



## **SPECIAL OLYMPICS MILESTONES**

### **June 1963**

Eunice Kennedy Shriver starts a summer day camp for children and adults with intellectual disabilities at her home in Maryland to explore their capabilities in a variety of sports and physical activities.

### **20 July 1968**

Together with the Chicago Park District, the Kennedy Foundation plans and underwrites the First International Special Olympics Summer Games, held in Chicago's Soldier Field with 1,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities from 26 U.S. states and Canada competing in athletics, floor hockey and aquatics.

### **December 1968**

Special Olympics is established as a not-for-profit charitable organization under the laws of the District of Columbia. The National Association for Retarded Citizens, the Council for Exceptional Children and the American Association on Mental Deficiency pledge their support for this first systematic effort to provide sports training and athletic competition for individuals with intellectual disabilities based on the Olympic tradition and spirit.

### **13-15 August 1970**

The Second International Special Olympics Summer Games take place in Chicago, Illinois with 2,000 athletes from all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, France, and Puerto Rico.

### **13-18 August 1972**

The Third International Special Olympics Summer Games take place at the University of California–Los Angeles with 2,500 participants.

### **7-11 August 1975**

The Fourth International Special Olympics Summer Games take place at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan with 3,200 athletes from 10 countries taking part. The Games are broadcast nationwide on CBS-TV's *Sports Spectacular*.

### **5-11 February 1977**

The First International Special Olympics Winter Games are held in Steamboat Springs, Colorado with more than 500 athletes competing in skiing and skating events. The CBS, ABC and NBC television networks cover the Games.

### **8-13 August 1979**

The Fifth International Special Olympics Summer Games take place at the State University of New York at Brockport with more than 3,500 athletes from every state in the United States and more than 20 countries.

### **1980-1981**

Special Olympics launches a training and certification program for coaches and publishes the first Sports Skills Guide.

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**8-13 March 1981**

The Second International Special Olympics Winter Games are held at the Village of Smugglers' Notch and Stowe, Vermont with more than 600 Alpine and cross-country skiers and ice skaters participating.

**12-18 July 1983**

The Sixth International Special Olympics Summer Games are held at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. A crowd of more than 60,000 attends the Opening Ceremonies and approximately 4,000 athletes participate.

**24-29 March 1985**

Athletes from 14 countries are represented in skiing and skating events at the Third International Special Olympics Winter Games in Park City, Utah.

**September 1986**

The International Year of Special Olympics, culminating in the 1987 International Special Olympics Summer Games, is launched at the United Nations in New York City under the banner "Special Olympics—Uniting the World."

**July 1987**

More than 30,000 law enforcement officers from every state in the United States and seven countries run 26,000 miles in the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics. The 1987 Torch Run raises more than US\$2 million.

**31 July-8 August 1987**

The University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana, host the Seventh International Special Olympics Summer Games. More than 4,700 athletes from more than 70 countries participate in 1987's largest amateur sports event. The Games are covered in *Sports Illustrated* and *Time*, and reach more than 150 million people worldwide.

**October 1987**

Jimmy and Vicki Iovine of A&M Records and Bobby Shriver produce *A Very Special Christmas*, featuring holiday music performed by top pop chart music performers, with all album proceeds benefiting Special Olympics Programs worldwide.

**February 1988**

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) signs an historic agreement officially recognizing Special Olympics.

**July 1988**

Special Olympics Unified Sports™ is launched at the annual Special Olympics Conference in Reno, Nevada.

**1-8 April 1989**

The Fourth International Special Olympics Winter Games are held in Reno, Nevada, and Lake Tahoe, California. More than 1,000 athletes from 18 countries participate.

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### **20-27 July 1990**

The Third European Special Olympics Summer Games are held in Strathclyde, Scotland. Thirty European countries are represented by 2,400 athletes participating in eight official and five demonstration sports.

### **19-27 July 1991**

The Eighth Special Olympics World Summer Games\* are held in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota. Six thousand athletes from more than 100 countries make this the largest sporting event in the world in 1991. (\*The official name changes in 1991 from International Games to Special Olympics World Summer or World Winter Games.)

### **30 September 1992**

Special Olympics kicks off its 25th Anniversary Celebration—"Together We Win"—at the United Nations in New York City, where the 25th Anniversary Traveling Exhibit is officially launched before beginning a nationwide tour.

### **20-27 March 1993**

The Fifth Special Olympics World Winter Games are held in Salzburg and Schladming, Austria, with 1,600 athletes from more than 50 countries participating in five winter sports. These are the First World Winter Games held outside North America.

### **1-9 July 1995**

More than 7,000 athletes from 143 countries gather in New Haven, Connecticut, for competition in 21 sports at the Ninth Special Olympics World Summer Games.

### **January 1997**

Healthy Athletes becomes an official Special Olympics initiative providing healthcare services to Special Olympics athletes worldwide. Healthy Athletes has five disciplines, the earliest of which—Special Olympics Special Smiles™ and Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes—have provided health benefits through dental screening and vision examinations to tens of thousands of Special Olympics athletes. The other disciplines are Special Olympics Healthy Hearing, in which athletes have hearing screenings, Special Olympics FUNfitness in which athletes learn injury prevention through stretching exercises, and Special Olympics Health Promotion, in which athletes learn the components of a healthy lifestyle—regular exercise and good nutrition choices.

### **1-8 February 1997**

Nearly 2,000 athletes from 73 countries compete in five Olympic-type winter sports in Toronto/Collingwood, Ontario, Canada, for the Sixth Special Olympics World Winter Games. This event is the world's largest winter multi-sport event in 1997.

### **20 July 1998**

Special Olympics celebrates 30 years of heroes with the introduction of twelve 30th Anniversary Global Messengers.

### **17 December 1998**

U.S. President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton host a Christmas concert at the White House—entitled "A Very Special Christmas from Washington D.C."—to celebrate Special

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Olympics' 30th anniversary. The event marks the first time a U.S. President has hosted a Special Olympics gala at the White House. It is also the first time that artists from the successful *A Very Special Christmas* album series gather to perform together.

**26 June-4 July 1999**

The 10th Special Olympics World Summer Games are held in the Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill area (Triangle) in North Carolina. More than 7,000 athletes representing 150 countries compete in 19 sports.

**2000**

Special Olympics launches the "Campaign for Growth" with a goal to reach one million new athletes worldwide by 2005, changing the face of the Special Olympics movement. To date, this is the most ambitious growth campaign in Special Olympics history.

**16 January 2000**

ABC-TV's *The Wonderful World of Disney* presents *The Loretta Claiborne Story*, the first prime-time television movie about the life of a Special Olympics athlete.

**18-22 May 2000**

The Special Olympics China Millennium March takes place throughout China. Special Olympics Global Torchbearer and film star Arnold Schwarzenegger, along with Special Olympics athletes, light the "Flame of Hope" at the Great Wall of China and celebrate the Special Olympics movement with gala events in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. Special Olympics China declares it will increase the current number of Special Olympics athletes from 50,000 to 500,000 by 2005.

**20-23 May 2000**

The first-ever Global Athlete Congress takes place in The Hague, the Netherlands. Sixty athletes from every region of the world come together to discuss the future of the Special Olympics movement. Despite differences in language, culture, age and gender, these athletes discuss topics, challenge existing ideals and vote on new resolutions.

**14 December 2000**

U.S. President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton host a Christmas concert at the White House—entitled "A Very Special Christmas from Washington, D.C."—to celebrate the "Spirit of Special Olympics."

**4-11 March 2001**

More than 1,800 athletes representing approximately 70 countries compete in seven Olympic-type winter sports at the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Anchorage, Alaska. The Games are the largest event ever held in the history of Alaska.

**5 March 2001**

The U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations conducts a public hearing, chaired by Senator Ted Stevens, on promoting health for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics presents a special report, "The Health Status and Needs of Individuals with Mental Retardation," identifying actions to improve the quality and length of life of persons with intellectual disabilities. A panel of distinguished speakers in the fields of intellectual disabilities, health care and physical fitness testify.

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### **5-10 March 2001**

The first-ever Global Youth Summit is held in conjunction with the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games. Thirty-four students with and without intellectual disabilities from around the world work in pairs to report on the Games and discuss how to overcome the attitudes and stereotypes that youth with intellectual disabilities face.

### **12-14 July 2001**

Special Olympics African Hope 2001 is held in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Sun City, South Africa. Former President Nelson Mandela, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Special Olympics athletes light the "Flame of Hope" on Robben Island, followed by the world's largest Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics® through the streets of Cape Town. A soccer tournament, golf fundraiser and gala events in Johannesburg and Sun City generate awareness of the movement throughout the continent. African Hope 2001 launches a major growth campaign to reach 100,000 new Special Olympics athletes throughout Africa by 2005.

### **October 2001**

Special Olympics Get Into It™ (SO Get Into It), a new K-12 service-learning curriculum is developed by Special Olympics and available at no cost to schools and teachers worldwide. A resource kit is for students with and without disabilities, *SO Get Into It* teaches young people about intellectual disabilities while empowering them to "be the difference," by learning values of inclusion, acceptance and respect.

### **5-6 December 2001**

U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher holds a conference in Washington, D.C., to address the disparities in health care experienced by people with intellectual disabilities. It is the first conference of its kind to address the medical discrimination and neglect of people with intellectual disabilities, as well as their lack of access to affordable, quality health care. The conferees develop action steps to address these issues.

### **13 December 2001**

U.S. President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush host a Christmas dinner at the White House to celebrate the "Spirit of Special Olympics." Musician B.B. King performs for the more than 100 guests.

### **11 February 2002**

U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher releases A National Blueprint to Improve the Health of People with Intellectual disabilities, the first government report to bring this issue to the forefront and promote actions to remedy it.

### **19-20 July 2002**

The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund partners with Special Olympics to host an annual birthday celebration for its founder and chairperson, former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela. In alignment with the theme, "Unified Sports and Intellectual Disability," Special Olympics athletes participate in non-competitive, Unified Sports™ activities with children from the Children's Fund at the Polokwane Stadium in South Africa. An estimated 30,000 spectators watch 240 children each from the Children's Fund and Special Olympics participate in football (soccer), floor hockey, athletics, golf, bocce and mini-cricket. This is the first-ever publicly celebrated birthday event for Mandela.

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### **28 April 2003**

Stock exchange bells are rung simultaneously around the world to launch "Invest In A Life," a web-based initiative where donations could be made to support the Special Olympics "Campaign for Growth." Global financial leaders and Special Olympics athletes join together at the opening of Stock Exchanges in New York City, USA; Dublin, Ireland; Johannesburg, South Africa; London, England; Mexico City, Mexico; Mumbai, India; Tokyo, Japan; and Warsaw, Poland

### **20 June 2003**

The Multinational Study of Attitudes toward Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities results are released in Belfast, Northern Ireland; presented as part of the 2003 Scientific Symposium, held in association with the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games. Commissioned by Special Olympics, the two-year study, led by Dr. Gary Siperstein of the University of Massachusetts Boston, is the largest and most comprehensive study ever conducted on this subject, reporting how people across the world view the roles and capabilities of persons with intellectual disabilities in the workplace, the classroom and in daily social life.

### **21-29 June 2003**

The 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games are held in Dublin, Ireland — the first Summer Games ever held outside the United States. The world's largest sporting event for 2003 featured 7,000 athletes from more than 150 countries participating in 21 sports.

### **22 June 2003**

Sargent Shriver retires as Chairman of Special Olympics. Tim Shriver is named Chairman and CEO.

### **19 May 2004**

FIBA Europe and Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia sign a partnership agreement to develop basketball for players with intellectual disabilities. Through the partnership, Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia aims to bring opportunities to 15,000 new players by 2006.

### **July 2004**

From 12-16 July and 19-23 July 2004, more than 60 campers with intellectual disabilities discover the opportunities and experiences of participating in a sports camp program at the home of Special Olympics Founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver in Potomac, Maryland (USA). Camp Shriver 2004, evoking memories of the first Camp Shriver in the 1960s, permits these campers to realize their potential, develop physical fitness and experience the joys and friendships that come from camp.

### **30 October 2004**

U.S. President George W. Bush signs the 'Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act of 2004,' which authorizes US\$15 million per year over five years in funding for the growth of Special Olympics and initiatives that foster greater understanding and respect for people with intellectual disabilities. The signing marks the first time ever that support for Special Olympics has been secured through authorizing legislation.

### **26 February – 5 March 2005**

The 2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games are held in Nagano, Japan, the first time the World Winter Games are held in Asia. The Games draw more than 1,800 athletes from 84

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countries, and thousands of families, volunteers, spectators and journalists from around the world. The seven sports venues include many previously used for the 1998 Winter Olympic Games.

#### **6 – 8 June 2005**

The second Global Athlete Conference is held in Panama City at the City of Knowledge where 78 Special Olympics athletes ages 16 to 50 from more than 35 countries that speak 11 different languages come together and discuss issues from competition management to how the athletes could serve a more prominent leadership role in government relations and fundraising. Guest speakers include Special Olympics CEO Bruce Pasternack and Vivian Fernandez de Torrijos, the First Lady of the Republic of Panama. Special Olympics founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver is also in attendance.

#### **23 – 25 August 2005**

Special Olympics Afghanistan holds its first ever National Games in Kabul as more than 300 athletes competed, 80 of them female, though due to cultural restrictions the males and females compete in separate venues. Special Olympics also introduces the Healthy Athletes program at the Games and trains 20 Afghani medical professionals how to conduct medical screenings. For many of the athletes it is the first time they receive a physical exam.

#### **23 December 2005**

The movie *The Ringer*, starring Johnny Knoxville, opens in movie theatres throughout the United States and Canada. *The Ringer* is a Farrelly Brothers comedy about an ordinary man who tries to “fix” the Special Olympics was made with the assistance of Special Olympics as over 150 Special Olympics athletes appeared in the film. *The Ringer* tells the Special Olympics story in a new way, challenging destructive stereotypes and negative thinking about people with intellectual disabilities that are prevalent around the world.

#### **2006**

Special Olympics surpasses its five year goal of doubling the number of athletes that participate worldwide, while at the same time changing attitudes about people with intellectual disabilities around the world. The Special Olympics serves over 2.5 million athletes and is truly a global movement. With sports at the core, Special Olympics stands as a leader in the field of intellectual disability, making incredible strides in the areas of health, education, family support, research and policy change in over 165 countries worldwide.

#### **28 March – 2 April 2006**

The first ever Special Olympics Latin American Games are held in San Salvador, El Salvador. More than 600 athletes from 18 Latin American countries participated in the games. Mrs. Ana Ligia Mixco Sol de Saca, First Lady of El Salvador, is the Honorary Chairperson for the Games Organizing Committee. The Games’ slogan, “Changing Attitudes, Promoting Opportunities” is part of an aggressive nationwide campaign by Mrs. Saca’s team that brings the faces of the Games - athletes, volunteers, organizers - into the public eye and generates tremendous pride and excitement for thousands of Salvadoreans as they prepare for the Games.

#### **10 June 2006**

President and Mrs. George W. Bush host a tribute dinner at the White House to honor Special Olympics for its unprecedented growth over the past five years on the 85<sup>th</sup> birthday of Founder

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Eunice Kennedy Shriver. Recording artist Rascal Flatts perform for guests that include Special Olympics athletes and key supporters of the “Campaign for Growth” from the business, entertainment and sports worlds.

### **2 – 7 July 2006**

The first-ever Special Olympics USA National Games are witnessed by thousands of spectators and supporters in Ames, Iowa. A host of celebrities and dignitaries including Tom Arnold, Hootie and the Blowfish, Jo Dee Messina, Kurt Warner, Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) and U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Richard Carmona are on hand to give their support of the inaugural event. Carmona also surprised Special Olympics Chairman Dr. Timothy Shriver by awarding him the Surgeon General’s Medallion, the highest honor the Surgeon General can bestow upon an individual.

### **6 – 13 November 2006**

The first Special Olympics International Cricket Cup is held in Mumbai, India, marking the official launch of cricket as a recognized sport for Special Olympics globally. Ten male, three female, and Unified Sports teams compete in the competition from Special Olympics Programs in Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and West Indies.

### **10 November 2006**

With support from the Organizing Committee of the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games, Shanghai Municipal Government, the Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations, the United Nations Office of Sport and Development and Peace, and Special Olympics International, the “Special Olympics For Social Harmony” forum is held at the United Nations in New York City. The forum’s objective is to create greater awareness of the global impact the Special Olympics movement and mission has on social change. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan addresses an international audience which includes Special Olympics Founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Special Olympics Global Ambassador Ziyi Zhang and several members from the Special Olympics International Board of Directors during a reception that follows the forum, and helps to unveil the “Special Olympics For Social Harmony” photo exhibition.

### **11-15 November 2006**

The Special Olympics Middle East/North Africa Regional Games takes place from 11-15 November 2006 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. One thousand athletes representing 20 Special Olympics Programs in the region compete in ten sports including aquatics, athletics, badminton, basketball, bocce, equestrian, football (soccer) — 5-a-side and Unified Sports®, powerlifting, table tennis and team handball.

### **September 2007**

The U.S. Department of State funds the Eunice Kennedy Shriver (EKS) Fellowship Program. This program is intended to create a cadre of professionals to lead Special Olympics Programs in developing countries, as well as develop cross-sector initiatives and long-term relationships between national Special Olympics Programs and the organizations and sectors in which Fellowship Program alumni are employed. The ultimate goal of this program is to raise the status of people with intellectual disabilities in these countries, by sensitizing every sector to the needs and value of this population.

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Fellows are selected from Special Olympics Programs and from the government, NGOs, and academic sectors in countries that are targets for development by both Special Olympics and the U.S. State Department. These countries include: Brazil, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Russia, South Africa, India, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

#### **2-11 October 2007**

The 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games, held in Shanghai, China are the first World Summer Games held in Asia. The Games draws 7,182 athletes from 164 countries, and thousands of families, volunteers, spectators and journalists from around the world as Shanghai plays host to the largest international sporting event in the world in 2007.

#### **20 July 2008**

Special Olympics celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Since July 20, 1968 the Special Olympics movement has grown from a few hundred athletes to 2.8 million athletes in over 180 countries in all regions of the world with nearly 30,000 competitions year round. Congress passes House Resolution 1279 officially recognizing Special Olympics 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as celebrations take place in Washington DC, on Chicago's Soldier Field – site of the first International Special Olympics Games (now World Games) and around the world.

#### **7-13 February 2009**

The 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games are held in Idaho, USA drawing nearly 2,000 athletes from nearly 100 countries along with thousands more volunteers, family members, friends and spectators. These World Games are themed to empower youth to be leaders of change for people with intellectual disabilities. An outcome of the 2009 World Winter Games was the "Spread the Word to End the Word" youth led campaign against the prevalent use of word "retard."

#### **May 2009**

The U.S. National Portrait Gallery unveils a historic portrait of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the founder of Special Olympics. This historic painting is the first portrait the Gallery has ever commissioned of an individual who has not served as a U.S. President or First Lady.

#### **11 August 2009**

The founder of Special Olympics, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, dies at her family home in Massachusetts. Letters and messages celebrating her contribution to humanity pour in from world leaders and ordinary people around the world.