



Special Olympics Hawaii Newsletter: February 2025

Mahalo for your continued support!

Support Our Athletes

Mission Partners



Year-Round Partners



Year-Round Supporters



What's Going On at Special Olympics Hawaii?

Team Up for the Inaugural Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii Truck Pull & Spring Fest

Think you need to be a powerlifter to pull a Coca-Cola truck? Think again! The Inaugural Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii Truck Pull & Spring Fest is your chance to form a team—friends, family, or coworkers—have a blast, and support local athletes, all while putting your strength to the test!

Save the Date!

☑ Saturday, April 5, 2025 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

☑ Ka Makana Ali'i



Find Your Division and Sign Up Today!

We've got six divisions, so everyone can join in on the fun:

- ☑ **First Responders (Police, Fire, EMS, and Military)** — show your team pride and the power of service in action!
- ☑ **Corporate/Business** — Bring your coworkers together for a one-of-a-kind team-building challenge!
- ☑ **Community** — From clubs and churches to families and friends—everyone is invited to pull together for a good cause!
- ☑ **High School** (teams of 10) — Sports teams, student clubs, or just a group of friends—pull for your school in a fun, friendly challenge!
- ☑ **Unified High School** (teams of 10) — Teams made up of five Special Olympics Athletes and five Unified Partners, demonstrating the power of inclusion!
- ☑ **Unified** — Teams with four Special Olympics Athletes and four Unified Partners—together, we show the strength of unity!

Don't Have a Full Team or Just Need a Helping Hand? No Problem!

Excited to support Special Olympics Hawaii athletes but need an extra hand? Whether you have a full team or are looking for additional members, our volunteers are here to help!

- ☑ Create a Team (eight members) — Anyone 14 years of age and older can participate—strength doesn't matter! Volunteers will assist your team if needed.
- ☑ Create a Smaller Team (fewer than eight members) — Gather as many teammates as you can, and we'll fill in the rest! Volunteers will help complete your team, so you can still join the fun.
- ☑ The fundraising minimum of \$2,000 per team still applies, with the same options available for high school teams of ten.

Fundraising is Easy!

The team fundraising minimum is \$2,000, but it's easier to raise funds than you may think! Each participant will receive a personalized online fundraising link to share with friends, family, and coworkers.

- ☑ If each person on your eight-person team raises just \$250, you'll meet the goal!
- ☑ Whether some team members raise \$500 or others raise \$100, as long as the team total reaches \$2,000, you're all set to participate.
- ☑ With six weeks to go, there's plenty of time to rally support and get your team ready for the event! Everyone is welcome to watch the competition at Ka Makana Ali'i and enjoy the free Spring Fest event, featuring ono food from local vendors, live entertainment, retail vendors, a celebrity dunk tank, an emergency vehicle display, and family-friendly activities.

Ready for the challenge? Register now and be a part of this exciting day of fun, teamwork, and giving back!
Click [here](#) to sign up!

Dine, Donate, and Support Tip A Cop This Weekend

Our 34th Annual Tip A Cop fundraiser tips off this weekend at participating California Pizza Kitchen and Goma Tei locations across Oahu. During Tip A Cop, off-duty law enforcement officers serve guests at participating restaurants—all to raise awareness and resources for Special Olympics Hawaii athletes and programs. The event will take place during the following dates and times:

California Pizza Kitchen – Ka Makana Ali'i, Kahala Mall, Kailua Town Center, and Pearlridge Center

- Friday, February 28: 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Saturday, March 1: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Sunday, March 2: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Goma Tei – Kahala Mall and Pearlridge Center

- Friday, February 28: 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Saturday, March 1: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Sunday, March 2: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. - 9 p.m. (Pearlridge Center — 5 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.)

“We are deeply grateful for the steadfast support of our local law enforcement and incredible partners like California Pizza Kitchen and Goma Tei for making this event possible,” said Dan Epstein, President and CEO of Special Olympics Hawaii. “Tip A Cop is a shining example of how our community can come together – from our volunteers who give their time, businesses which open their doors to us, and generous diners who help empower our athletes and sustain vital programs. Together, we’re helping local athletes achieve their dreams and inspiring change. We encourage everyone to join us for a meal, show their appreciation for our law enforcement officers, and celebrate the spirit of giving back.”



Since its inception, Tip A Cop has raised \$546,092 for Special Olympics Hawaii.

Unified Champion Schools Flag Football League Scores a Touchdown



Special Olympics Hawaii’s Unified Champion Schools Flag Football League kicked off earlier this month. With seven powerhouse high schools in the mix—Campbell, Farrington, Kailua, Kaimuki, Mililani, Nanakuli, and Radford—this season, as expected, has been filled with unforgettable plays, strong teamwork, and high-energy competition.

One participant shared: “One of the Kailua athletes has (multiple) one-on-one caregivers because of behavioral issues. Today, he played with his team, offense and defense, took instruction from his partners, and the referee (me), and never showed a behavioral issue for a moment. His coach said that for him to take instruction from that many people in that type of setting was ‘nothing short of a miracle.’”

In addition to the team competition on February 3, two schools participated in the Individual Skills Competition, where athletes tested their agility, passing, and catching skills. Their dedication and determination were on full display, proving that every athlete has what it takes to shine!

On February 22, teams came together for a final day of competition and camaraderie. Fans, friends, and family witnessed big plays, even bigger smiles, and the ultimate show of inclusion as they cheered on these incredible athletes, who hit the field with passion and purpose.

The Guardian: Celebrating Major Carlene Lau’s Impact



We are thrilled to celebrate the well-deserved promotion of Major Carlene Lau of the Honolulu Police Department! Major Lau has been an unwavering champion of Special Olympics Hawaii, serving as a dedicated member of the Law Enforcement Torch Run Planning Committee and embodying the true spirit of a Guardian of the Flame.

For the past two years, she has led a Badges & Buckets team, bringing much-needed resources and awareness to support our athletes. Major Lau’s commitment to inclusion is evident through her volunteer work at events, engagement with athletes, and inspiring fellow officers to get involved. She has continuously gone above and beyond to make a positive impact.

Her promotion to major is a testament to her dedication, integrity, and leadership—qualities that extend far beyond law enforcement. We are deeply grateful for Major Lau’s contributions to Special Olympics Hawaii and are proud to celebrate this milestone with her. Congratulations, Major Lau!

We look forward to the continued positive influence you will have on our community!

Sponsor Feature: Kaiser Permanente

This month Kaiser Permanente Mapunapuna hosted its 15th Annual Medfest for Special Olympics Hawaii. The event, which took place on February 11, 2025, provided athletes with free physical examinations from a team of dedicated doctors, specialists, and healthcare professionals. An entire floor of Kaiser Permanente's facility was devoted to this special event, where athletes from Goodwill, Kaimiloa Elementary, and other delegations took advantage of the opportunity to receive health screenings from Kaiser Permanente's incredible staff.



Dr. Benjamin Chun, Rosalind Harper, Ruby Agnes, and their amazing team led the event, with Dr. Chun continuing his role as the Medfest Clinical Director. Clinical Directors Phoebe Packer and Dr. Gale Prentiss, along with Kaiser physicians Dr. Robert Pederson, Dr. Jenna Holmen, and Dr. Colin Petko, joined 16 medical professionals who volunteered their time and expertise to make this event a success.

In addition to the Mapunapuna event, two Medfests are scheduled for our neighbor island athletes in the coming months:

Kona Medfest

- **Where:** Kaiser Permanente Kona Medical Office
- **When:** Dates will be forthcoming.
- **Sign Up:** bit.ly/2025KonaMedfest
- **Contact:** Denise Lindsey | westhawaiiad@sohawaii.org

Kauai Medfest

- **Where:** Kaiser Permanente Kauai Office
- **When:** Saturday, March 8, 2025 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- **Sign Up:** bit.ly/KauaiMedfest25
- **Contact:** Lisa Aki | kauaiad@sohawaii.org

For 19 years, Kaiser Permanente has been a steadfast supporter of Special Olympics Hawaii and our athletes. Their commitment has grown over time, and today, as a Year-Round Partner, they provide \$50,000 in in-kind services annually.

Kaiser Permanente's mission of health equity, wellness, and service to the community continues to inspire and support Special Olympics Hawaii athletes. We are grateful for their ongoing generosity and partnership.

From Hawaii to Capitol Hill: Raising Our Voices for Special Olympics

By Jack Whitaker, Special Olympics Hawaii athlete



From February 4-5, I traveled to Washington, D.C., with my mom, Paula and Special Olympics Hawaii President & CEO, Dan Epstein for Capitol Hill Day. While there, I shared how Special Olympics has helped my family and many other athletes. We met with Hawaii's leaders, including Senator Mazie Hirono, Senator Brian Schatz, Representative Ed Case, and Representative Jill Tokuda. They all showed strong support for Special Olympics and its mission.

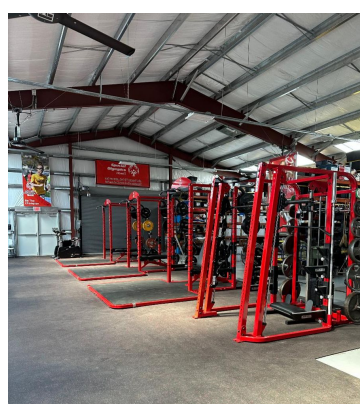
One of the most exciting parts of the trip was meeting Tim Shriver, Board Chair of Special Olympics International, and European Parliament representatives who want to start similar programs in their countries. It was amazing to see how Special Olympics is making a difference around the world.

During our visit, we also got to explore Washington, D.C. I toured the Capitol building, walked the National Mall to see famous monuments, and visited museums like the Air and Space Museum, the American History Museum, the African American History Museum, and the Holocaust Museum. This trip was fun, exciting, and very special.

Special Olympics helps not just people with intellectual disabilities, but also their families and communities. Representing Special Olympics Hawaii and sharing my story was a huge honor. This trip wouldn't have been possible without the love and support of my family, friends, and the Special Olympics Hawaii staff. Thank you all so much!



Editor's Note: Capitol Hill Day is an annual flagship event organized by Special Olympics that brings together more than 250 participants and volunteers from 48 states and the District of Columbia. Special Olympics athletes lead hundreds of face-to-face meetings with Members of Congress in both the House and Senate, urging their elected officials to support inclusive education and health initiatives for people with intellectual disabilities (ID). Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® programming is in more than 10,000 schools across the United States, with a goal of being in 20,000 schools by 2030. Additionally, Special Olympics is addressing health disparities for people with ID by providing free health screenings and training healthcare professionals to deliver follow-up care where and when it's needed.



Power Up Your Training at the Special Olympics Hawaii Fitness Center!

FUNDRAISER FOR Special Olympics Hawaii - Oahu Area Programs

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY FUNDRAISERS

When: Friday, March 7, 2025
Pick-up order by 6:00PM or delivery on Friday, March 7th

Where: Available at Panda Express locations nationwide
www.pandaexpress.com

How: Online orders only. Add code **SOH25** to the Fundraiser Code box during online checkout at www.pandaexpress.com or the App.

28% of sales will be donated to Special Olympics Hawaii - Oahu Area Programs

Special Olympics Oahu offers free, year-round sports to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

www.sohawaii.org | www.pandaexpress.com

Special Olympics

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

Order Panda Express Online to Help Oahu Athletes Shine

The Special Olympics Hawaii Fitness Center is now open, offering teams the chance to train for powerlifting or cross-training for other sports. Please note that the fitness center is currently open only to teams and is not yet available for individual athlete use. Reach out to Oahu Area Director Paula Whitaker at oahuAD@sohawaii.org to lock in your team's training time and get ready to lift your game!

Support Special Olympics Hawaii's Oahu area programs by ordering from Panda Express on Friday, March 7! Order online for pickup or delivery from any Panda Express location nationwide by entering code **9001678** in the **FUNDRAISING BOX** at checkout. 28% of sales using code **9001678** in the **FUNDRAISING BOX** will be donated to Special Olympics Oahu. Click [here](#) to place your order and enjoy a delicious way to give back!

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.

Forward to a Friend

Connect With Us!

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. We can't wait to see what kind of stories you'll share!

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