

SPORTLIGHT

Winter 2025



Special Olympics

Michigan

Area 30

Published 3 Times/Year

Volume 33 Issue 1

Editor: Mary Adams

AREA DIRECTOR CORNER LISA SCHWAGER

Hello & Happy Holidays!

We had another great Fall season with our Soccer, Golf, and Flag Football seasons. Our athletes attended the State Fall Games, and everyone came home with medals! Our Flag Football team won Gold again for the third year in a row—great job athletes!!

We are excited to be starting our Winter sports season. We will be offering Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Snowshoe and basketball for guys and gals.

Our 2025 Sports Calendar is included in this newsletter. If you need an extra copy, just let me know.

A huge THANK YOU to Tracey/Steve Tatum and Christine/Ray Bowerson for their help with the Christmas Parade. Also, thank you to the athletes who walked in the parade and represented Special Olympics. You are all greatly appreciated!

I would like to wish all the athletes, coaches, volunteers, our Area Management Team, and families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope 2025 is good to everyone!

Our area email is: area30@somi.org. Please use this email for any questions/concerns. If you need to contact me, please use my cell number: 989-329-0850.

Note: our new address is: 2808 Blairmont Drive, Midland, MI 48642

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**

THANK YOU!!

Thanks to everyone who has supported our program throughout the past! With your help, our program of sports training and competition have provided our athletes an unique opportunity to further develop their true potential. Without your community spirit and support, our program would not be a success. Thanks for all your sharing, caring, and support!! We are looking forward to our new year of sports training and competition.

WITH AGE COMES EXCELLENCE!!

Can you believe that our newsletter is celebrating its 33th year. We're happy to bring you all of our Special Olympics events and activities. This would not be possible without your support—whether it be monetary or manpower. A special thanks to QRP PRINTING who prints our quality newsletter. We also thank all the athletes, parents, guardians, staff, friends, and our special volunteers for your continued support!

2025 SPORTS CALENDAR

Inside this issue is our 2025 Sports Calendar. On the back side of the calendar are our guidelines for attending state tournaments. This is a handy pull-out reference sheet, which we hope you will post on your refrigerator or other convenient place. Make sure you keep a copy of this calendar. If you misplace your copy or have not received one, call Lisa Schwager @ 989-329-0850 to get another one.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS FORMS

NOW is the time to get your Special Olympics form filled out. This form needs to be signed and dated by a doctor and the athlete's legal guardian. If an athlete is their own guardian, they may sign the form. This form is valid for three years. An athlete will not be allowed to participate in Special Olympics until their form is updated. The form is available through Lisa Schwager. Call her @ 989-329-0850 to check if your form is current.

Lisa Schwager, Area Director
2808 Blairmont
Midland, MI 48642
989-329-0850
area30@somi.org

John Muisenga, Assistant Area Director
989-859-1595
jamuisenga@charter.net

FLAG FOOTBALL SEASON

By: Lisa Schwager, Coach

The Golden Knights brought home the gold medal once again, making this the third year in a row for winning the Gold! The guys had a great season winning every game. We welcomed three new athletes: Joe Kaczynski, Jordan Altenburg, and Angelo Vela. It was a super season, and all the athletes did a fantastic job! Congratulations to these athletes: Jordan Altenburg, Tanner Bowerson, Jamie Brisboy, Joe Kaczynski, Silas Pitt, Jack Richardson, Jacob Schwager, Brad Sheets, Josh Shouse, Angelo Vela, and Andy Young. A special thank you to our coaches: Jeff Pitt, Lisa Schwager, Tracey Tatum, and Gregg Young.



ANDY'S CURLING LEAGUE

by: Gregg Young, Coordinator

Andy's League is alive and going strong!! Are you interested in Curling? We meet on Saturday mornings from November to mid-March from 9:00-11:30 am at the Midland Curling Club



Andy's League was created for people with physical and/or developmental disabilities—along with their families, friends, and support staff. Anyone is welcome—athletes, family, and staff. There is no cost to participate. All you need is to dress warmly—air temperature on the ice is about 40°F. We use sticks to deliver the stones so anyone can do it, including people in wheelchairs. We provide all the equipment and training you will need.

The Midland Curling Club is located @ 2009 Jefferson Avenue. For more information or if you have questions, contact Gregg Young @ 989-492-2029 or Gregg@youngassocinc.com. Hope to see you on the ice. Curling Rocks!



ALPINE SKIING

by: Ann Gach, Coach

The Alpine Ski Team will have their practices in January. Athletes are: Josh DiMercurio, Heather Wellman, and Misty Holloman. Coaches are: Ann Gach, Vince Mathews, and Lynne DiMercurio. We will ski at Caberfae Resort on Sundays – **January 5.12.19.26**. The Saginaw Ski Coach (Sandy Van Haaren) will ski with us. The Alpine Team will attend State Winter Games in Traverse City from February 4-7. We are looking forward to an awesome season!

CROSS-COUNTRY SKI PRACTICES

by: Jerry Kaczynski, Coach

Cross Country skiing has been holding conditioning sessions on Saturday mornings at the Rail Trail (starting at the Dublin Road Senior Center). The team of four skiers (Elizabeth Gisse, Joe Kaczynski, Laura Lamberton, and Miyami Yokomizo) walk, talk, and enjoy the setting that the trail offers. If we are fortunate to get some snow and conditions allow, we will do some skiing at the City Forest. The sessions started on December 7 and will continue through January until the State Winter Games. Thanks to Frank How for assisting with athletes and helping with the practice sessions.



SNOWSHOE PRACTICES

by: Mary Adams, Coach

Snowshoe practices will be held @ Plymouth Park (by the pool) from 10:00-11:00 am on Saturday mornings **January 4.11.18.25** and **February 1**. If there is no snow, we will do conditioning practices.

Our Snowshoe team has doubled in size from four athletes to eight athletes!! We'd like to welcome back the following athletes: Kevin Davis, Kristian Davis, Bruce Fahlgren, and Justine Wenzel. Welcome to the new athletes: Jim Bernard, Jenny Finzel, Craig Hall, and Anna Ruter. A special THANK YOU to Kay Harley who serves as my assistant coach. She is the expert on putting on the snowshoes for the athletes!! Also, thanks to Jeff Butkiewicz and Ann Gach for assisting. It will be a fun season, and I am so thrilled to be coaching snowshoe with Kay, Jeff, and Ann!



STATE WINTER GAMES

We will be attending the State Winter Games at the Grand Traverse Resort (GTR) in Traverse City from February 4-7. We are sending a delegation of 21 people to these games. Our athletes will be competing in snowshoe, cross-country skiing, and alpine skiing. Alpine Skiing and Cross Country Skiing will be held @ Schuss Mountain, and Snowshoe will be held @ GTR. In order for an athlete to attend these games, they must attend the sports practices and their Special Olympics form must be current. We are so thrilled and excited to be attending these games!! Good luck athletes!!





BASKETBALL PRACTICES

by: Gregg Young

Our Male basketball teams, our Female basketball team, and our Basketball Skills team will start practices in January. We have four teams—two Male, one Female, and one Skills team. The Male teams are The Warriors (higher-skill level team) and the Celtics (lower-skill level team). The Female team is the Super Cats. The Shooting Stars team are our skills athletes. Following is our schedule:

Monday Evenings (Northeast)

WARRIORS TEAM → Coach: Lisa Schwager
7:15-9:00 pm
(practices January 6-March 24)

Monday Evenings (Siebert Elementary)

SHOOTING STARS SKILLS TEAM →
Coaches: Sue Crane, Erica Roy, Joann/Steve Roy,
Paul/Maria Kalitta
6:15-7:15 pm
(practices January 6 – March 3)

Tuesday Evenings (Northeast)

SUPER CATS → Coach: Lauren Saj
7:15-8:30 pm
(practices January 7– March 25)

Thursday Evenings (Northeast)

WARRIORS TEAM → Coach: Lisa Schwager
7:15-9:15 pm
(practices January 9 – March 27)

Friday Evenings (Jefferson)

CELTICS TEAM / Coaches → Jeff Dyer/Jeff Pitt
7:15-8:30 pm
(practices January 10– March 28)

The Warriors, Celtics, and Super Cats will compete in the Area 7 Alma Tournament on Saturday, January 18 in Shepherd. Each team will play three games. Good luck teams!

The Super Cats automatically qualify for the State Basketball tournament on March 21-22 in Grand Rapids as there is no qualifying Female District Basketball Tournament.

Good luck to all our basketball teams!! You have the best basketball coaches who are teaching you skills, technique, and sportsmanship!



SUPERCATS BASKETBALL TEAM

by: Lauren Saj, Coach

The Supercats are excited for a new season of basketball. Welcome back to all of our ladies! We are anxiously awaiting another amazing season. We will be practicing Tuesday evenings from 7:15-8:30 pm @ Northeast Middle School. If you are interested in playing this season, contact me at 586-863-3428 for more information. Practices will officially start Tuesday, January 7. See you there! A special thank you to Deb Lamberton and Karen Muehfeld for serving as my assistant coaches.

DISTRICT SENIOR MALES BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

by: Gregg Young

The District Basketball Tournament for the Senior Male teams will be held on **Saturday, March 1** @ Alma College. The Celtics and the Warriors teams will compete in this tournament. If they win their respective division, they will attend the State Basketball Tournament in Grand Rapids on March 21-22. Good luck to our teams!!

STATE SENIOR MALES/FEMALES BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The State Seniors Males/Females Basketball Tournament will be held in Grand Rapids on **March 21-22**.

The Senior Male basketball teams will attend the District Basketball Tournament at Alma College and must win their respective division in order to advance onto state competition. Our Female team will attend the State Basketball Tournament. Good luck to all the athletes!



BASKETBALL SKILLS REGIONAL TOURNAMENT

by: Sue Crane, Coach

Our annual Basketball Skills Tournament will be held on **Monday, March 10** from 6:15-7:30 pm at Siebert Elementary School. Come out and cheer on the athletes and watch them showcase their awesome basketball talents! Medals will be awarded to all athletes. This is also the last day of practice for our basketball skills athletes. If you are interested in volunteering at the tournament, please contact Sue Crane at 989-860-8677.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE FORM

Is your Special Olympics form up to date? If not, an athlete will not be allowed to compete until the form is current. Forms are available through Lisa Schwager; call her @ 989-329-0850 to check your form status.



AQUATICS PRACTICES

by: **John Muisenga, Coach**

Area 30 swimmers returned to the pool for a full 2024-25 season beginning this past November. We are looking forward to our Area 30 Regional Aquatics Meet on March 22 and the Area 9 Swim Meet is on April 12 at Bay City Western.



REGIONAL AQUATICS MEET

by: **John Muisenga, Coach**

Our Regional Aquatics Meet will be held on **Saturday, March 22** at Dow High School from 10-3 pm. We need volunteers to ensure the success of this regional meet. Please contact John Muisenga @ 989-859-1595 if you can volunteer.

TRACK-N-FIELD / BOCCE PRACTICES

Track practices will be held on Saturday, **April 5.12.19.26**. Practices will be held at Dow High School track from 9:30-11:30 am. Ann and Sara Gach are the track coaches. Contact Ann at 989-954-2841 if you are interested in doing track. Our track team will attend the Area 31 Area Meet on May 3 and the Area 9 Area Meet on May 10.



Bocce practices will be held on Saturday, **April 5.12.19.26** and **May 3.10** at Dow High School soccer field from 9:30-11:30 am. Gregg Young is the Bocce Coach; call Gregg at 989-492-2029 if you are interested in doing Bocce.

YOUNG ATHLETES PROGRAM

by: **Lori Wright, YAP Coordinator**

ALERT!! The Young Athletes Program is back for the Winter Session. Mark your calendars for **January 7.21** and **February 4.18**. This will be held at the Blessed Sacrament Parish Center Gym from 6:00-7:00 pm.

We had eight athletes show up for our Fall Session. Please spread the word—we would love to grow our program with these wonderful young athletes!! If you have a chance, come out and watch these young athletes as they are our future. Volunteers are always needed and appreciated!

Contact Lori Wright @ lorisuewright@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer or have your child participate in this program.



“BOWLING BUDDIES” BOWLING LEAGUE

by: **Erica Roy, Coordinator**

Bowling Buddies started in September and is coordinated by Adam/Erica Roy, Tina Kocsis, and Steve/Joann Roy. Just a reminder that this is not Special Olympics sponsored, which means that Special Olympics does not pay for bowling.

Note: if a person does not show up for a practice, they will be charged \$4/practice as this money is applied towards the banquet and awards cost.

Please mark your calendar with these dates:

Dates: December 7.21
January 4.18
February 8 (Banquet)

Time: 1:00-3:30 pm
(check in @ 1:00, bowling starts at 1:30)

Location: Northern Lanes

Cost: \$10/week
(includes two games plus bowling shoes)

Who: Anyone!! Can be athletes, volunteers, unified partners; it's open to all!

If you have any questions, contact either:

- Erica Roy @ 989-418-9859 / ericadavis9009@gmail.com
- Tina Kocsis @ 989-941-5883 / tj_kocsis@yahoo.com



SPECIAL OLYMPICS MICHIGAN (SOMI) NEW IMPROVED WEBSITE

Check out the SOMI website. It is very easy and user friendly. To view our area webpage, follow these steps:

1. Log into the website → www.somi.org
2. Click on: “Find Your Local Area” on top of the page
3. Select “Mid- RegMichigan Region”, then “Area 30”

This page is specific to our area and has many forms you can access. Our sports and contact information are listed. We also have a link to our area Facebook page. This webpage is updated continuously. Feel free to share this with your family, friends, co-workers, etc.

Any questions, contact Mary Adams—a30so@chartermi.net

Do you know someone who could benefit from participating in Special Olympics sports training and competition? If so, contact our Area Director—Lisa Schwager @ 989-329-0850 or area30@somi.org. Special Olympics athletes develop physical fitness and self-confidence that helps them succeed at home, school, and work.

**2025 SPORTS CALENDAR
SPECIAL OLYMPICS MIDLAND COUNTY**

Area Director: Lisa Schwager

Phone: 989-329-0850

Email: Area30@somi.org

** Note: Dates/Locations Subject to Change*

Basketball Practices

January - March

Location: Siebert Elementary

6:15-7:15 pm (Monday) SKILLS TEAM

Location: Northeast Middle School

7:15-8:30 pm (Tuesday) SUPER CATS TEAM

7:15-9:00 pm (Monday/Thursday)

WARRIORS TEAM

Location: Jefferson Middle School

7:15-8:30 pm (Friday) CELTICS TEAM

Cross-Country Practices

Saturday mornings

January 4.11.18.25 / February 1

10:00-11:30 noon

Location: Rail Trail

Snow Shoe Practices

Saturday mornings

January 4.11.18.25 / February 1

10:00-11:00 am

Location: Plymouth Park

Alpine Skiing Practices

Sunday (all day)

January 5.12.19.26

Location: Caberfae Ski Resort

Aquatics Practices

Wednesday evenings

January - May / October - December

7:00-8:30 pm

Location: Northeast Middle School

State Winter Games

February 4-7

Grand Traverse Resort in Traverse City

POLAR PLUNGE FUNDRAISER

Saturday, February 15

11:00-3:00 pm

Location: Dow Diamond

Basketball Skills Regional Tournament

Monday, March 10

6:15-7:30 pm

Location: Siebert Elementary

District Male Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 1

Location: Alma College

Regional Aquatics Tournament

Saturday, March 22

9:00-2:00 pm

Location: Dow High School Pool

State Basketball Tournament

March 21-22

Location: Grand Rapids

Male Teams must qualify; Female teams will attend

Young Athletes Program

January 7.21 / February 4.18 (Winter Session)

6:00-7:00 pm

Location: Blessed Sacrament Gym

Track-n-Field/Bocce Practices

Saturday mornings

April 5.12.19.26 / May 3.10

9:30-11:30 am

Location: Dow High School Track

WALK-A-THON FUNDRAISER

Saturday, May 17

9:30-10:30 am

Location: Dow High School Track

Area Summer Games Meet

Saturday, May 17

11:00-3:00 pm

Location: Dow High School Track

State Summer Games

May 29-31

Location: CMU, Mt. Pleasant

Cycling Practices

June - September

Tuesday evenings

4:30-5:30 pm

Location: Midland Tridge (Rail Trail)

Golf Practices

Saturday afternoons

June - September

1:00-4:00 pm

Location: Currie Golf Course

Softball Practices

June - August

Thursday evenings

6:30-8:00 pm

Location: Midland High School

Softball Skills Practices

June - August

Tuesday evenings

6:00-7:00 pm

Location: Midland Miracle Field

Soccer Practices

July - September

Monday evenings

6:00-7:30 pm

Location: Midland Soccer Complex

Softball Skills Tournament

Tuesday, August 12

6:00-8:00 pm

Location: Midland Miracle Field

Family Hall of Fame Banquet

Wednesday, August 20

6:00-8:00 pm

Location: Plymouth Park, Shelter F

Flag Football Practices

September - October

Tuesday/Thursday evenings

6:00-7:30 pm

Location: Midland High School

GOLF OUTING FUNDRAISER*

Sunday, August 3

8:00-3:00 pm

Location: Sandy Ridge Golf Course

LETR FUNDRAISER*

September 11 (*tentative*)

4:30-7:00 pm

Location: Law Enforcement Center

State Fall Games*

Softball - August

Cycling/Golf/Soccer - September

Flag Football - November

Dates: TBD

AREA 30 SPECIAL OLYMPICS GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDANCE AT STATE TOURNAMENTS

Following are a list of guidelines for selecting athletes to attend state tournaments (i.e. basketball, soccer, track, softball, etc):

1. PRACTICE

To qualify for a state tournament, the athlete must attend a minimum of six (6) practices. All of our sport seasons consist of at least an 8-week training program. It is only fair to take an athlete to the state meet who participated in the training and competition versus an athlete who has not. Our philosophy is that an athlete who is not trained will not be ready for sports competition.

2. INDEPENDENT

The athlete must be fairly independent. The chaperones have responsibility for four (4) athletes and cannot be expected to devote their full attention to just 1 athlete. We do not and will not have time to "pamper" them; one must not stifle the ability an athlete has if allowed to show it. **THIS IS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR THE ATHLETE.** Let's not ruin it by suffocating the athlete.

3. BEHAVIOR

The athlete must display good behavior. They must be able to take DIRECT ORDERS from the chaperones. They must behave appropriately. We will tolerate misbehavior at times; however, we will not endure misbehavior constantly from anyone.

NOTE: Misbehavior consists of the following: bad attitude, unwilling to listen or cooperate, stealing, unexplained absences, excessive foul language, overly aggressive behavior, running away, etc.

4. ATTITUDE

If an athlete refuses a ribbon or medal at a state tournament, they will not be allowed to attend that specific tournament of a period of 1 year.

5. UPDATED FORMS

In order for an athlete to participate, their Special Olympics Health Appraisal Form must be updated. This form includes a medical portion, which needs to be signed and dated by a doctor, and the legal guardian section which needs to be signed and dated by the athlete's legal guardian. If an athlete is their own guardian, they may sign that portion.

FUNDRAISING NEWS!

GREAT LAKES BAY POLAR PLUNGE 2025

The 2025 Polar Plunge for the Great Lakes Bay Area will be held at the Dow Diamond on **Saturday, February 15**. Registration starts at 11 am; the plunge starts 1 pm. Portions of monies will go to our area. Any questions, contact John Muisenga at 989-859-1595 or jamuisenga@charter.net.

SPONSOR-A-CHAMP FUNDRAISER

Our annual SAC fundraising campaign is planned for April. This fundraiser will help support our athletes attending State Summer Games @ CMU in June. Contact John Muisenga if you would like to be on the mailing list to support our athletes.



WALK-A-THON FUNDRAISER—MAY 17

SAVE THE DATE!! Our annual Walk-A-Thon will be held on Saturday, May 17 @ the Dow High track prior to our Area Summer Games Meet. Please look to join us and welcome in the Spring/Summer sports season.

AMANDA BROWN POETRY

Amanda is a Special Olympics athlete who is multi-talented. Besides participating in sports, she is also an accomplished photographer and poet. We are proud to publish Amanda's beautiful poetry and hope you enjoy future poetry from Amanda.

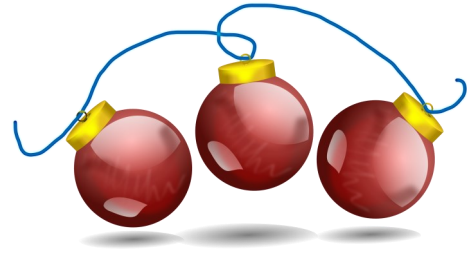
SANTA IN TOWN

By: Amanda Brown

I'm going with my friends
Now, and having fun meeting
My friends in town and
Going to see Santa coming

To town, first we need
A treat that was found
They are free for taking.
Mrs. Claus gave me a red

Bulb, and my friend got
Them too, then Santa came.
My friends and I cheered
As the sleigh came through!



Area 30
Special Olympics
is looking for new
athletes!



Join Today!



Scan the QR code for more
information or contact

Lauren Saj
Email: gnam1le@cmich.edu or
call 586-863-3428



THANK YOU!!

A special THANK YOU to the following people and organizations for their generous contributions:

- Catherine & Pete Anders
- Kroger
- Bernadine LeBeau
- Samuel Shusterman
- United Way

THANK YOU to Dan & Janet Agostinelli who gave a memorial donation in honor of *Irene Agostinelli*.

A special THANK YOU to the Midland Aktion Club for a general donation.

AREA 30 WELCOMES NEW ATHLETES!

Welcome to the following athlete who has joined our program:

*Jordan Altenburg
Aiyun Cao
Van Lyon
Angelo Vela*

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK!!

Have you "LIKED" us on Facebook? We post several times/week. Check out all the latest happenings on our Facebook page:

www.Facebook.com/Midland.Area30

Mary Adams is our administrator. Feel free to contact her if you would like something added to the page.

- Mary Adams — a30so@chartermi.net



Birthdays

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY To Our
Special Athletes and Volunteers!**

October

Jameson Baker
Jennifer Banaszak
Tanner Bowerson
Jen Chwastek
Jacob Crane
Brooke Drumheller
Kim Eaton
Jacob Fitrakis
Sue Haremski
Raiden Jones
Reeve Jones
Laura Lorenzo
Vince Mathews
Jan McNeil
Duane Moe
Karen Muehlfelt
Kendall Thiel
Angelo Vela
Elaine Yokomizo
Jim Yokomizo

November

Mary Adams
Jim Baker
Lynne DiMercurio
Thomas Drout
Bently Feinauer
Ann Gach
Lindsay Haremski
Laura Lamberton
Kevin Moe
Carter Roy-Davis
Steve Roy

December

Jordan Altenburg
Jon Donker
Sara Gach
Frank How
Hollie Kayden
Tina Kocis
Tony Peariso
Lauren Saj
Josh Shouse
Tim Spitnale
Dave Stickle
Grace Tetreau
Harper Tetreau
Jon Thiel
Candice Weeks

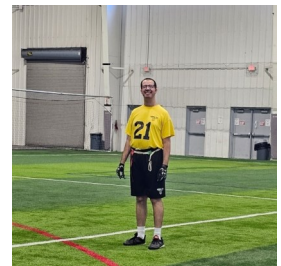
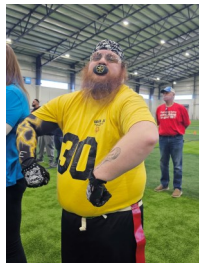
January

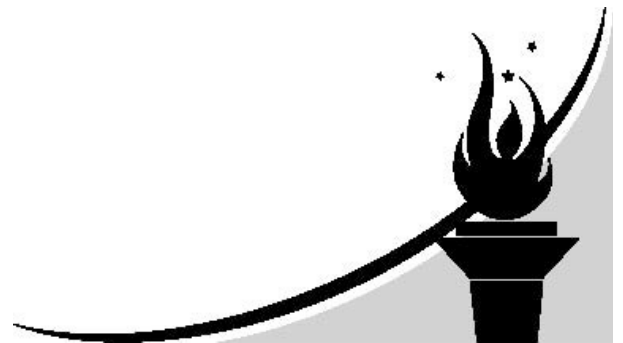
Jenny Adamcik
Doug Altenburg
Lincoln Barringer
Gilian Bond
Jeff Butkiewicz
Sue Crane
Justin Dyer
Mary Kaczynski
Brayden Meyers
Silas Pitt
Anna Struble
Matt Teer
Andy Tudethout

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY



MEMORIES OF 2024!!!





COME SHARE THE SPIRIT OF AREA 30 SPECIAL OLYMPICS

- Send information on enrolling athletes in Special Olympics
- Send information on volunteering for Special Olympics
- Send information on how I can involve my organization
- Accept the enclosed tax-deductible contribution

Name: _____

Address: _____

Mail to: Area 30 Special Olympics, 2808 Blairmont Drive, Midland, MI 48642
or Contact: Lisa Schwager, Area Director (989)329-0850 / area30@somi.org