A. Expand opportunities through Unified schools and other partnerships.
 - i. Increase participation in Unified recreation through inclusive physical education, middle school, high school and college Unified club sports, Shriver Cup competitions and Young Athletes™.
 - ii. Increase inclusive youth leadership opportunities through the three components of Unified Champion schools.
 - iii. Increase participation in interscholastic programs through the NJSIAA partnership.
 - iv. Further explore the need for Motor Activity Training Programs (MATP) in special services school districts.
 - v. Develop a protocol to transition athletes and Unified partners from school-based programs to community-based programs.
- B. Expand opportunities through community programs and other partnerships.
 - i. Assess the needs and interests of athletes and their families, including Young Athletes™, transitioning into sports training and competition opportunities.
 - ii. Increase opportunities within existing sport rules to accommodate the needs of transitioning athletes.
 - iii. Develop and integrate a foundation of youth sports-based approaches, rules, standards and competition opportunities into the existing SONJ structure that reflect youth sports standards from other governing sport organizations as required.
 - iv. Develop a procedure to transition athletes and Unified partners from community-based programs to school-based programs.
 - v. Expand local training programs, Unified recreation and skill development opportunities throughout the state.
- C. Evaluate and develop opportunities for family engagement throughout the organization.
 - i. Increase opportunities at the area and state level for families to provide input and feedback to enhance the athlete and family experience in the organization.

- D. Increase quality and quantity of partnerships with community and private facilities to allow for year-long participation in sport, fitness and health activity initiatives.
 - i. Explore new and enhance existing partnerships to expand opportunities for our athletes throughout their timeframe of involvement with SONJ.
- E. Develop consistent, specific organizational processes and competition standards from the area level to the state level of competition.
 - i. Assess the participation in our 24 sports offered and interest in potential new sports.
 - ii. Utilizing existing SOI standards, further develop specific event management guidelines that will be used as a tool for current and future SONJ staff and volunteers.
 - iii. Establish sport-specific timelines with respective deadlines.
 - iv. Establish consistent protocols for stakeholder entry points (registrations, medicals, certifications).
- F. Evaluate and develop athlete leadership opportunities throughout the organization.
 - i. Strengthen the structure and increase participation in Global Messengers, Athlete University and Athlete Congress.
 - ii. Provide athletes additional Special Olympics involvement opportunities outside of their sport training and competition (committees, mentors, coaching, officiating).
 - iii. Engage athletes through local Area Input Councils to provide feedback to Athlete Congress.

III. Enhance volunteer engagement opportunities within the organization to ensure continuity of service.

- A. Research and implement recruitment tools to attract volunteers.
 - i. Create a community outreach network which includes partnering with existing volunteers, families and athletes.
 - ii. Examine available technology and social media outlets to increase volunteer involvement.
 - iii. Further develop volunteer interest sessions by using online and in-person presentations.

- B. Develop a plan to standardize volunteer trainings.
 - i. Produce cohesive materials to enhance the volunteer experience and distribute to all stakeholders.
 - ii. Create a general orientation to provide information on volunteer roles within the organization.
 - iii. Provide additional event preparedness to volunteers by developing new ways to train for specific events and roles.
 - iv. Provide additional training on athlete interactions and appropriate terminology use.
- C. Develop a a succession plan for volunteer leadership opportunities.
 - i. Clearly define the types of leadership roles to gain an understanding of needs, both organization and event-specific.
 - ii. Create and establish a transition plan and protocol for the succession of retiring volunteers who hold current leadership roles.
 - iii. Provide opportunities for existing volunteers to become more engaged by utilizing skills-based volunteers for leadership roles.
- D. Develop a sustainable plan for volunteer retention.
 - i. Create a sustainable appreciation system to build a vested interest for the organization.
 - ii. Investigate volunteer recognition programs of larger nonprofit organizations with the intention of implementation.
 - iii. Collect additional census data to determine the composition of volunteers.

IV. Increase the visibility of SONJ's mission and vision through innovative marketing and technology strategies to promote inclusion and acceptance in schools and communities and among all of SONJ's stakeholders throughout the state.

- A. Redesign SONJ.org to illuminate our cause, convey our impact and engage our visitors.
 - i. Conduct SONJ website audit.
 - ii. Initiate RFP process to retain a website developer.
 - iii. Develop and launch a new SONJ.org.
- B. Utilize the most efficient, up-to-date technologies and tools to market to, communicate with and engage our target audiences and influencers across all levels of the organization.

- i. Organize all communications data and contact information through a centralized database for more efficient, relevant and personalized communications across all levels of the organization.
 - C. Create quality content for all digital communications channels.
 - i. Streamline SONJ's social media presence across all levels of the organization, and across all social media platforms, to ensure voice, branding and conversations are appropriate and relevant.
- V. Enhance monetary and in-kind resources to build and sustain the future of SONJ while promoting the mission to all involved stakeholders.**
 - A. Establish a formal cultivation and stewardship program for individual giving, planned giving and major gifts.
 - i. Build out the relationship function for donors and supporters in the SONJ central database.
 - ii. Develop a formal ongoing process for donor research.
 - B. Create strategic, long-term partnerships with new and existing sponsors/supporters to further enhance funds and in-kind support.
 - i. Target 4-5 new year-round partners annually.
 - ii. Engage the SONJ Board of Trustees to facilitate potential new partnerships.
 - iii. Explore potential new fundraising and partnership opportunities in South Jersey to expand brand visibility.
 - iv. Enhance existing targeted fundraising events to maximize revenue.
 - C. Develop a fundraising/marketing strategy to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Special Olympics in 2018.
 - i. Identify 3-4 fundraising events and/or campaigns to promote and celebrate the 50th anniversary.
- VI. Foster an organizational culture that will develop and retain staff, resulting in a collaborative approach to building the future of SONJ.**
 - A. Engage employees in decisions that have a direct impact on them to promote consistency and transparency throughout the organization.

- i. Create an employee wellness survey and establish an Employee Wellness Committee to set priorities.
 - ii. Circulate an annual employee engagement survey to determine needs and priorities.
 - iii. Facilitate a meaningful annual staff performance review process.
- B. Foster educational and training opportunities to advance staff development.
 - i. Following the annual performance review, survey staff to investigate their professional development priorities.
 - ii. Offer professional development opportunities annually through collaboration with the Mercer Institute, the Chamber of Commerce and Thomas Edison State University, and investigate other possible collaborative partners.
- C. Create a path for succession planning.
 - i. Create a “leadership track” to develop and prepare internal candidates to fill future leadership positions at SONJ.
 - ii. Design retirement/exit strategies for key roles that will likely be vacated within the next 5-7 years.

Process to Review, Assess and Update the Plan

This plan is designed to be a living document that is reviewed and revised regularly to reflect changing environments and evolving opportunities. It is critical to track related data, monitor progress in implementing the plan and continually focus on the principle objectives. A review process has been established to assess progress and to update the plan regularly.

- The plan will be an item on all management team agendas.
- One staff person will be assigned to assure general facilitation of the plan, to track progress continuously and to oversee the development of annual updates.
- The management team and appropriate Board of Trustee committee chairpersons will report to the Board at each regularly scheduled Board meeting, and by email where necessary, regarding progress in achieving each of the objectives.
- Annual plan updates, and revisions as necessary, will be completed and endorsed by the Board of Trustees.