



Special Olympics Connecticut Newsletter

MAY 2025

Athletes to Compete at Summer Games Presented by Pratt & Whitney, June 6th-8th



We look forward to hosting our 2025 Summer Games presented by Pratt & Whitney at venues in New Haven County on Friday, June 6th, Saturday, June 7th, and Sunday, June 8th. All events are open to the public and free to attend. They include:

Friday, June 6th

Developmental Swimming at Hamden Hall - Beckerman Athletic Center, 225 Skiff Street, Hamden, Noon

Opening Ceremony at Southern Connecticut State University - Jess Dow Field, 1 Wintergreen Avenue, New Haven, 6:30 p.m. Emcee: NBC Connecticut's Ryan Hanrahan

Saturday, June 7th

Swimming, Track & Field, and Race Walking at Southern Connecticut State University, 501 Crescent Street, New Haven, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Soccer and Tennis at Hamden Hall - Beckerman Athletic Center, 225 Skiff Street, Hamden, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Cycling at Yale West Campus, 100 West Campus Drive, Orange, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sponsor Hospitality Luncheon at Southern Connecticut State University - School of Business, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Victory Dance at Southern Connecticut State University, 7 to 9 p.m.

Sunday, June 8th

Swimming, Track & Field, and Race Walking at Southern Connecticut State University, 501 Crescent Street, New Haven, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Soccer and Tennis at Hamden Hall - Beckerman Athletic Center, 225 Skiff Street, Hamden, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

*Times are subject to change

Healthy Athletes® Activities

Healthy Athletes Village at Southern Connecticut State University - Michael J Adanti Student Center. Disciplines will include: FUNfitness, Fit Feet, Health Promotion, Healthy Hearing (Saturday only), Opening Eyes, Strong Minds, and Special Smiles, Saturday, June 7th - 9 a.m.

to 5 p.m. and Sunday, June 8th - 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Health Fair at Hamden Hall - Beckerman Athletic Center, Saturday, June 7th - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
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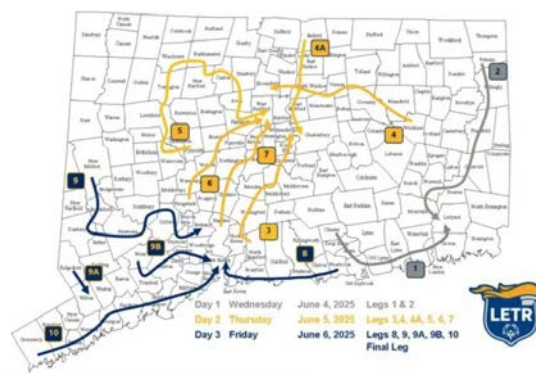
Coca-Cola Beverages Northeast - Foxwoods Resort Casino - Hearst Connecticut Media Group
N&D Sports - NBC CT/Telemundo - Pepperidge Farm - WORX

Officers to Carry "Flame of Hope" Statewide During Torch Run, June 4th - 6th

Police officers from across the state and athletes in some communities will participate in the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Connecticut on the three days leading up to Summer Games.

During the event, they'll carry the torch - with its "Flame of Hope" - to promote the mission and athletes of Special Olympics.

To see routes and schedules and find out when participants will be passing through your town, click [here](#).



2024 Annual Report Now Available Online

Our 2024 annual report is now published on our website, [socc.org](#). To view the report, click [here](#).

The annual report was designed by Worx, a Special Olympics Connecticut Year-Round Supplier.

Unified Sports® Awards Banquet Celebrates Outstanding School Coaches, Teammates



The 21st Annual Special Olympics Unified Sports® Awards Banquet hosted by the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) and Special Olympics Connecticut was attended by more than 900 student athletes and Unified Sports® partners, coaches, teachers, administrators, family members, and special honorees representing 94 high schools and middle schools across the state. It was an evening to celebrate those who play Unified and live Unified and schools that promote acceptance and inclusion for all in sports, in classroom, and beyond the schoolground.

During the event, Awards were presented to the following:

- Special Olympics Unified Sports® Rookie School of the Year – East Hampton Middle School
- Unified Sports Athletic Director of the Year – Matthew Memoli, Newtown High School
- Unified Sports Middle School Coach of the Year – Mike Misseri, JFK Middle School
- Unified Sports High School Coach of the Year – Stephanie Bregman, Pomperaug High School
- Special Appreciation Award - IAABO Board 8 Officials
- Overall Exemplary Middle School / Michael's Cup Winner – Westbrook Middle School
- Overall Exemplary High School / Michael's Cup Winner – Lyme-Old Lyme High School
- The Beau Doherty-Mike Savage Teammate Award – an athlete and Unified Sports® partner from each school

Student essayists also read their winning essays about “a time when you included someone in a Unified Sports experience” or “a time when a Unified Sports experience made you feel included.”

Bob Hale, Director of Special Olympics Connecticut Unified Sports in schools since 2019, was also celebrated for his leadership and accomplishments. Bob will be retiring at the end of this academic year. The Awards Banquet took place on April 28th at The Aqua Turf Club.

Global Messengers Meeting Inspires Leadership, Love, and Laughter



Our Athlete Leadership Spring Training Day took place May 3rd with nearly 100 participants including 45 Global Messengers - athletes who serve as ambassadors, spokespersons, and decision-makers for our organization.

Global Messenger Abby Snyder presented a breakout session about "Injury Prevention" and special guest speakers Lisa and Kurt Noble, who are Athlete Leaders from Special Olympics Illinois, offered a session about "Breaking Down Stereotypes in Relationships."

iHeart Radio Connecticut's Allison Demers talked to the group about her experience as a broadcaster and encouraged the Global Messengers to follow their passion and dreams, and "Nationally-Noted Motivational Speaker and Humorist" Kevin Wanzer shared words about "love, leadership, and laughter". Ending the day on a high note, yoga instructor and Special Olympics Farmington Valley Coach Kerry Tharpe led the group in chair yoga.

Training Days like this not only inspire and uplift our athletes, they also connect and allow them to grow and learn together. Synchrony is a Sponsor of our Athlete Leadership Program and The Sarah Bader Athlete Leadership Speaker Series is made possible through the generosity of the Sarah Bader Family.

Awards Dinner Honors Exceptional Volunteers

The SOCT Unsung Hero Award is presented to volunteers who serve our athletes with no expectation of recognition or reward.

This year's honorees are Adam Colletti, Helen King, Heidi Klein, Nick and Karen Zoccoli, and Melissa Jacobs. Each was presented with the prestigious Award at our Annual Awards Dinner.

Today and every day, we are grateful for the dedication and caring efforts of these amazing individuals.



Adam Colletti has been a member of the New London Wildcats since 2006. He's participated in softball and volleyball and was on the Unified team that won a silver medal at the 2014 Special Olympics USA Games.



Helen King is the heart and soul of Special Olympics Waterbury, serving as a parent, coach, and volunteer. Helen assists by coordinating transportation, scheduling buses, and coaching multiple sports at once.



Heidi Klein has been involved with Special Olympics Cheshire for more than 13 years and serves as the team's Local Coordinator. In this role, she organizes events, assists athletes, and supports her team's coaches and partners.



Nick and Karen Zoccoli got involved with Special Olympics in 2009 as a supporter of the Summer Games Athlete Dance, and since then have supported our Local Programs, Northern Time Trials, Unified Sports® Fall Festival, Winter Games, and MedFest.



Melissa Jacobs has been involved in Special Olympics for over a decade, personally and through her company, Henkel. She volunteers at State Games and represented Henkel at the 2023 Special Olympics World Games in Berlin.



Over the Edge Due to popular demand, we're adding a third rope from the rooftop at Mohegan Sun's Sky Tower so more brave supporters of SOCT can go Over the Edge for athletes of all abilities on August 29th. To find out more and sign up to rappel, click [here](#).

Noteworthy News



Our very first Mobile Plunge, hosted by Danbury police, took place at Danbury High School on April 27th.

What is a Mobile Plunge you may ask? You pick the place and we bring the pool and the opportunity to plunge for our athletes to you! With the success of this inaugural event, you can look forward to many more SOCT Mobile Penguin Plunges in the seasons ahead!



SOCT Global Messengers Remi Pagan and Jen Eng visited Labcorp in Shelton to invite the company's employees to come out and volunteer at Summer Games. This will be the first year



The American Legion has been a generous sponsor of our Summer Games for 15 years and has donated nearly \$40,000 to support the event! Lou Robinson presented a check to

Labcorp has a group of volunteers at the event!

continue his organization's charitable tradition.



Prysmian of Willimantic is a new SOCT sponsor and the company's employees volunteered at our UCONN Husky Classic Soccer Tournament.



Our athletes were thrilled to participate in a Unified Fishing Tournament at Gemstone Farm with members of the National Guard and Law Enforcement.

Free Resources to Care for Loved Ones

To show our appreciation for all you've done for Special Olympics Connecticut, we would like to offer you something in return. Something we hope will have a positive impact on you and your family. If you're like many people, creating or updating your will, trust and other important documents is something that often falls to the bottom of the to-do list. But planning can help you care for your loved ones and offer significant peace of mind. And it doesn't have to be complicated.

We hope our **free publications** will help you get started. Some of the information available includes:

- Considerations for taking care of a loved one with special needs, parents or elder family members
- Tips for choosing an executor
- Creating an Advance Care Directive
- Why you need a digital estate plan

You'll find a complete list of free publications **here**.

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Contact us at 203-230-1201 or specialolympicsct@soct.org.

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