



Organization Name: Special Olympics Rhode Island

Employer ID#: 05-0377867 **Founded:** 1968

Address: 370 George Washington Highway

City: Smithfield **State:** Rhode Island **Zip Code:** 02917

CEO: Dennis DeJesus

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Mission: The mission of Special Olympics Rhode Island is to provide year-round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

About Special Olympics Rhode Island

The Special Olympics concept was born in the early 1960's when Eunice Kennedy Shriver started a day camp for children with intellectual disabilities. She observed the great joy campers experienced when playing sports and resolved to create a program that meets physical fitness needs and boosts self-esteem. The Rhode Island Chapter of Special Olympics was established in 1968 and has served thousands of athletes and their families ever since.

Special Olympics Rhode Island (SORI) serves over 4,000 athletes, all Rhode Islanders with intellectual disabilities. Our athletes are of all ages, from age 2 to 77. Along with the athletes, Special Olympics provides involvement and support to family members and/or caregivers, along with hundreds of volunteers from high schools, colleges and companies from around the state.

In non-pandemic times: Special Olympics Rhode Island provides over 1,600 year-round sports training and athletic competitions each year in 21 official and demonstration sports. SORI also has a Unified Sports Program, a Motor Activities Training Program, Young Athletes Program (for children under age 8), Healthy Athletes Program and the Sargent Shriver Global Messenger Program. Our Unified Champion Schools Program is in EVERY RI Public High School, most public Middle Schools and a growing number of Elementary Schools. SO College launched in 2019 and currently has four active RI universities enrolled.

When Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded Special Olympics in 1968, she proclaimed that no athlete will pay to participate. SORI has stayed true to this policy and do not charge a registration or participation fee. SORI relies on the generosity and support of corporations, foundations and individuals to meet the organizational expenses. Though part of the international Special Olympics, SORI is independently operated and funded.