

Special Olympics Hawaii: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Date: March 13, 2020

To: Special Olympics Hawaii athletes, coaches, volunteers, families, and supporters

Subject: Cancellation or Postponement of all sports training and competition activities through May 31, 2020

Dear Special Olympics Hawaii 'Ohana,

I hope that this message finds you safe and healthy. As the situation with COVID-19 continues to develop, **Special Olympics Hawaii has made the decision to cancel or postpone all Special Olympics Hawaii events (including practices, competitions and fundraisers, and Summer Games) through May 31, 2020.** With guidance from Special Olympics International, CDC, State, and County Officials and input from stakeholders, we felt that these actions are necessary to keep all participants safe and do our part to contain the spread of this fast-moving virus.

These actions include the cancellation of the following:

- All practices and sports competition activities through the end of May, including ALL Area, Regional competitions and Summer Games
- Holoholo Walking Club and Toastmasters meetings through the end of May
- Preschool Play Days through the end of May

Additionally, please note that:

- Unified Champion School activities will be determined by the Department of Education and/or their respective school(s). Please check with that school directly for information on activities.
- All Torch Runs will be postponed to dates later in the year.
- The Polar Plunge and Cheer for Champions fundraising events have been postponed.
- Participants in all postponed events will be notified as events are re-scheduled.

We know that canceling events is truly disappointing for the athletes who work so hard for the chance to compete – as well as for the coaches, volunteers, family, and our staff and board who support them and look forward to cheering them on. But we also know that our love of sport doesn't compare to the importance of protecting the health and safety of all involved.

With no practice and competition in the coming weeks and months, we worry about both the physical and mental the health of our athletes and stakeholders. For many of our athletes, Special Olympics is a lifeline for both physical activity and social activity. Therefore, SOHI is introducing home fitness and health programs, with a social component this week, available to all SOHI stakeholders. Please go to our website www.sohawaii.org for more information.

How can you help during this difficult time? While volunteer and coaching opportunities are suspended for the moment, we need our community now more than ever! Here are a few ways you can help:



- **Make a donation!** As a result of the COVID-19 situation we have had to cancel/postpone three of our largest annual fundraisers, Tip a Cop, Polar Plunge and Cheer for Champions which provide vital funding for our work. Please considering [giving](#).
- **Reach out to an athlete.** Many of our athletes are socially isolated and have lost critical social connections due to COVID-19. Let them know they are not forgotten. You can post your message on the Special Olympics Hawaii Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsHawaii/>
- **Support One Another.** We know our Special Olympics Hawaii ohana is the most caring and generous. During this difficult time don't forget to care for yourself as you care for others. Your health and well-being are extremely important.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate this constantly changing environment and strive to make the best possible decisions with the safety and well-being of our athletes and all constituents at the forefront. Please visit our website (www.sohawaii.org) for the latest information and updates.

With much aloha,
Nancy Bottelo
President & CEO
Special Olympics Hawaii