



Special Olympics



Update

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Special Olympics is a nonprofit international program of year-round sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with mental retardation.

Welcome to the third issue of *Healthy Athletes Update*. The date is fast approaching for the start of the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Dublin, Ireland. Just as the athletes are working hard to be at their peak for competition, the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes™ disciplines are working hard to be ready to open their venues to the 7,000 athletes who will compete in the 2003 World Games. As you read this newsletter, we hope you will see the spectacular growth that has occurred since the Healthy Athletes initiative began.

Dr. Steve Perlman, the Global Clinical Advisor of Special Olympics Special Smiles™, describes how far the program has come since its inception. It is clear that the work Dr. Perlman has accomplished has changed the lives of many Special Olympics athletes. Special Smiles not only touches the lives of the athletes who visit these venues, but it also clearly highlights the need to improve access to dental care for people with mental retardation in all the corners of the globe. Please read his column to get all the details.

Dr. Perlman also describes the development of a professional organization that is merging the expertise of medicine and dentistry—the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry. This is the first time these professionals have joined forces to work toward improving medical care for people with special needs. Special Olympics President and CEO Timothy Shriver is a member of the Executive Board of this new association. What an honor for both Shriver and Special Olympics. Congratulations to both!

Special Olympics-Lions Club International Opening Eyes™ Global Clinical Advisor Dr. Paul Berman shares the excitement of both established and new sponsorships. The Lions Clubs International Foundation is in its third year of support. Not only have the Lions provided essential financial support, which is the primary reason that Opening Eyes has been able to grow so fast, but Lions Club members also have volunteered at Opening Eyes venues around the world. They have been enthusiastic and hard working, and the program has benefited because of their participation.

We would like to announce a new agreement with Essilor International, the new sponsor for all of the ophthalmic lenses of Opening Eyes. Each athlete who receives a new pair of glasses will benefit from this agreement, as well as the agreement with Safilo which will provide all the prescription frames and non-prescription sunglasses. Liberty Optical has supported Opening Eyes for many years, providing all of the sports frames needed by the athletes. The athletes and volunteers thank each of you for your new and continued support.

The Special Olympics Healthy Hearing™ program is growing along with the other Healthy Athletes disciplines. Dr. Judy Montgomery shares a heartwarming story from the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Alaska, USA. She describes her experience with a young man from Turkmenistan. As you read the

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The Special Olympics University Washington D.C. Team



From top left to bottom right: David Evangelista, Kyra Sherman, Kester Edwards, Dr. Mark Wagner, Dr. Stephen Corbin, Shantae Polk, Courtney Pastorfield, and Renee Dease

story, it is clear how the Healthy Hearing program can make a significant impact on an athlete's life. We commend the volunteers who made it possible for this young man to return home with better hearing.

The Special Olympics Health Promotion program is not only getting larger, but also diversifying. Courtney Pastorfield, Manager of Health Promotion, talks about some exciting plans for Dublin, Ireland, that include the addition of screening for bone density which can indicate whether or not the athlete is at risk for osteoporosis. Health Promotion also will provide information to the families and caregivers of the athletes. It will offer educational programs to encourage healthy lifestyles. There are many other exciting activities planned for Dublin. Make certain to pay a visit to the Health Promotion venue.

Sun Safety, part of the Health Promotion program, was introduced at the 1999 Special Olympics World Summer Games in North Carolina, USA,

and will again be offered at the 2003 World Summer Games. The goal of this program is to educate the athletes on how to best protect themselves from developing skin cancer. This is a serious problem, and volunteers will be available to answer the athletes' questions.

The Special Olympics FUNfitness initiative is growing rapidly with the addition of several new programs in the United States as well as one last year in Ireland. FUNfitness has more than 130 physical therapists who already have volunteered for the 2003 World Games. In addition, Dr. Donna Bainbridge shares some personal stories to remind us why we are involved in Special Olympics.

Our newest Healthy Athletes discipline, Special Olympics Fit Feet, was developed by the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine. Dr. Pat Nunan is the Academy's current president and will serve as our Global Clinical Advisor. He is supported by the organization's Executive Director, Rita Yates. Podiatric screenings will be

available to the athletes during the 2003 World Games.

There are so many exciting things happening in Healthy Athletes. All of the disciplines continue to grow and move into new communities and countries. Each program has several common goals: to improve the quality of life for people with mental retardation through better access to health care; to improve their ability to train and compete; to train more providers who are willing to offer their services; and to teach the athletes to make healthy lifestyle choices. We need to encourage more professionals to become involved in the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes initiative. All of us should make it our responsibility to contact our friends and colleagues and convince them to volunteer at an event. Once they have an opportunity to participate, they will be hooked forever. Share the excitement of being a part of Special Olympics!

See you all in Dublin! ■

Directors' Corner

Mark L. Wagner, D.M.D.

Stephen B. Corbin, D.D.S., M.P.H.

As the second quarter of 2003 draws to a close, we are confronted with challenges and opportunities. In the last few months, we have seen remarkable advances and firsts in the Healthy Athletes initiative. From 28 February-1 March, we had our first Train-the-Trainer event in Mexico City, Mexico. Health care professionals from Mexico, the United States and the Caribbean came to this training event. Through the fabulous cooperation and assistance of Special Olympics Mexico, nearly 200 athletes from in and around Mexico City received screening services in FUNfitness, Healthy Hearing, Opening Eyes and Special Smiles. The great news is that 55 new clinical directors were trained for North America. One of the great quotes about the initiative occurred during a national press conference in conjunction with the event. Roberto Rodriquez, the President of Special Olympics Mexico, said, "Sport in my poor country is a luxury. It will be the health initiatives that will allow it to grow."

We recently completed a major training and screening program in Latin America. Health professionals from 17 countries in South and Central America were invited to Panama City, Panama, in May. This event was cosponsored by Special Olympics Panama and the Special Olympics Latin America Region. Training of specialists in eye care, hearing, dentistry and health promotion took place. Further, intensive planning sessions have laid the groundwork for a truly unique regional strategy to grow Healthy Athletes.

The 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games are fast approaching. Thousands of Special Olympics athletes will be given the opportunity to receive health screening and services. These services will include FUNFitness, Fit Feet (Podiatry), Healthy Hearing, Health Promotion (nutrition, sun and skin safety, tobacco cessation and bone health), Opening Eyes and Special Smiles. There will be a Train-the-Trainer event from 19-24 June which will include clinical seminars and hands-on screening of athletes. The screenings will take place from 20-29 June. For more details, read "Countdown to Dublin" (page 8) in this newsletter.

In early 2003, Healthy Athletes received great news that it was again included in the United States' 2003 Federal Budget. This is the second year that Special Olympics has received a federal appropriation to further its health initiatives in service, education and research. This funding will allow the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes initiative to continue to expand and benefit many thousands more athletes. And, a giant "thank you" to Lions Club International Foundation who approved a \$2 million grant extension to support Opening Eyes through June 2005.

Finally, we wish to express our continuing gratitude to be involved with this initiative. The opportunity to meet and work with so many talented and dedicated health professionals is a wonderment and joy.

We respect you all and thank you for your time and talent. ■

Special Olympics Special Smiles

Steven Perlman, D.D.S., M.Sc.



Special Olympics

Healthy Athletes

Special Smiles™

As we reflect upon the achievements of Special Olympics Special Smiles over the past few years, it is hard to grasp how much has been accomplished toward improving the oral health and access to care for children and adults with mental retardation. Some of the highlights include:

Special Smiles data provided significant documentation to the Yale Report, "The Health Status and Needs of Individuals with Mental Retardation."

Special Smiles testimony and data helped initiate the first U.S. Senate hearing on "Health Disparities and People with Mental Retardation" held on 5 March at the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Anchorage, Alaska, USA.

The Senate hearing, along with the time spent with former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher, led to the first Surgeon General's Conference on "Health Disparities and Mental Retardation," held in Washington, D.C., USA, in February 2002.



Dr. Timothy Shriver (left) discusses the health needs of Special Olympics athletes with Surgeon General David Satcher.



Special Olympics athlete Loretta Claiborne offers riveting testimony at a U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee hearing.

Dr. Satcher spent several hours at the Healthy Athletes venue, including Special Smiles, which opened his eyes to the problem with access to care, quality of care and education of dental professionals. In the summary of the conference, it was brought to light that access to and the ability to receive dental care is the number one health problem that people with mental retardation face.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) held a Senate hearing on the Children's Oral Health bill on 25 June 2002, during which Timothy Shriver was asked to provide testimony in the area of special patient care. That bill now includes specific provisions for children with developmental disabilities.

The work being done by Special Smiles was integral to the American Dental Association (ADA) passing Resolution 66H at its annual session in September 2002. This resolution states:

- Resolved, that the Association supports appropriate initiatives and legislation to improve and foster the oral

health of persons with special needs, and be it further

- Resolved, that the constituent and component dental societies be encouraged to support state and local initiatives and legislation to improve the oral health of persons with special needs, and be it further
- Resolved, that dental and allied dental programs be encouraged to educate students about the oral health needs and issues of people with special needs.

There is no doubt that this came about as a result of Special Smile's continued pressure and creation of awareness in this area.

Last year, Dr. H. Barry Waldman donated his services to Special Olympics during his sabbatical. In addition to having published many significant articles covering health issues for children and adults with disabilities, Dr. Waldman became aware that policy requiring dental schools to educate students in the field of special patient care had been eliminated by the ADA Council on Dental Education.

As a result of efforts by Special Olympics and others, we are proud to announce that, at the January meeting, the Council on Dental Education addressed this issue by including a newly stated policy on dental education. It has not been formalized as of this date, but it is a significant start.

We are also very proud to announce that our efforts have contributed to the

formation of the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry, a new association of health care providers. The Executive Board is being led by the most accomplished dentists, developmental pediatricians, developmental physicians, internists, neurologists, psychiatrists and representatives of other specialties of medicine, as well as leaders and educators in special patient care in dentistry. The mission statement and strategic plan of the Academy are as follows:

Improving Quality of Care Through Teaching and Research

It is the position of the Academy that no meaningful progress will ever be made toward achieving parity in access to health care for people with mental retardation and developmental disability until medical and dental schools begin to responsibly train tomorrow's doctors in the rudimentary principles of that care.

Our mission is simple and uncomplicated. It is to:

- Advocate for improving the quality of health care available to Americans with mental retardation and developmental disabilities and for improving access to that care by developing University-based Developmental Medicine and Dentistry Programs across the country.

- Promote the inclusion of training in the care of people with mental retardation and developmental disabilities in the curricula of mainstream medical and dental schools throughout the nation.
- Improve and expand clinically-based research programs in areas specific to the medical and dental care of people with mental retardation and developmental disabilities.

The leadership of the Academy understands that to accomplish our mission we must begin our work in the medical and dental schools and then build partnerships with the community and with human service programs.

These partnerships will make it more difficult for any one partner to walk away from its commitment in the months and years to come.

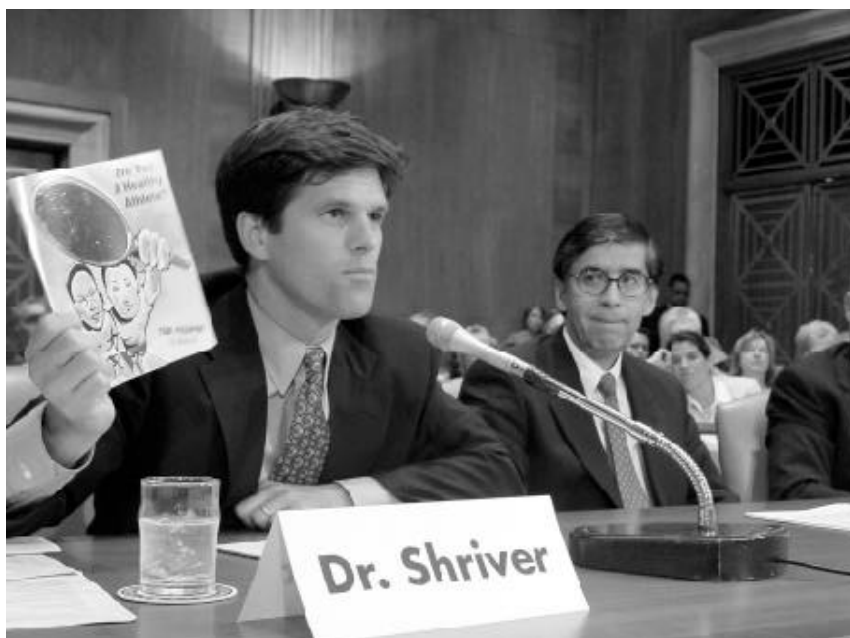
Information on the Academy can be found at www.aadmd.org.

Timothy Shriver has accepted a position on the Academy's Executive Board and will have a major influence in policy development. The Academy's leadership already has established its presence by meeting with key health care leaders in the Bush administration. The first meeting was in March 2003. The Academy will use Exceptional Parent Magazine as a forum until it starts its own journal.

Special Smiles, along with colleagues in Healthy Hearing, FUNfitness and

Opening Eyes, conducted the first Train-the-Trainer seminar in Mexico. Dentists from the United States and Mexico attended this event and completed nearly 200 oral health screenings of athletes from the communities in and around Mexico City. Special Smiles training also took place in Panama City, Panama. Dentists and other health professionals from South and Central America participated. In addition to this event, the Atraumatic Restorative Therapy (ART) technique was introduced to our Latin American colleagues. This is a cooperative undertaking with the Pan American Health Organization. Through this effort, we hope to expand the service to our athletes in many parts of the world by offering a minimally invasive approach to the management of severe dental decay.

All of these accomplishments are historic, but none of them would have been possible without the efforts of our local coordinators and our many sponsors and supporters. Special acknowledgement is owed to the Grottoes of North America. This is their second year of support to the Special Smiles program for children in North America. Their leadership, mentoring and recruitment of extraordinary volunteers have made our dreams a reality. We thank you all. ■



Dr. Shriver makes a point to a U.S. Senate hearing on children's oral health.



Grottoes of North America pictured with Special Olympics staff at the signing of a partnership for Special Smiles.

Special Olympics- Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes

Paul Berman, O.D.



Special Olympics



Lions Clubs International



The Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes initiative has been very fortunate to acquire sponsorships that support its goals. Sponsorship of the Opening Eyes initiative cannot begin without acknowledging the partnership with the Lions Clubs International Foundation which has given cash grants of US\$5.78 million over five years to cover most of the direct costs involved in running the program. This financial contribution has enabled us to grow to the point where we expect to complete 180 events in 40 states and 25 countries by the end of the three-year grant in December 2003.

The Lions not only provide financial backing, but also much needed volunteer support and networking in the field. No matter what the need, be it alcohol swabs or business cards, there has always been a Lion to help us. In addition, the Lions Clubs have been a source of eager volunteers which helps make the athletes' screening experience efficient and enjoyable.

The Lions motto is "We Serve." Many of our optometrists have joined the Lions after learning how this great organization helps people, particularly in the area of vision care. Many of the Lions have said that participating in an Opening Eyes screening was one of the most gratifying experiences they have had.

In 2003, we formalized an agreement with Essilor International, the manufacturers of Varilux®, Airwear® and Crizal® lenses. Essilor International is now the exclusive global supplier of lenses for Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes, ensuring the highest quality products for our athletes. For most of the Opening Eyes events, Essilor International will be providing polycarbonate lenses — the highest standard for eye protection and performance.

We also have signed an agreement with Safilo, an Italian-based company that is one of the world's largest manufacturers of fashion eyewear. Safilo brands include Gucci, Nine West, Fossil and Christian Dior. Safilo will be donating frames and sunglasses, ensuring athletes will not only see well but also look good.

The longest standing corporate supporter of the Opening Eyes program has been Liberty Optical. Liberty Optical has been providing athletes with eye wear designed for sports, specifically Rec Specs and aqua goggles. These glasses provide eye protection and improved vision when competing in contact sports as well as aquatics events. This has been particularly satisfying to the athletes.

Obviously, Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes would not be here today without the support of the Lions Clubs Organization and these other fine corporations which understand the concept of corporate giving.

On behalf of the Special Olympics athletes throughout the world who will be benefiting from their generosity, we would like to say thank you to our sponsors. ■



A Special Olympics athlete from Paraguay is seeing things differently now.

Special Olympics Healthy Hearing

Phil Hofstetter, Audiologist,
Nome, Alaska



Special Olympics

Healthy Athletes

Healthy Hearing

How Anchorage Changed My Life!

The 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Anchorage, Alaska, were the beginning of a series of experiences that have changed my life. This article is about one particular incident that stands out among the rest—an endearing, enlightening and wonderful experience to say the least!

During my first Healthy Athletes orientation in Anchorage, I was told that when you volunteer with Special Olympics there are many special experiences you will have that will change your life. I didn't know how true that statement would become.

I am an audiologist who volunteered for the Special Olympics Healthy Hearing program and have since become more and more involved with Special Olympics. The 2001 World Games was my first exposure to Special Olympics.

The Healthy Hearing venue was a busy one with approximately 30 audiologists, speech and language pathologists, otolaryngologists, physicians and other volunteers, screening the hearing of nearly 1,200 athletes and 600 non-athletes. Athletes who entered the Healthy Hearing venue could obtain an ear examination followed by a test using special equipment that automatically screens their hearing (see www.healthy-hearing.org for more information).

Among all the dignitaries and wonderful athletes from around the globe, there was an adolescent athlete from Turkmenistan. While he was sitting at my station for an initial otoscopic ear check, I saw that he was wearing a hearing aid.



Dr. Phil Hofstetter and friends.

Closer examination showed a very old, beat-up looking, behind-the-ear-style device that had tape wrapped around it. I asked him to take out the hearing aid. To my amazement, the part that goes in the ear was stuck!

Behind-the-ear-style hearing aids have the body of the hearing aid sitting behind the ear with tubing attached to a custom ear mold. In this case, the tubing just slid out of the ear mold, leaving the mold in his ear.

Looking closer, I saw that the ear mold looked much different from a normal mold. In fact, the mold was not custom at all but a generic "earbud," and it had tape wrapped around it as well. It took a while to remove the earbud.

By then, fellow audiologists and Healthy Hearing volunteers were observing. We all agreed we could not in good conscience let him leave our station with a hearing aid in such disrepair. But what could we do? Fitting hearing aids is a tricky business, even in a proper facility. Sophisticated equipment is required to develop a custom prescription fit for the ear.

Then, Healthy Hearing volunteer Joyce Sexton, an Anchorage audiologist and owner of Northern Hearing Services, offered the use of her office and facilities. With the help of an interpreter, the athlete, his coach, Sexton, Chris Cantin, Karen Pastel and I took a van and drove to the audiology facility. A complete audiological evaluation was

done, and a brand-new hearing aid was donated by Sexton's office.

The tricky part now was to provide a custom ear mold. Normally, an ear impression is made and sent to a special lab that makes the molds. But since the athlete was leaving the next day, there was no time to provide this service. We quickly decided to make our own mold with the same material we use to make instant custom swim plugs.



Healthy Hearing tests being provided to Special Olympics patients.

Making an ear mold to fit a hearing aid is difficult. But with a little perseverance, two molds, ready for use with a hearing aid, were made. We made a back-up mold because there is no audiology facility or audiologist near the athlete's home in Turkmenistan.

Then came the time to turn on the hearing aid and adjust the device to match his hearing loss. The aid was programmed and then, finally, turned on. The look on his face said it all! It was remarkable! Previously, the boy

was not able to hear his coach. His face lit up now that he could hear and understand his coach. He was so excited.

It was a terrific experience, especially since we knew of no audiologists or hearing aid specialists in Turkmenistan. When we heard the boy had to travel to another country just to obtain hearing aid batteries, we provided him with a year's supply of batteries!

I am not sure how much the new hearing aid changed the life of that

athlete, but being part of the team that helped him get a new hearing aid has changed my life as an audiologist. I realized that, through the generous contributions of Special Olympics and the Healthy Hearing team, we can make an enormous impact on the quality of life of individuals with developmental disabilities. ■

Special Olympics Health Promotion

Courtney Pastorfield, R.N., B.S
Beverly Berkin, C.H.E.S., F.A.S.H.A



Countdown to Dublin

With only a month to go before the 11th Special Olympics World Summer Games, plans for the Health Promotion venue at the Games continue to mature and broaden. To help realize our goal of giving athletes the information and means to achieve physical fitness and make healthy lifestyle choices, several new activities have been added to expand and enhance the range of services for Special Olympics athletes and their families.

The multifaceted Health Promotion venue will be situated at the entrance to the Healthy Athletes center. Lively, colorful and inviting, it will be the first venue to greet athletes when they arrive. Health Promotion will offer a Sun Safety program and dermatological screening (see "Sun Safety-Skin Cancer Prevention"). Athletes will be given handouts about how to avoid sun-induced skin damage while physicians

who specialize in dermatology perform upper body skin checks. Tobacco avoidance counseling and educational materials on the risks associated with tobacco use will be available, with assistance from the Irish Cancer Society and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Healthy nutrition will be encouraged through interactive games and incentives. Volunteer dieticians will perform assessments and offer one-on-one counseling in three key areas: daily consumption of fruits and vegetables ("Give me five"); maintenance of bone strength (through exercise and calcium intake); and adequate hydration. Informative brochures are currently being designed in each of the areas with plans to have them translated into a number of languages.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Enoch-Gelbard Foundation, the 2003 World Games Health Promotion venue will offer primary screening for osteoporosis, using PIXI scanners. These scanners measure heel bone densities and generate results quickly, allowing the athletes to receive an on-the-spot report and consultation. Osteoporosis (bone weakening due to loss of calcium mineral) appears to be inordinately common among people with Down syndrome. Small scale studies (including a Special Olympics pilot study which collected data during the Chicago [USA] Medfest, October 2002) have reported that people with Down syndrome are more likely to have under-mineralized bones, even when their ages, levels of exercise and diets

are taken into account. The screenings will provide an extraordinary, large-scale opportunity to assess the prevalence of bone demineralization across a wide range of ages and ethnicities. No other setting could offer such a spectrum of opportunity to better understand how syndromes and conditions associated with mental retardation relate to bone integrity.

Another new Health Promotion activity will take place during the Games, but will be held outside of the



Special Olympics Panama athlete measuring up.

Healthy Athletes venue. Several educational seminars will be offered at the Family Center, located at the Royal Dublin Society (RDS). Drawing from the wealth of allied health expertise of Healthy Athletes, clinicians will provide health education and discuss strategies to encourage healthy athlete lifestyle choices. Athlete families and caretakers will be invited to attend, and a high degree of audience participation is anticipated.

Going beyond the World Summer Games, Health Promotion is continuing its efforts to establish long-term, community-based, health and fitness promotion programs. In response to a request for proposals, six U.S. state Special Olympics Programs submitted plans to initiate wellness/fitness programs within their communities. Each unique proposal creatively draws upon the resources and talent that are locally available. Collectively, they display an exciting diversity of strategies and community partnership ideas. Full proposals were due early in March, and grant awards will be announced later this spring. Each pilot program will conduct a self evaluation, and an external program evaluation will be performed as well. By pursuing a diversity of approaches, it is our hope that we will gain insight as to what constitutes the best practices. We can then share and assist Special Olympics Programs with the development of these models for our athletes.

Another new and exciting Health Promotion project is a fitness video, produced in collaboration with the Enoch-Gelbard Foundation and Woodbine House publishers. Special Olympics athletes will demonstrate exercises that can be easily done in diverse settings (at home, outdoors and in a gym) which increase endurance, flexibility and strength, while still being fun. As the Healthy Athletes first large-scale endeavor of this type, the video will “star” Special Olympics athletes,

and there are plans to include cameo appearances by U.S. Olympic gold medalists. It will contain lively, engaging music and settings to sustain interest and encourage participation. The target audiences are the athletes, families, coaches, group homes and allied health providers. The video has great potential to augment Special Olympics athlete conditioning between



Promoting athlete health in Panama.

practices and to bring fitness-promoting opportunities to those not already engaged in Special Olympics. A creative production team, representing a broad range of talent and expertise within Special Olympics, Woodbine House and outside consultants, began project development in early March.

Sun Safety-Skin Cancer Prevention

The Sun Safety-Skin Cancer Prevention program began at the 1999 Special Olympics World Summer Games in North Carolina, USA, with the assistance of physicians and dermatology specialists from The Westwood-Squibb Center for Dermatological Research Department of the Wake Forest University School of Medicine and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As a result of data generated from screenings, the first research report on the dermatological health status of persons with disabilities was published. Prior to this event, no large scale international study had ever been completed

on the dermatological health status of persons with mental retardation.

Building on the success of the 1999 World Games dermatological screening of 1,217 athletes, Healthy Athletes initiated a Sun Safety-Skin Cancer Prevention program at the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Alaska. Coordinated by Beverly Berkin, key sun-safety health messages were

provided for the athletes through interactive, hands-on activities. More than 5,000 sunscreen samples were distributed to athletes, coaches and families. A “Coaches Corner” provided information on how coaches can protect the athletes during outdoor training and competition. The information was available in English and Spanish. A “Parent Table” was established, as well, to provide parents and caregivers accurate information on sunscreens and various methods of sun protection. The cooperation of the American Cancer Society,

the American Academy of Dermatology, the Skin Cancer Foundation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Weather Channel and the Schering-Plough Health Care Division helped make this a most productive and successful event.



Beverly Berkin with a happy Sun Safety customer.

Similar venues followed in New Jersey, Connecticut, New York, Westchester-Putnam and Delaware from summer 2001 through fall 2002. The 2003 World Games will host a Sun Safety-Skin Cancer Prevention venue and will provide dermatological screening of the athletes by Irish dermatologists. The Irish Cancer Society will provide assistance and support for this health promotion effort for the athletes, coaches and families.

With skin cancer being the most common and fastest-rising cancer, the Healthy Athletes initiative is making a concerted effort to participate with national and international groups to

provide coaches and families with the most current information and means to help promote sun safe behaviors. The U.S. National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention founded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and now sponsored by the American Cancer Society, the American Academy of Dermatology and the Skin Cancer Foundation have extended an invitation to the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Sun Safety-Skin Cancer Prevention program to participate in its efforts to educate its populace on the primary prevention of skin cancer.

The Healthy Athletes Sun Safety-Skin Cancer Prevention program is based on

the Healthy People 2010 objective to increase the proportion of persons who use at least one of the protective measures that may reduce the risk of skin cancer.

Special Olympics is presently reviewing the rates of skin cancer in countries around the world and working with the International Alliance Against Skin Cancer to accumulate information that will assist in enhancing skin cancer awareness for participating countries in Special Olympics. ■

Special Olympics FUNfitness - Developed by the American Physical Therapy Association for *Special Olympics Healthy Athletes*
Donna Bainbridge, P.T., Ed. D.



Special Olympics



The Special Olympics FUNfitness program has been expanding rapidly. We divided the United States into regions and have eight physical therapists (PT) who have agreed to be Regional U.S. Coordinators. There is only one region yet to cover. The volunteers will work with the states in their regions to initiate, develop and perpetuate the FUNfitness program. The Regional Coordinators gave a presentation on FUNfitness at the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Combined Sections Meeting in Tampa, Florida, USA, in February 2003, and are planning to have a Special Olympics Global Messenger join them in giving a longer presentation at the APTA Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., USA, in June 2003.

New programs being hosted this year in the United States include New



Even sit-ups can be fun when athletes participate in FUNfitness—here in Mexico.

Mexico, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Florida and Ohio. U.S. states that continue to expand FUNfitness include Texas, North Carolina, New Jersey, South Carolina and Montana. A majority of the states have sent a representative to a Train-the-Trainer session. Most of the remaining U.S. states—Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Nevada, and Idaho attended the session in Mexico City, Mexico.

We are very excited to be initiating global programming in Mexico; four physiotherapists from different regions in Mexico and a representative from the Caribbean region attended the training session in Mexico City. Previously, Ireland was the only country outside the United States that had hosted FUNfitness. An article describing the FUNfitness program will also be appearing in the World Confederation of Physical Therapy News.

Our FUNfitness Coordinator in Ireland reports good progress. More than 130 physical therapy professionals have volunteered for the FUNfitness venue at the 2003 World Games and are currently being scheduled for day and evening sessions. Their volunteer training will be conducted several weeks before the event, but physiotherapists from Dublin will be invited to join us on Friday, 20 June, for a portion of the training session.

Special Olympics athletes Renee Dease and Kester Edwards are helping to develop talking points on hydration and stretching for two athlete fliers so that athletes will have clear, consistent information about these topics. The fliers will be ready for distribution at the 2003 World Summer Games and can be handed out at any Healthy Athletes venue.

To remind us why we volunteer, let me relate several athlete stories:

Vicki Tilley (North Carolina, USA) tells the story of a Special Olympics North Carolina athlete who had been receiving physical therapy in his home town. When he arrived at the Wellness Park in Raleigh during the Program's 2002 State Summer Games, he decided that he did not need a FUNfitness screening. He stood by and watched as his friends and teammates had fun at their FUNfitness screenings. He decided that he wanted to join the fun, and, besides, he might learn something new. So he registered for FUNfitness and smiled all the way. And he did learn something new.

Joy Varghese (Ireland) tells about another athlete who refused to come in for the tests even though all of his team was taking part in FUNfitness. He spotted one physiotherapist who he thought resembled one of the singers in Boyzone Band. He approached this physiotherapist and asked him to carry

out the tests, thinking that he was from the Boyzone Band. Whatever it takes, we were delighted that he got his fitness tested.

And finally, the physiotherapists in Ireland relate the saga of an athlete who returned to FUNfitness to give the four or five medals that she had won to the physiotherapist who tested her. The athlete was so pleased with him and with the tests that she wanted him to have the medals that she had won. When the physiotherapist said he would not accept the medals, she made him wear them around his neck for a few seconds before taking them back.

These stories are the reason why we try. ■

Special Olympics Fit Feet

Pat Nunan D.P.M.



Many Special Olympics athletes suffer from foot and ankle pain or deformities that impair their performance. Also, participants are not always fitted with shoes and socks best suited for their particular sport. Special Olympics Healthy Athletes, in conjunction with the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine, has developed the Fit Feet program to evaluate foot and ankle deformities. The AAPSM consists of more than 500 members throughout the United States whose goal is to evaluate, diagnose and treat athletes and fitness participants.

Under the leadership of Clinical Advisor Patrick Nunan, D.P.M., Fit Feet developed a protocol for evaluation of the Special Olympics athlete. Last summer at the Special Olympics Ohio (USA) State Summer Games in Columbus, a pilot screening program was offered to athletes, families and coaches. Currently, Fit Feet is assembling a network to give other Special Olympics Programs an opportunity to take advantage of this program. Dr. Nunan will volunteer at the Fit Feet venue at the 2003 Summer Games in Ireland.

For more information, contact Rita Yates, Executive Director, AAPSM, at (888) 854-FEET (3338) or info@aapsm.org. Patrick Nunan, D.P.M., can be reached at (513) 779-9673 or PJNDPMRUN@aol.com. ■

2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games

The 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games take place from 21-29 June 2003. The Games are centered around the Greater Dublin area. The Healthy Athletes initiative runs from 21-29 June 2003 and is preceded by a Train-the-Trainer session. ■





No Smoking (Prohibido Fumar) but improved hearing in Mexico.



Special Olympics

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