

Sports Grand Marshals - OC Special Olympians

Special Olympics is a unique non-profit organization that is focused on empowering those with intellectual disabilities to excel in sports and life. Many are unaware that Special Olympics is the world's largest public health organization for people with intellectual disabilities, providing access to free health services for a population with significant, unmet health needs.

Not only do we improve the lives of our athletes, but we also improve and support our local communities. For example, through our Unified Champion Schools Programs, we have unified sports competitions at high schools where those with and without intellectual disabilities compete on the same team. This creates a campus of inclusion and acceptance; it helps break down social groups and cliques that often make students feel left out. In a dramatically changing world, it's critical that we teach and help our youth see differences as strengths and opportunities to learn; not reasons to exclude and make fun of students.

Huntington Beach and Special Olympics have a long history of collaborating to improve our community. Whether it's our athletes volunteering at Leisure World to bring smiles to our senior's faces, creating unified sports at Orange County high schools, or providing a positive outlet for our HB citizens living with an intellectual disability, the city of HB has embraced this powerful and positive movement. We couldn't be more proud and excited to continue this partnership.

On July 4th, Special Olympics Orange County will have 16 athletes and four key volunteer leaders that will provide extra smiles to parade attendees. The 4th is about unifying America and celebrating our country's independence and Special Olympics is a great way to showcase an America that stands for all its citizens.