



Special Olympics Hawaii Newsletter: March 2025

Mahalo for your continued support!

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Mission Partners



Par Hawaii



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What's Going On at Special Olympics Hawaii?

Students Advocate for Inclusion at State Capitol



Students from various Unified Champions Schools on Kauai traveled to Oahu on March 5 for “Day at the Capitol,” an event focused on advocacy and inclusion for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

During the event, Special Olympics Hawaii athletes and their Unified partners had the opportunity to sit in on legislative sessions, hear from guest speakers, and participate in discussions about disability awareness and inclusion. This experience allowed students to share their unique perspectives, learn about the legislative process, and advocate for a more inclusive community.

The event highlighted the importance of giving individuals with disabilities a voice in shaping policies that impact them and reinforce the Unified movement’s commitment to fostering a more accepting and inclusive society.

Full Tank, Full Heart: Par Hawaii Celebrates 20 Years Fueling Dreams for Special Olympics Hawaii Athletes

This year Par Hawaii celebrates 20 years Fueling Dreams for local athletes. From April 14 to May 26, 2025, island drivers can go the extra mile by making a donation at check out at any participating Hele station including 20 on Oahu, eight on Hawaii Island, and five on Maui. Every dollar pumped into this campaign helps athletes with intellectual disabilities train and compete free of charge.

“We are proud to support Special Olympics Hawaii and the incredible work they do to uplift and empower local athletes with intellectual disabilities at no charge to them or their families,” said John Peyton, Vice President – Hawaii Retail at Par Hawaii. “The generosity of our customers makes a meaningful impact, helping to sustain essential programs in sports, health, leadership, and inclusion for these athletes in our communities.”



Par Hawaii, marketer of Hele and 76 Hawaii, has been a strong supporter of Special Olympics Hawaii for more than three decades. To date, the Fueling Dreams campaign has raised more than \$1,057,120 for Special Olympics Hawaii athletes and programs.

Get Involved: Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Our volunteers play a big part in the success of Special Olympics Hawaii events. With spring and summer events approaching, we’re looking for volunteers to help out. Below are a few ways to get involved and support Special Olympics Hawaii!

Oahu Area Games (Sunday, April 27 at Punahou School): Volunteers are needed to support our Oahu athletes competing in powerlifting, swimming, and track & field.

Interested in getting involved? Please contact Oahu Regional Area Director, Paula Whitaker, at oahuad@sohawaii.org.

Preschool Play Days: Join us and help our Preschool Special Education students stay active! Volunteers are needed to run various activity stations and assist with escorting participants safely through crosswalks and the parking area. For many of these children, this will be their first experience at an organized Play Day—come see the smiles on their faces!

- **Honolulu Preschool Play Day - Manoa District Park**
 - Friday, March 28 from 7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- **Leeward Preschool Play Day - Special Olympics Health and Wellness Center**
 - Friday, April 4 from 7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- **Leeward Preschool Play Day - Nanakuli High School**
 - Tuesday, April 22 from 7:30 a.m. – 12:30

Interested in getting involved? Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Alexis Martin, at volunteer@sohawaii.org.

Staff Spotlight: Jennifer Wong, Project Assistant

*Get to know some of the names and faces
that help make Special Olympics Hawaii run.*

This month we introduce you to Jennifer Wong, a multi-sport Special Olympics athlete who also works with our office as a dedicated project assistant. Jennifer has supported our office for over 21 years making her one of our organization’s most experienced team members. In her role as a project assistant, she provides valuable support in the office. When she isnt working at Special Olympics Hawaii, Jennifer competes in golf, swimming, bowling, soccer, track, and powerlifting. She even proudly represented Hawaii at the 2007 World Games in Shanghai!

Read on to learn more about Jennifer Wong.



- What high school you grad from?**
Castle High School.
- What’s your go-to plate lunch order?**
I love a good lau lau plate lunch.
- Your favorite memory from a Special Olympics Hawaii event?**
My favorite memory has been the chance to meet celebrities. One time, we met Marcus Mariota while he was at the State Summer Games opening ceremonies years ago.
- If you could compete in any Special Olympics sport, which one would it be and why?**
Volleyball because it's so much fun.
- If you could share one thing about Special Olympics Hawaii with the community, what would it be?**
I love that it’s inclusive and allows everyone to just be who they are.

The Guardian: 2025 Tip A Cop Raises More Than \$29,000 for Athletes



Thanks to the generous support of California Pizza Kitchen and Goma Tei, this year’s event brought together off-duty, volunteer law enforcement officers, community members, and generous donors in an inspiring show of support for our local athletes.

Volunteers from the Honolulu Police Department, Federal Detention Center, NCIS, Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, and the U.S. Marine Corps proudly traded their badges for aprons, serving meals and collecting "tips"—all donated directly to support our programs. Their energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to inclusion made a lasting impact on every guest they served.

Because of the community’s generosity, this event raised more than \$29,000, to provide year-round sports training, competitions, and health and leadership programs for athletes across Hawaii.

A heartfelt mahalo to our dedicated law enforcement volunteers, the staff of California Pizza Kitchen and Goma Tei, and everyone who came out to support. Your kindness fuels the joy, confidence, and empowerment of our athletes.

Together, we are building a more inclusive Hawaii—one tip at a time.

UH Medical School Hosts Day of Disability Awareness



On February 26, the University of Hawaii at Manoa’s John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) hosted a “Day of Disability Awareness,” inviting several local organizations to share their work with and for people with disabilities. Michelle Kimura, our former Health and Wellness Manager invited us to share about our organization with 80 medical students and their professors.

Special Olympics Hawaii athlete Ashley Graham and her mother, Vicki; athlete Peter Gumataotao and his father, Pete; and athlete Nicole Inouye discussed various aspects of Special Olympics. They educated students on ways future doctors might interact with people with disabilities. The parents shared heartfelt stories about the challenges and successes of navigating their children’s health journeys, offering valuable suggestions on how these future doctors can make a meaningful difference in their patients’ lives.

Mahalo to JABSOM and their students for the warm welcome and genuine interest in learning about ways to interact and care for our athletes and others with disabilities.

Mahalo to Our Valued Year-Round Partner, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii – The Odom Corporation, for Powering the Inaugural Truck Pull & Spring Fest!

This month we would like to highlight Year-Round Partner, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii – The Odom Corporation. Throughout the year, this company generously provides water, sports drinks, and soft drinks for our area and state competitions, as well as fundraising events.

Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii – The Odom Corporation’s commitment extends beyond donations as well, as they actively support key fundraisers, including serving as a Gold Medal table sponsor for Cheer for Champions and participating in Over the Edge. Additionally, their vice president and general manager, Joe Carter, strengthens this partnership through his leadership as a dedicated member of our board of directors.

As the title sponsor for our Inaugural Truck Pull and Spring Fest, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii – The Odom Corporation’s support plays a crucial role in bringing this exciting event to life. Set to take place on Saturday, April 5, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Ka Makana Ali’i, the Inaugural Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii Truck Pull & Spring Fest is a high-energy event where teams of eight will go full throttle to pull a 40,000-pound Coca-Cola truck 30 feet in the fastest time.



But the fun doesn’t stop at the finish line—spectators and participants alike can also take part in the Spring Fest, featuring ono food, first responder vehicle displays, family-friendly activities, live entertainment, and booths showcasing local crafts and products.

"We are thrilled to support Special Olympics Hawaii and their Inaugural Truck Pull & Spring Fest," said Joe Carter, Vice President and General Manager of Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii – The Odom Corporation. "Special Olympics Hawaii athletes demonstrate determination and heart every day, so having the opportunity to pull for a purpose and reflect their strength in the Truck Pull is truly an honor. We look forward to connecting with the community and enjoying a fun-filled day."

Mahalo again to our title sponsor, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii – The Odom Corporation, for making this event possible.



Mahalo to Our Incredible Truck Pull & Spring Fest Sponsors and Partners!

As we gear up for our Inaugural Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii Truck Pull & Spring Fest, we’d like to send a special thank you to the following partners:

- Venue Sponsor: Ka Makana Ali’i
- Law Enforcement Torch Run
- Media Partner: KHON2
- Media Partner: iHeartMedia (92.3 KSSK) Media Partner: Yelp Hawaii



Special Olympics Hawaii in the News

Check out the latest headlines featuring Special Olympics Hawaii!

- ["Our Picks for Upcoming Events" in HONOLULU Magazine](#)
- ["Special Olympics Hawaii Rolls Out New Fundraiser: The Inaugural Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii"](#)
- ["Truck Pull & Spring Fest" on Hawaii IRL](#)
- ["Tip A Cop" collects tips for Special Olympics Hawaii for 2025" on Wake Up 2day](#)



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.

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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