

**Special Olympics**  
Hawaii



## Special Olympics Hawaii Newsletter: January 2025

Mahalo for your continued support!

Support Our Athletes

### Mission Partners



### Year-Round Partners



ALEXANDER & BALDWIN  
PARTNERS FOR HAWAII



KAISER  
PERMANENTE



### Year-Round Supporters



CALIFORNIA  
PIZZA KITCHEN



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

### Let's Pull Together for our Athletes at the Inaugural Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii Truck Pull & Spring Fest

We're thrilled to announce the Inaugural Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii Truck Pull & Spring Fest, happening on Saturday, April 5, 2025, at Ka Makana Ali'i in Kapolei. This one-of-a-kind event promises a day of adrenaline-pumping competition, family fun, and community spirit—all in support of Special Olympics Hawaii athletes.

#### The Main Event: The Truck Pull

Get ready for the ultimate challenge. Teams of eight will pull a 40,000-pound Coca-Cola truck, 30 feet in an exciting competition that tests teamwork and strength, all while giving back to the athletes who inspire us every day with their dedication and determination.



### Fun for Everyone: Spring Fest

In addition to the Truck Pull, the Spring Fest will feature:

- Delicious food from local vendors
- First responder vehicle displays
- Family-friendly activities
- Live entertainment
- Vendor booths featuring local businesses and crafts

Whether you're competing, cheering on a team, or simply enjoying the festivities, there's something for everyone.

### How You Can Get Involved

- **Form a Team:** Gather your colleagues, friends, or family to take on the truck pull challenge. Each team raises a minimum of \$2,000, with tools and tips available to make fundraising easy and fun. Team divisions include First Responders, Corporate/Business, Community, High School, Unified High School, and Unified.
- **Be a Sponsor or Vendor:** Promote your business while supporting a great cause. Sponsorship and vendor opportunities are available.
- **Spread the Word:** Share this exciting event with your network and help make it a success!

**Why Your Support Matters:** Funds raised through the Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii Truck Pull & Spring Fest go far beyond sports. Your contributions help fund health programs, leadership development, and inclusion initiatives that enrich the lives of Special Olympics Hawaii athletes—free of charge. Together, we can empower individuals with intellectual disabilities across the state to reach their personal best, both on and off the playing field.

**Sign Up Now:** Registration for teams, sponsors, and vendors is now open. Visit [sohawaii.org](http://sohawaii.org) to learn more. For additional information, contact Tracey at [traceyb@sohawaii.org](mailto:traceyb@sohawaii.org) or 808-695-3524.

Mahalo to our title sponsor: Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii – The Odom Corporation, our venue sponsor: Ka Makana Ali'i, and the Law Enforcement Torch Run for making this event possible.

Let's pull together to make a difference and create unforgettable memories. See you at the Inaugural Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii Truck Pull & Spring Fest!

---

## Building Inclusion Through Sports: Hawaii's Unified Champion Schools Shine

Hawaii is proud to be the home to 74 Unified Champion Schools (UCS) statewide. These schools actively build a more inclusive community by promoting social inclusion, respect, and friendship.

### What is Unified Champion Schools?

Unified Champion Schools (UCS) is a program

that brings students with and without intellectual disabilities together to create school environments where everyone feels valued and included. Through sports, inclusive youth leadership opportunities, and whole-school engagement, UCS empowers students to be change-makers in their schools and communities. This program also provides funding for transportation and inclusionary activities, making it easier for schools to participate and create meaningful, inclusive sports experiences.



#### How Can You Get Involved?

- **Join the Movement:** Encourage your school to become a Unified Champion School and gain access to valuable resources and support.
- **Volunteer:** Participate in UCS events as a volunteer or coach.
- **Spread Awareness:** Advocate for inclusion in your community and inspire others to take action.

Together, we can create a culture of acceptance and belonging, one school at a time. To learn more about Unified Champion Schools, contact Emerald-Leigh at [unify@sohawaii.org](mailto:unify@sohawaii.org).

## From Hawaii to Turin: Help Officer Abran Light the Way for Local Athletes



Officer Michael Abran, a 14-year veteran of the Hawaii Police Department, was recently recognized with the prestigious Haweo Award, which honors Hawaii County law enforcement and fire department personnel who go above and beyond the call of duty. This award highlights Officer Abran's steadfast dedication to Special Olympics Hawaii and his outstanding service to the community.

For the past nine years, Officer Abran has volunteered as a coach, fundraiser, and event organizer, making a significant and lasting impact on Special Olympics athletes and the broader community. Now, as a proud Guardian of the Flame, he has been selected to represent Hawaii in the 2025 World Winter Games Torch Run in Turin, Italy. This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity will allow him to showcase the aloha spirit and advocate for inclusion on a global stage this March. Carrying the torch reflects his commitment to the Special Olympics movement and a testament to the athletes he has mentored and inspired.

To make this journey possible, Officer Abran needs our support. Travel and related expenses are significant, and every contribution will help him represent Hawaii with pride. Let's come together as an ohana to carry the flame to the global stage. You can support Officer Abran's journey by donating today at [bit.ly/michaelabran2025](https://bit.ly/michaelabran2025).

Together, we can help Officer Abran shine a light on the power of inclusion and bring the aloha spirit to Turin. Let's celebrate and support him as he continues his mission of inclusion and empowerment!

# Empowering Athletes Through Health and Wellness

Did you know that Special Olympics is one of the world's largest health organizations? A cornerstone of its mission is advancing health access and equity to ensure better care and overall well-being for athletes and individuals with disabilities. Over the past 30 years, Special Olympics has collected valuable data to monitor and enhance the health of its athletes, addressing disparities faced by individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).



## What is Healthy Athletes?

The Healthy Athletes program features a dedicated team of athlete leaders and health messengers who raise awareness within healthcare systems and educational institutions. This program ensures athletes receive health screenings spanning nine disciplines:

- Fit Feet (Podiatry)
- Fun Fitness (Physical Therapy)
- Healthy Young Athletes (Early intervention for children ages 2-7)
- Healthy Hearing (Audiology)
- Health Promotion (Nutrition)
- Opening Eyes (Vision)
- MedFest (General health screening)
- Special Smiles (Dental care)
- Strong Minds (Mental health)

At the heart of our Healthy Athletes program are 13 clinical directors—experienced doctors, specialists, and health professionals—who provide free screenings during our Annual Summer Games. MedFest events, held throughout the year, further expand access to care.

For the past nine years, Kaiser Permanente, has been a key partner, hosting annual Medfests, dedicating an entire floor at their Mapunapuna location. This invaluable partnership ensures our athletes receive free medical screenings from skilled physicians and specialists.

## Upcoming Oahu MedFest Event

**When:** Tuesday, February 11, 2024

**Where:** Kaiser Permanente, Mapunapuna Clinic  
2828 Paa Street, Honolulu, HI 96819

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**About:** The MedFest screening is open to all school delegations and adult athletes with expiring medical documents. Additional MedFest events will also be held at Kaiser Permanente facilities on Kauai and Kona, with details to be announced at a later date.

Mahalo to our partners, volunteers, and health professionals for their ongoing support in promoting the health and wellness of our Special Olympics Hawaii athletes. For additional details and to register, visit [sohawaii.org/events/mapunapuna-medfest/](https://sohawaii.org/events/mapunapuna-medfest/). For additional information, please contact Tina, Health & Wellness Manager, at [ha@sohawaii.org](mailto:ha@sohawaii.org) or call 808-695-3532.

---

## Sponsor Feature: Par Hawaii

This year, we proudly celebrate 35 years of unwavering support from Par Hawaii. Their dedication has been instrumental in helping fund programs that empower our athletes and foster engagement between their customers and our mission. Since 1991, Par Hawaii has contributed an impressive \$1,617,322, demonstrating their steadfast commitment to our athletes.



We'll also be celebrating another significant milestone this year, the 20th Annual Fueling Dreams campaign, taking place this April and May. This effort exemplifies the commitment of Hele and 76 store managers and employees, who go above and beyond in supporting our athletes. Donations collected at Hele and 76 stores on Oahu, Maui, Hilo, and Kona continue to fuel the dreams of our athletes across the state. Par Hawaii's support is also evident in their sponsorship of key events, including being the Opening Ceremonies sponsor of the State Summer Games, where their employees volunteer each year. They are also a Table Sponsor at our Cheer for Champions gala and organize a team to participate in the annual Over the Edge fundraiser.

Additionally, Par Hawaii has a strong history of past contributions. Their involvement includes participating in the Polar Plunge and making a generous \$80,000 contribution to our Capital Campaign, further solidifying their role as a crucial supporter of our mission.

We are grateful to Par Hawaii, their leadership, and their employees for 35 years of incredible support. A special mahalo goes to John Peyton, Par Hawaii's vice president of Hawaii retail and a dedicated member of our board of directors, for his unwavering commitment and advocacy. We look forward to continuing this strong partnership and achieving even greater success together in the years to come. Mahalo Par Hawaii!



### Jayden's Mission to Inspire Inclusion

Special Olympics Kauai athlete, Jayden, was recently featured in the Unified Generation e-newsletter for his inspiring efforts as a Hawaii Youth Ambassador. Committed to spreading awareness and promoting inclusion, Jayden is on a mission to share the message of Special Olympics Hawaii. Jayden shares, "...get more speaking opportunities because I want to get everyone to know about Special Olympics!" We're proud of Jayden's dedication to making a difference!



### 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](http://bit.ly/plannedgivinghawaii).

### 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!

