



December 1, 2011

Dear Friends:

From all of us at Special Olympics Michigan Area 11, we extend our warmest holiday greetings to you and yours and hope you enjoy a safe and joyous holiday season.

We have much to be grateful for as we look back at 2011 and the progress Area 11 has made. The 2011 Polar Plunge greatly increased its net return from 2010. Our appreciation goes to the organizers and sponsors of the Miles for Medals Walk for a well organized and fun event. With the retirement of the Festival of Trees Gala, "Let's TOGA for Special Olympics" was introduced with a fun and lively nature and proved to be a very successful event. We are so thankful for all the third party fundraisers that were done on behalf of Area 11, too.

Our program continued to increase numbers in participation. We added the Young Athletes Program in Area 11. We were able to purchase much needed equipment and uniforms and will continue to do so in 2012. Thank you to our sports coordinators, coaches, parents, and volunteers for assisting in making our program a success. Our athletes so much enjoy the friendships, training, and competition that the Special Olympics program offers them. Together we can Go for the Gold.

Thank you to Jaime Gunderson for her many years of service to the Area 11 program and we congratulate her on her new position with Special Olympics Michigan. She will be housed in our Southwest Regional office but will be working for Special Olympics Michigan. We are thankful that we now have a full time office manager, Jolon Hull. Jolon is learning quickly and will be helping us in countless ways.

Our goals for 2012 are ambitious, and we need your support if we are to continue to improve and expand. We would like to improve on the quality of program and services. We will continue to expand the Young Athletes Program in Area 11. Young Athletes is an innovative sports play program for children with intellectual disabilities, designed to introduce them to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics eligibility at age 8. The Project Unify Program has been introduced in Area 11. We presently have 11 schools participating in this program. We also will be improving and expanding our volunteer management program in order to support the increased demands of our growing program.

On behalf of our paid staff and management team, thank you for your continued support and we hope you will join with us to ensure 2012 is another year of continued growth for all our Special Olympic athletes, coaches and volunteers. Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane House".

Diane House
Area 11 Director



Sports Program Dates:

Winter Sports

Jan.	10	Final scores, levels, and times are due
Jan.	17	Area Alpine Ski/Snowboard/Snowshoe Competition at Cannonsburg
Jan.	24	Southwest Regional Winter Games at Timber Ridge Ski Area, Otsego
Jan.	30	Area Speed Skating Competition at Griff's Icehouse
Feb.	7-10	State Winter Games at Grand Traverse Resort

Basketball

Jan.	2	Basketball training begins
Jan.	17	Registration Due for District Basketball
Jan.	17	Registration Due for State Unified Basketball
Feb.	4	Registration Due for Female and Juniors for State Basketball
Feb.	11	Game Scores due for Districts
Feb.	15	The Betsey Tournament for Juniors at Kraft Meadows Middle School
Feb.	21	Game Scores due for State Unified Basketball
Feb.	25	Area Unified Basketball Tournament at Cedar Springs High School
Mar.	3	Southwest Regional Basketball District at Caledonia Area Schools
Mar.	7	Game Scores due for Females and Juniors for State Basketball
Mar.	10	State Unified Basketball Tournament in Kalamazoo
Mar.	23-24	State Basketball Finals at Rockford Area Schools

Aquatics

Jan.	11	Aquatics Training begins at Grandville Middle School (pending)
Jan.	12	Aquatics training begins at Rockford (pending)
Mar.	13	Coaches Meeting to distribute State Games slots — at A11 office, 5:30pm
Apr.	11	Spring Sports registration due for Spring Games & State Games
May	5	Southwest Regional Spring Games at Calvin College
May 31-June 2		State Summer Games in Mt. Pleasant

Bowling

Feb.	7	Bowling leagues begin
Mar.	13	Coaches Meeting to distribute State Games slots — at A11 office, 5:30pm
Apr.	9	Bowling registration due (minimum of 6 games) for Area Touney/State Games
May	19	Area 11 Bowling Tournament at Park Center Lanes

Spring Sports

Mar.	3	Call In for spring sports
Mar.	13	Coaches Meeting to distribute State Games slots — at A11 office, 5:30pm
Apr.	11	Spring Sports registration due for Spring Games & State Games
May	5	Southwest Regional Spring Games at Calvin College
May	15	Area Spring Games at Northview High School
May 31-June 2		State Summer Games in Mt. Pleasant

Dates are subject to change. For the most up-to-date information, visit us on Facebook or the web www.somi.org/area11

Coaches Info:

Training: Visit www.somi.org, click the "Get Involved" tab, then "Coaches" for the online General Orientation and Protective Behaviors training. To get certified in a sport, call (616) 583-1202.

Athlete forms: Coaches should retain copies of all athlete forms and have them at all Special Olympics activities. Athlete health appraisal and code of conduct forms must be on file in the Area 11 office before training begins.

Athlete participation forms are available online at www.somi.org/area11

Volunteers

Thank you to the many volunteers who helped us provide a quality sports program to over 1,200 athletes in Kent & Barry counties in 2011. We couldn't do it without all the volunteers, coaches, and chaperones.

We are always looking for volunteers to help with various one-day events (see the attached 2012 calendar), serve on fundraising committees, or spend a few hours in the Area 11 office to assist with clerical tasks.

Please email area11.specialolympics@gmail.com or call the office if you are interested in helping out in 2012!

Young Athlete Program

The Young Athlete program is an innovative sports play program for children ages 2-7 with intellectual disabilities. We are currently looking for people to help organize and implement this program in Area 11.

If you are interested or for more details contact Jaime Gunderson at: 583.1202

Resources

HELP! We need your email address for the weekly Area 11 updates and quarterly newsletters. Subscribe at <http://eepurl.com/gIIMj> or email hull1jb@cmich.edu to be added to our list.

Online Resources



SOMI — www.somi.org

Learn about Special Olympics Michigan, SOMI Resource Center, tournament dates, coach resources, parent information, and more.



AREA 11 — www.somi.org/area11

Upcoming Area 11 events & fundraisers, athlete health appraisal and code of conduct forms, volunteer forms, and more.



FACEBOOK — www.facebook.com/fansofsoarea11

Event information and photos, weekly "Meet the Athletes" feature, fundraiser info, reminders, helpful links, or just ask a question. Please share your Area 11 event photos on our wall!



TWITTER — www.twitter.com/fansofsoarea11

Event information, reminders, helpful links, and answers to your questions.



FLICKR — www.flickr.com/somiarea11

Share your photos with us by tagging them as "SOMI Area 11"

As always, if you prefer to pick up the phone, please call the office Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm to speak with a friendly voice. Our new office manager Jolon is in the office full time to assist you.

YOU GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? The Area 11 weekly email newsletter and quarterly "Special 'O'nnouncements" are always looking for a good story, event or program of interest to the special needs community. Please send to hull1jb@cmich.edu and we will include them when space is available.



MEET ATHLETE JACQUI!

Jacqui Putney-Bunt is a Global Messenger for Area 11. She graciously created and donated her artwork for the recent Let's TOGA for Special Olympics fundraiser on October 28 and even collaborated with other athlete-artists on a few pieces. Jacqui gave a welcome speech at that event and introduced WZZM's Juliet Dragos the following week at the SOMI Leadership Conference in Mt. Pleasant. Thank you to Jacqui for being such a wonderful spokesperson for our program. If your athlete is interested in becoming a global messenger, please contact the office.

Financial Planning Help

Special needs calls for special planning. I know because I work with families that have special needs members, helping them with their financial, insurance, and investment planning. I also know because my family is going through it. My sister-in-law Jenny has autism and more than likely, she is going to live longer than her parents. According to the Autism Society of America, 60 percent of costs related to autism are in adult services. The question my family faced was this: how do we make sure Jenny still maintains a good quality of life after her parents are gone that doesn't interfere with the funding she receives from the state? The solution: a Special Needs Trust.

By definition, a special needs trust is created to ensure that beneficiaries who are mentally or physically disabled can enjoy the use of property which is intended to be held for their benefit. Usually these trusts are unfunded, meaning

they are ready to receive property and assets; but it does not actually function until some event occurs. These triggering events can include the passing of one or both parents or the incapacity of one or both parents. Because the assets in a special needs trust do not directly belong to the beneficiary, they do not interfere with their eligibility for state funding. A trustee is appointed to oversee the management and distribution of the assets. Who makes a good trustee? That's another topic for another time.

The funds in a special needs trust can be used in a variety of ways. These can include practical items such as food, clothing, shelter, medical expenses, insurance bills, necessary equipment, dietary needs, education, transportation, and home care expenses. These can also include more discretionary items such as spending money, vacations, trips, movies, video games, toys, or anything else that brings joy

and enhances the quality of life for the beneficiary.

Some parents will agree this is a good strategy but what about the option of leaving the money to someone else they trust to take care of the disabled beneficiary? Although it may seem appropriate, there are problems with this option. They would not be legally required to use the money for the disabled beneficiary, they could run into problems with creditors, divorce could force them into sharing money with a former spouse, or they may die early and the money would be left to their heirs. Special needs trusts assure parents "control from the grave" so to speak.

Once the special needs trust is established, how do we go about funding it? As mentioned before, they typically are not funded until the last parent passes away. Parents can use a variety of assets to fund these trusts such as the proceeds from the sale of their home, in-

vestment accounts, life insurance, annuities, or other savings vehicles.

Now back to Jenny. A special needs trust gives her parents the peace of mind knowing that she will be taken care of once they are gone. My husband as her guardian also has the peace of mind knowing that he will have the resources to be able to take care of her and help enhance her quality of life after his parents are gone. In the end, we all want what is best for Jenny and a special needs trust gives us the guidelines to help us do just that.

Kim Bolker, CFP®, is a registered representative through Sigma Financial Corporation, Member FINRA/SIPC. 4261 Park Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. 734-663-1611. If you would like additional information regarding this topic you can contact Kim at 616-942-8600, kbolker@sigmarep.com, or stop in her office at 2050 Breton Ave SE, Suite 104, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

Winter Fundraising

Heart of West Michigan United Way

Please remember us this new year by designating your United Way contributions to:

Special Olympics Michigan Area 11
1239 76th Street SW, Suite E
Byron Center, MI 49315

We are very thankful to all of you who support our program through United Way.

Gift Wrapping at Breton Village Mall



Each holiday season, Breton Village Mall offers a free gift wrapping service to its shoppers. As volunteers, Area 11 receives \$1 per gift we wrap from the Mall. We started the day after Thanksgiving and we will be wrapping gifts through Christmas Eve.

We still need you to volunteer for the open gift wrapping shifts, so join the fun by calling Jolon at the office (616) 583-1202 or email hull1jb@cmich.edu.

This fundraiser normally raises over \$4000 for Special Olympics Michigan Area 11. We would especially like to thank the gift wrapping coordinators: Laura Bassett, Noreen Beemer, Pam Braam, Jeanne Putney, Randy Sailors, John Pylman, and Mary Vargo.

POP CAN DRIVE

Don't let returnables "bottle up" your house! We are asking each team or sports program to collect pop cans to raise funds for our local Special Olympics program. We have received money from individuals, teams, schools, and businesses and appreciate your efforts. Thank you!

Basketball Buddy Button Sales



Are you a 2012 Basketball Buddy?

Each year, we sell \$5 buttons to raise money for the basketball program. During the month of January, athletes will be selling buttons so be sure to get yours!

Proudly display your support and yearly Basketball Buddy membership. Some buttons and \$10 t-shirts will be available at the A11 Unified Basketball Tournament at Cedar Springs High School on February 25.

A11 Special Olympics Night at the Griffins

Support our athletes and the Grand Rapids Griffins on Saturday, February 11, 2012 for a night of fun! Lower level tickets are only \$15 (reg. \$20) and \$4 per ticket sold through the link www.griffinshockey.com/promocode using code SPECIAL goes to Area 11. \$5 meal deals available at concessions behind sections 108 and 122. You may also call the Griffins for tickets.



2012 LETR Grand Rapids Polar Plunge



It's that time! Plan your costume, get registered, and start collecting pledges for the 2012 Polar Plunge! Go to

<http://www.firstgiving.com/polarplunge> and register for the Grand Rapids event which will be held Saturday, February 25 at Reed's Lake in East Grand Rapids.

Plungers should raise a minimum of \$75 to participate and will receive an official Polar Plunge t-shirt.

2012 SCOOPER BOWLS

Friends and families who are not involved in the Special Olympics Bowling League, we invite you to take part in Friends and Family Scooper Bowl on Saturday, February 4, at Northfield Lanes. Please call the office for information (583-1202).

After the first of the year, each bowler will be given a pledge sheet and information about Scooper Bowls. It's a special day for bowling league participants including fundraising for the Bowling League Program, having fun, receiving awards, and eating ice cream. Scooper Bowl dates are: Tuesday, February 21 (Park Center Lanes), Thursday, February 23 (Park Center Lanes), and Wednesday, February 29 (Northfield Lanes).



Special Olympics
Michigan
Area 11

SOMI AREA 11 PROJECTED EVENTS CALENDAR FOR 2012

Local Area 11 Competition Events (Please note that some of these dates are tentative)**

Date	Event	Location
January 17	Area 11 Winter Sports Competition	Cannonsburg Ski Area
January 30	Area 11 Speed Skating Competition	Griff's Icehouse
February-March	Area 11 Mini-Basketball Tournaments	Various locations
February 25	Area 11 Unified Basketball Tournament	Cedar Springs High School
May 15	Area 11 Spring Games (Track/ Field,Bocce)	Northview High School
May 19	Area 11 Bowling Tournament	Park Center Lanes
July 7	Area 11 Golf Tournament	Fellowship Greens
August 25	Area 11 Cycling Competition	Calvary Church Parking Lot off Bradford NE
September 15	Area 11 Soccer Tournament	DNR West River Drive Soccer Fields
October 18	Area 11 Poly Hockey Tournament	Sparta High School
December 8	Area 11 Friendship Bowling Tournament	Park Center Lanes

State and Regional Competition Events (Please note some of these dates are tentative)**

Date	Event	Location
January 24	SW Regional Winter Games	Timberidge Ski Area, Otsego
February 7-10	State Winter Games	Grand Traverse Resort
March 3	SW District Basketball	Caledonia Public Schools
March 10	State Unified Basketball	Kalamazoo
March 23-24	State Basketball Finals	Rockford Public Schools
May 5	SW Regional Spring Games	Calvin College, Grand Rapids
May 31-June 2	State Summer Games	Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant
July 19	State Summer Sports Golf Classic	Pine View Golf Course , Ypsilanti
July 28	State Regional Softball Tournament	Kalamazoo
September 8	State Cycling Finals	Chelsea
September 29	SW Regional Soccer Tournament	Duncan Lake Middle School
October 19 & 20	State Soccer Finals	Halmich Park, Warren
October 27	SW Regional Poly Hockey Tournament	Newaygo High School
November 17 & 18	State Poly Hockey Finals	Eastern High School, Lansing

Fundraising Events (Please note some of these dates are tentative)**

Date	Event	Location
January 26	Culvers Restaurants	4 Locations in Kent County
February 4	Friends and Family Scooper Bowl	Northfield Lanes
February 11	Area 11 Night at the Griffins	Van Andel Arena
February 19	Cooley Law School Fundraiser for Area 11	Park Center Lanes
February 25	Polar Plunge	East Grand Rapids Middle School
February 21,23, 29	Bowling League Scooper Bowl	Park Center Lanes/Northfield Lanes
Mar., Nov., & Dec.	Ham Sales	Kent and Barry Counties
April 14	Schmohz 5K	Grand Rapids / Patterson & 28th Street
April 21	United Labor Charity Bowl	Park Center Lanes
May 18	San Chez Bistro Fundraiser	San Chez Bistro
TBD	Miles for Medals	Aquinas College
June 9	Fogt 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament	The Fogts Home
June 15	Highlands Golf Outing for Area 11	Elks Club, Grand Rapids
August 11	NEAR Golf Outing for Family and Friends	Gracewil Golf Course
August 14	Siren Chase	Aquinas College
August 22	Area 11 Night at the Whitecaps	Fifth/Third Park
October 26	Let's Toga for SOMI Area 11	The BOB
November 23-December 24	Gift Wrapping at Breton Village	Breton Village