



Robert “Beau” Doherty is President of Special Olympics Connecticut and has been with the organization for more than 35 years.

Beau began his career at the former Paul A. Dever State School in Taunton, Massachusetts, where he witnessed, firsthand, the isolation and separation that the intellectual disability community experienced. He was hired as Training Director for Special Olympics Massachusetts in 1982 to help provide individuals with intellectual disabilities opportunities to play sports and soon after, in 1986, continued his career at Special Olympics Connecticut, becoming its President and CEO in 1993.

Beau is warmly known throughout Special Olympics’ global community as the “Godfather” of Unified Sports[®], an inclusive program for people with and without intellectual disabilities that uses sports as a platform to inspire acceptance and inclusion for all, on and off the playing field. Since he encouraged Special Olympics Founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver to embrace the program, Unified Sports[®] has grown exponentially and now has more than 1,800,000 participants in 172 countries.

Under Beau’s leadership, Special Olympics Connecticut provides more than 12,000 athletes (with intellectual disabilities) and Unified partners (their

teammates without intellectual disabilities) with opportunities to compete in 27 sports at 132 competitions - including four state games. Special Olympics Connecticut also offers health screenings in seven disciplines and screened 1,790 athletes last year. Events and activities are organized and run by 28 staff members and 13,902 volunteers.

Beau's successful model of partnering with the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference to bring Unified Sports® to 95% of Connecticut's public high schools is now being replicated nationwide. And, Connecticut has 62 Unified Sports® banner schools which have received national recognition for their inclusive school programs, more than any other state.

Professional highlights include helping to establish the first Special Olympics program in the Arab country of Jordan, co-chairing the Special Olympics Indigenous Peoples Initiative in North America and managing the Special Olympics World Games in Connecticut in 1995.

For his impactful accomplishments, Beau was featured in ESPN's *50 Game Changers*, a series to celebrate Special Olympics' 50th Anniversary that was produced in 2018.

Fun Facts:

Sports hero: Hockey player, Bobby Orr

What does inclusion mean to you? Inclusion is a fashionable word that is thrown around often. The key is to make Inclusion real.