



## Special Olympics Hawaii Newsletter: December 2024

Mahalo for your continued support!

Support Our Athletes

### Mission Partners



Par Hawaii



### Year-Round Partners



ALEXANDER & BALDWIN  
BALTIMORE FOR HAWAII



AMERICAN MEDICAL RESPONSE



KAISER  
PERMANENTE



### Year-Round Supporters



CALIFORNIA  
PIZZA KITCHEN



## What's Going On at Special Olympics Hawaii?

### Unified Champion Schools Have a Ball Showcasing Inclusion and Sportsmanship



On November 4 and 18, 2024, eight teams from six schools gathered for two exciting days of basketball. Hosted by Nanakuli High School and Kaimuki High School, the Unified Champion Schools Basketball League showcased the spirit of inclusion and teamwork as athletes and partners from diverse backgrounds competed side by side.

“I chose to help people with special needs because I want to give back to those with disabilities and be nice to everyone, no matter what extra problems they may face,” said Elijah Pontin, a Unified Partner from Campbell High School. “People should do what I’m doing because it shows love for the community and the value of kindness.”

The event was a tremendous success, bringing together students, families, and communities to celebrate the power of sports in fostering unity and understanding. With competitive games, inspiring moments, and exceptional sportsmanship, it was a day that truly highlighted the importance of inclusion in sports.

Congratulations to all who participated, and a big mahalo to everyone who helped make this memorable event possible!

---

## Celebrating Movement and Culture at Special Olympics Hawaii Young Athletes Makahiki Pā’ani



On December 7, Special Olympics Hawaii held its annual Young Athletes Makahiki Pā’ani event for children ages two to seven, with and without intellectual disabilities. Fifty keiki and one-hundred family members enjoyed a morning of movement and Hawaiian cultural games, including rolling the moa and ulu, throwing the ihe, dancing hula, and listening to mele. At the end of the event, keiki were given toys that were generously donated by Basketball Hawaii Youth Academy, AMVETS Hawaii, Augie T, and

## Closing Out the Year in Classic Fashion

Over 700 Special Olympics Hawaii athletes and Unified Partners came together for a spectacular Holiday Classic on Nov. 23-24. This year's event included memorable moments like a double-overtime basketball showdown, personal best scores in bowling, and a bocce tournament filled with the signature "bocce" dance.

For the first time in several years, every island in the state was represented, with Lanai making its long-awaited return to competition.

Marine Corps Base Hawaii and Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam once again hosted the games, with service members from both bases volunteering their time. Base Commanders Col. Jeremy Beaven, U.S. Marine Corps and Capt. Samuel White, U.S. Navy both delivered inspiring remarks at the opening ceremonies. Many of our athletes had the honor of receiving their medals from Col. Beaven and Capt. White as they greeted athletes throughout the weekend.

With beautiful weather, outstanding volunteers, and inspiring performances from the athletes, the Holiday Classic was the perfect way to close out the year.

---



## The Guardian: Lighting the Way with Corporal Ashley Fernandez's Dedication to Service and Special Olympics



*Corporal Ashley Fernandez with her fellow Guardians of the Flame*

This month, we celebrate the remarkable achievements of Corporal Ashley Fernandez, who has recently been promoted within the Honolulu Police Department. Corporal Fernandez is deeply committed to Special Olympics Hawaii and our mission of inclusion and empowerment for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Her dedication to Special Olympics Hawaii has been unwavering since 2017. She has volunteered her time at events such as Badges and Buckets and Tip A Cop fundraisers, which encourage law enforcement officers to raise awareness and resources for our athletes.

In November 2024, Corporal Fernandez took her commitment to the next level by traveling to Texas for the International Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) Conference. At the event, she connected with fellow law enforcement officers from across the country who share her passion for advocating for Special Olympics athletes.

Fernandez's promotion to corporal is a testament to her hard work and commitment to both her law enforcement duties and community service. As a Guardian of the Flame—an honor given to those who protect and carry the Flame of Hope to its final destination—her journey continues to inspire those around her, both as an officer and as an advocate for those who need it most. Congratulations to Corporal Ashley Fernandez on her promotion and her ongoing efforts to make our community a safer, more inclusive place.

---

## **Screening for Success: Healthy Young Athletes Focus on Health and Wellness**

On December 7, 2024, Dr. Erika Phelps-Nishiguchi of Hawaii Pacific Health led the second Healthy Young Athletes screening at the Young Athletes Annual Makahiki Pā'ani event. Vision, hearing, and developmental surveillance screenings were offered to children ages two to seven.

Healthy Young Athletes Clinical Director, Dr. Phelps-Nishiguchi was joined by volunteers from the Department of



Health's Early Intervention/Child Find & Children with Special Health Needs branch, the Hawaii Maternal & Child Health Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities program, students from the University of Hawaii Medical/Kinesiology & Rehabilitation Science department, and Mililani Mauka Elementary. Project Vision provided vision screenings, while Healthy Hearing Clinical Director Susan May of Kaiser Permanente and her audiology team conducted hearing screenings.

Parents received feedback and referrals based on screening results and were given the opportunity to discuss questions/concerns regarding their child's health, development, and wellness. It was an informative and enjoyable day for both parents and keiki.

The next Healthy Athletes screenings will be at our Annual Medfest on February 11, 2025, at the Kaiser Permanente Mapunapuna Clinic. Medfest screenings will also be available on Maui, West Hawaii, and Kauai.

Mark your calendars and start the New Year with a focus on health and well-being! For more information or to schedule a screening in your community or school, contact Tina King, Health & Wellness Manager at 808-695-3532 or email [ha@sohawaii.org](mailto:ha@sohawaii.org).

---

## Sponsor Feature:



The Fertility Institute of Hawaii plays a vital role in building families within our community and supporting Special Olympics Hawaii throughout the year. We deeply appreciate the unwavering dedication of Dr. John Frattarelli, founder and Laboratory Director of the Fertility Institute of Hawaii. Dr. Frattarelli is a Special Olympics Hawaii board member, the chairperson of our Capital Campaign, and a proud father to Brandon Frattarelli, a Special Olympics athlete.

"Thanks to the Fertility Institute of Hawaii and Dr. Frattarelli's leadership, we are able to provide more opportunities for athletes to shine and for our programs to thrive," said Dan Epstein, President and CEO of Special Olympics Hawaii. "Their generosity and hands-on involvement make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve, and we are proud to have them as a valued partner in our work."

As a year-round supporter of Special Olympics Hawaii, the Fertility Institute of Hawaii has served as the presenting sponsor of our Cheer for Champions gala for three years. Dr. Frattarelli's contributions extends beyond sponsorships—he has also participated in our Over the Edge and Paradise Plunge fundraisers alongside his son, Brandon. His leadership as our Capital Campaign chair and dedication as head coach of the Windward Warriors exemplify his commitment to Special Olympics Hawaii.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Frattarelli and the entire Fertility Institute of Hawaii team for their ongoing support of our athletes and our mission.

---



Create a legacy of giving:  
**empower future athletes**

[DOWNLOAD ESTATE PLANNING TOOLS](#)



### Planned Giving

One of the most important gifts you can give to your family, friends and community is a future where each person is accepted and appreciated for their unique strengths. Learn more about how you can leave a lasting impact when you include Special Olympics Hawaii in your will, by visiting [bit.ly/plannedgivinghawaii](https://bit.ly/plannedgivinghawaii).

### Combined Federal Campaign

Each fall, the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) provides federal employees and retirees with the chance to support their favorite charities. The 2024 CFC runs now through January 15, 2025. Visit [givecfc.org](https://givecfc.org) and use charity code 43725 to make a donation and meaningful impact for Special Olympics Hawaii.

---

### Share your Special Story

If you have a story about your involvement with Special Olympics Hawaii – such as a volunteer, coach, official or family member – we would love to hear from you! Please email your story to our PR team at [crystalclearcomms@gmail.com](mailto:crystalclearcomms@gmail.com). We can't wait to see what kind of stories you'll share!

Special Olympics Hawaii | 91-610 Maunakapu St | Ewa Beach, HI 96706 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)