



# Annual Report 2014 Revealing the Champion in All of Us

# Mission

Special Olympics Alberta is committed to enriching the lives of Albertans with an intellectual disability through sport.

## Vision

Special Olympics Alberta provides individuals with an intellectual disability, of all ages, abilities, opportunity to realize their full athletic potential, with appropriate training, coaching and competitions, to develop life skills, a healthy body and self-esteem.

Special Olympics Alberta is an accredited chapter of Special Olympics Canada

# Special Olympics is more than an event!

Special Olympics delivers **world-class sport programs** to people with intellectual disabilities of **all ages** and a **wide range of abilities** daily in **communities across Alberta.** 

Special Olympics believes that people with intellectual disabilities can, and will, **succeed** when given the opportunity – we are leveling the playing field

# Special Olympics is a catalyst for social change. Our programs help:

Instill confidence, self-esteem and other life skills in our athletes

Contribute to healthier athletes with life-long physical fitness habits

Change attitudes and create a more inclusive society

Strengthen communities

# Special Olympics Alberta offers sports programs

Number of Athletes 2986 | Number of Volunteers 644 | Number of Coaches 526 | Sports available 18



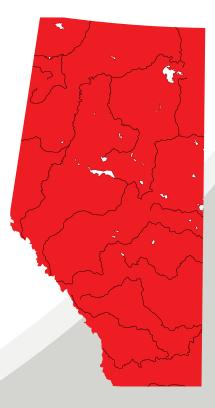
# Special Olympics Alberta is:

Athletes, coaches, and volunteers in 29 communities across Alberta

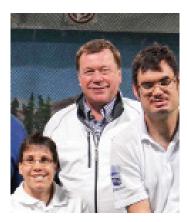
Airdrie & District Barrhead Brooks Calgary Camrose Crowsnest Pass Drumheller Edmonton Edson Foothills Grande Prairie Hinton Lacombe Lakeland Leduc Lethbridge Lloydminster Medicine Hat Olds and District Red Deer Rocky Mountain House

St. Albert

St. Paul Strathcona Vegreville West Central Westlock Wetaskiwin Whitecourt



# Message from Board of Directors Chair, Bill McLaren



The summer started with splash and bang with exciting competition at the 2013 Canada Summer Games in Sherbrooke, Quebec. Eight Special Olympics Alberta athletes represented our province proudly and earned Alberta a record breaking 12 twelve medals. An achievement made possible because of local sports programs and the training of our athletes, by coaches and volunteers each day.

This July in Vancouver, 2,632 athletes with 554 coaches across Canada participated in 35 competitions at the 2014 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games. We selected 120 athletes and 42 mission staff and coaches, the largest Alberta team to date, to represent the talent of our province. Our athletes earned 131 medals, but what I was most impressed with was from the countless personal bests accomplished.

Our focus is on our future and community which led to over \$520,000 invested into community development; translating into more resources and coach development. We continued to reach out to children and youth through a successful Youth Sports Day in both Calgary and Edmonton.

Building a solid foundation for athletes and coaches is only possible through community support and partnerships that selflessly fundraise for our movement. Our festival, "S.O. Dance!" combined dynamic energy and dance moves with wonderful media partners who danced their socks off for awareness and funds. Our powerful partners, the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics, ramped up their support with new awareness and fundraising events. We have hired a dedicated staff to help maintain their momentum in the community and anticipate even more success. We also celebrated a major milestone with our longstanding partner, the Motor Dealers' Association of Alberta with the 30th anniversary of the MDA Charity Classic. Their steadfast support has provided Special Olympics Alberta with over \$5.8 million for the past 30 years.

We have our sights set to spread the movement and to create thriving community sports programs for all ages and abilities to individuals with intellectual disabilities. It is possible only through the time, energy and passion of our volunteers, coaches and staff. Thank you for an amazing year – you are building better communities and changing lives each day.

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Bill McLaren

# Message from the President and CEO, Johnny Byrne



I am very excited to introduce our 2013-14 Annual Report. Taking the time to step back and take pride in the work we have done as an organization is important. This report is a celebration of our accomplishments this past year and recognition for some of our amazing supporters and leaders.

This was my first full year as CEO at Special Olympics Alberta and I found it very rewarding and exciting. I had the opportunity to visit with many grassroots program and listen to our volunteer leaders and athletes. To help set our priorities for 2014-15, we made it a priority to reach out to our affiliates and grassroots coaches. The feedback we received was intergral for our board

to set the direction for our organization. The resounding positive feedback we heard reassured us that we were going in the right direction. Our affiliates appreciated being engaged and given the opportunity to provide feedback.

Another great source of pride is the development of our Athlete Leadership network. We are an athlete centered organization that needs to continue to strive to empower and engage our athletes more in setting our direction and priorities. Our provincial athlete leadership council published its first two provincial newsletters and expanded their growth as leaders. In addition Katie Saunders, a Special Olympics athlete from Calgary, was named the athlete representative on the National Board- a great personal honor for her and for Special Olympics Alberta.

The past year was also marked milestones for two of our longest standing partners. The Motor Dealers Association celebrated its 30th anniversary and over 5.9 million dollars in support to Special Olympics Alberta. Our Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) relationship continued to grow and prosper. We are very excited to have added a LETR support staff position that is dedicated to strengthening and growing our relationship with law enforcement across the province.

What energizes me the most is thinking about our future potential. As we move into 2014-15, I look forward to bringing on a new staff position that will be dedicated to providing support to affiliates and focusing on our volunteer management and recognition. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization so ensuring that they receive more support is a priority for us moving forward.

Our flagship in the year ahead will be our provincial games that will be hosted in the north for the first time. We look forward to highlighting Grande Prairie and the region and making an impact to help raise awareness for Special Olympics in this amazing part of the province.

What a year...and what a year to come. Thanks for all that you do,

Johnny Byrne



A Year in Review



# Advance Quality Sports and Competition

- Youth Sports Day engaged over 120 students and 50 teachers and support in Calgary and for the first year in Edmonton.
- Young Athletes Program Leaders Training was offered to the Adapted Physical Education program to 26 students at Red Deer College.
- Coach Development Sessions were held in four sports providing networking and sport technical training for new and experienced coaches.
- 30 coaches from seven affiliates took advantage of coach development grants to take sport specific coach training courses through their provincial sport organization.
- Technical committees were formed for floor hockey and curling to assist in preparation and divisioning for the 2015 Special Olympics Alberta Winter Games.
- Overall, there were 35 competitions with 2,632 athletes competing and 554 coaches.
- For the first time, Special Olympics held its provincial figure skating qualifier competing alongside the province's best skaters at Skate Canada's Starskate competition.
- Eight athletes in the sports of swimming and athletics competed in the Canada Summer Games in Sherbrooke earning twelve medals- an all time highest total for Special Olympics Alberta athletes.
- Team Alberta was selected and put in a year of solid training. To ensure team cohesion and skill development, each team had the opportunity to gather a minimum of two face to face full team or sport specific training at camps.

# Build Communities

- Special Olympics Alberta partnered with Physiotherapy Alberta and the Dieticians of Alberta to support Team Alberta at the its first training camp.
- Alberta sent athlete, mentor and trainer representatives to the Athlete Leadership University hosted in Vancouver.
- A new Athlete Leadership Committee was launched in Grande Prairie taking on a meaningful role within the affiliate and planning the year end banquet.

# Connecting Fans and Funds

- \$528,194 invested in community development
- Special Olympics Alberta Festival SO Dance! brought media personalities together with athletes to showcase joy and friendship in this energy-charged dance-off for a cause
- Our dedicated partners MDA celebrated the 29th and 30th MDA Charity Classic for Special Olympics Alberta and successfully raised awareness and funds by over 300 dealers across Alberta.
- Shared Team Alberta athlete experience with partners, friends and family through Draft an Athlete and Personal Best programs while raising funds to support the team
- An exclusive Special Olympics campaign was run by Safeway raising over \$698,000 across Canada where 93 Alberta stores raised \$206,894.
- A dedicated staff was created and filled to support the growing events of Alberta's LETR which raised over \$313,000 provincially
- Key messaging used nationally and provincially

# Movement Leadership

• Affiliates and coaches were consulted to provide feedback which was incorporated into the 2014-15 SOA Business Plan.

# Volunteers- Drive the Movement

Volunteers are the backbone of the Special Olympics movement. Special Olympics would not exist today- and could not have been created- without the time, energy, commitment and enthusiasm of our volunteers.

Special Olympics Alberta would like to celebrate the milestones reached by our volunteers across Alberta.

## 25 Years

Sigrid Johnson, Calgary Val Wahl, Calgary Ernie Langridge, Lethbridge Sheana McDermott, Wetaskiwin Blain Fuller, Wetaskiwin Elaine Kellert, Calgary

Norm Hurley, Calgary

20 Years

## 15 Years

Theresa Dias, Calgary Theresa Garagan, Calgary Debbie Hatton, Calgary Joanie Scott, Calgary Lance Zackodnik, Calgary Cole Davis, Brooks Gerry Pydde, Wetaskiwin Janice Pydde, Wetaskiwin Tara Gillow, Wetaskiwin Jason Gillow, Wetaskiwin

# 10 Years

Peter Glossop, Calgary Cecile Jolicoeur, Calgary Lisa Kerr, Calgary Michael Morin, Calgary Abe Villanueva, Calgary Wendy Nelson, Lethbridge

# 5 Years

Allison Garwah, Calgary Lucy Arnold, Calgary Christy Atkins, Calgary Bob Boychuk, Calgary Bill Clark, Calgary Cassie Edwards, Calgary Kathy Ervin, Calgary Selby Jensen-Smith, Calgary Anne Kennedy, Calgary Courtney Luxen, Calgary Raechel Marpole, Calgary Katrina Michayluk, Calgary Mark Ogle, Calgary Ginny Price, Calgary Torey Price, Calgary Lois Ross, Calgary Karen Saunders, Calgary Richard Sawka, Calgary

Liz Shorter, Calgary Nathan VanDecker, Calgary Jason Wardman, Calgary Adam Price, Calgary Jan Schwonik, Wetaskiwin John Schwonik, Wetaskiwin Kara Albers, Wetaskiwin



# I Can Achieve Anything A Special Olympics Athlete's Story

#### "Sometimes I just stop and take a deep breath, and tell myself to try my best."

Even after 26 years of competing, Mitchell Pennington still gets butterflies at competitions and reminds himself to just focus and to be the best he can be.



Pennington had a stroke before he was born and has difficulties with the right side of his body. When he was six, his family decided that Special Olympics would be a good way to keep him busy, active and engaged by enrolling him in the 5-pin bowling program in Drumheller.

Instantly he was hooked.



He was having fun, making new friends, building his self esteem and learning new skills from his coaches. With his growing confidence and support from his family, teammates, and coaches, Pennington aimed for new heights to try his hand with alpine skiing- finding a new passion.

Today, Pennington lives on his own with a few roommates and works at Tim Horton's, the bowling alley and at the World's Largest Dinosaur. When he's not busy working, he volunteers for the Drumheller Dragons junior A hockey team. With his many achievements, his proudest accomplishment is being the best uncle to his nephew, Finn, and niece, Everly.

"My biggest fans are my family. They always support me," said Pennington.

Special Olympics provides opportunities for families to come together and celebrate abilities and accomplishments of our athletes. We believe that people with intellectual disabilities can and will succeed when give the opportunity. Seeing athletes like Mitchell Pennington flourish in the community and find confidence in his abilities and breaks the idea of barriers and proudly declares there are no limits to what people with intellectual disabilities can accomplish.

"Because of Special Olympics, I've learned and accomplished lots of things."

#### You inspire us to be better An Open Letter to Special Olympics Athletes

I remember my first taste of defeat when I was 13. It felt like a dramatic scene from a sports movie- it was a championship game where a couple points determined victory. I was sweaty, nervous and shaky. The last thing I remember was being on the court, then a booming roar of bliss from the other team and instantly, I had a wave of disappointment come over me.

I was too young and naïve to understand the lessons of what sports really teaches you and it was not until later I comprehended its true beauty.

Lucky for me, after being part of Special Olympics this past year, I'm reminded at each track meet, soccer game, floor hockey tournament, and Monday night softball training practice what the power and spirit sport creates.

It's not shiny medals that leave a lasting memory. Yes, it's a nice piece of hardware and neck weight, but our athletes show us more than that. They invite you to share in their joy of making new friends, of what it looks like to support teammates, and how mentorship with coaches are lifelong friendships.

They tell you about the training and work they put in each day because they simply want to do their best.

I have witnessed them pick themselves up after a fall, lick their wounds, then beg their coach to get back out there to help the team. Work, sweat and pain is written on their faces at each squat, lunge, or lap they must do. There are times they get discouraged, but still they persist.

It is an undeniable energy that surrounds them when they've set their sights to be their best. An energy so contagious that it inspires coaches and supporters to cheer them on every step of the way. It is the essential idea that you just need to try to be all you can be with grace, dignity and fairness.

For this lesson and all the inspiring ways you make me understand and become a better person, I want to thank you, our athletes, for showing me the true power of sport-giving it your all because it's the attempt that counts the most!

# Drafting Dreams and Achieving Personal Bests

SPECIA

Draft an Athlete and Personal Best are grass-roots fundraising and awareness campaigns for Special Olympics Alberta and Team Alberta.

The Draft an Athlete program builds relationships between Team Alberta athletes and the communities where they live and train. The program provided support to the athletes for training, travel, and accommodation leading up to and during the 2014 National Games. As a way for a company, and its employees, to get behind an athlete (or athletes), Draft an Athlete built a connection for sponsors to follow their athlete's training during their journey to Games.

The Personal Best program was driven by our athletes to seek support within their own communities for their costs in competing at National Games. Not only did all the athletes raise awareness and funds, they gave a promise to each of their supporters that they would try to be their best as they trainined and worked to represent Alberta on a national stage. Every community around the province rallied around Team Alberta. With almost 1,000 organizations and individual donors coming on board to support both programs, Draft an Athlete raised over \$80,000 towards Team Alberta while the athletes brought in an astounding \$53,000. The success from these programs were essential to off-set the expenses of Team Alberta's journey to Vancouver.

It was a tremendous year that built a solid foundation for future teams representing the great province of Alberta.





# The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Alberta

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) for Special Olympics Alberta kicked off this year on a high note, literally, as they held *Free the Fuzz* roof sits at six Walmart Canada locations across the province, raising \$154,084.49, and that was just the beginning of the 27 fundraising and awareness events held this year.

LETR is the Special Olympics' largest grass-roots fundraiser and public awareness vehicle in the world. In 2013, dedicated law enforcement volunteers raised over \$50 million for Special Olympics Programs around the world. Here in Alberta for the 2013-2014 year, the LETR proudly raised \$327,326.42.

LETR has evolved from a symbolic awareness run to a very significant, annual grass-roots fundraising effort conducted by law enforcement agencies. From Torch Run shirts and puppy sales to the events such as half marathons, *Free the Fuzz* roof sits, *Cops and Crepes*, *Polar Plunges*®, and fitness challenges, the LETR raises funds to reach more athletes who can grow and thrive through the transformative power of sports.

In Alberta, 18 agencies in 14 communities contribute to LETR efforts annually, not only with events, but as Guardians of the Flame®, ensuring the delivery of the Special Olympics Flame of Hope™ to the opening ceremony of Provincial Games, and sending off our local athletes to National and World Games.



#### Elliot Moskowy

Age: 23 Affiliate: Red Deer Years with Special Olympics: 5 Sports: Swimming

Determined and focused. Elliot is a shark in the water. Training all year round with Special Olympics and Red Deer's Master Swim Club, Elliot is steadfast on his goal to represent Canada at the World Games. Each year Elliot exhibits improvements and gains new skills at all levels. Out of the water, Elliot is compassionate, sportsmanship demonstrates and respect towards his fellow athletes, coaches and officials. At any opportunity, Elliot encourages and motivates his teammates and jumps at the chance to represent Special Olympics as a speaker or at fundraising engagements. Elliott has blossomed as a speaker and advocate for Special Olympics and last fall spoke eloquently at the Motor Dealers Association Gala about his triumphs and the impact Special Olympics has left on his life. He has completed his schooling and works at his parents sign shop.



#### Marsha Oudman

Age: 44 Affiliate: Lethbridge Years with Special Olympics: over 20 Sports: 10 Pin Bowling, Powerlifting, Swimming

Marsha exemplifies over twenty years of dedication to her sports and training while consistently working at achieving her personal bests. Marsha has attended numerous provincial games in swimming as well as a couple of nationals. Marsha knows that hard work is what will get her to her goal. She has perfected her butterfly stroke and pushes herself to try new events like the 50m, 100m and 200m butterfly. Last year, Marsha represented Alberta in the Global World Aquatic event in San Juan Puerto Rico. Training daily and pushing for her best, she not only broke personal bests, but medaled in her two events with a gold in butterfly and a bronze in freestyle. She is a self starter and is part of the team spirit in competitions. She is dedicated to achieving her goals whether it be in her personal life or in sports.



#### The Wild Ones

Members: Candice Bagan, Laura Dakin, Chris Deak, Jordan Deren, Sonia Massimino, Justin McIntosh, Tom McLaughlin, Jenny Murray, Christine Stoski, Nicole Whittington Affiliate: Strathcona Years as team: 2 Sport: Soccer

The Wild Ones are built on respect, encouragement and the tenacity to keep trying to improve. The athletes' interaction with each other demonstrate the true spirit of Special Olympics. Each player respects each unique and different strengths he or she brings to the group and they are eager to learn skills from their coach. They support each other when someone is struggling with a new skill and encourages each other when they are tired. They also opened their arms to welcome two Edmonton athletes that joined the team for National Games. Working together as a team, the Wild Ones have gone from 10 separate athletes to a complete and supportive unit. From the humble start in mastering skills to difficult and complex drills, the team is succeeding at each challenge they are presented and are asking for more.







#### Connie Biro

#### Affiliate: Red Deer Length of service with Special Olympics: 25 Years

Connie Biro is dedicated, motivated and compassionate to make the program in Red Deer grow and thrive. In her 25 years of selfless dedication to Special Olympics, she has taken on many roles as an affiliate secretary, administrator, coordinator, fundraiser, and an aquatic sport chairman for the 2013 Special Olympics provincial summer games. Through Connie's hard work, the Special Olympics aquatics' program in Red Deer has more than tripled in numbers with several swimmers excelling at the provincial, national and international levels because of her efforts. She has provided guidance and shares best practices with other affiliates to help them run well organized and successful swim meets.

#### Vincent MacIntyre

Affiliate: Sherwood Park and Edmonton Length of Service with Special Olympics: 8 years Sports: Floor Hockey and Soccer

Vince MacIntyre volunteers to ensure that all the athletes he coaches has the opportunity to reach their full athletic potential and that they're having fun. The fun doesn't just mean training, it's also the opportunity to take fun trips to watch professional soccer and lacrosse games. For almost a decade, Vince has been dedicating his time and efforts to shape healthy, confident athletes in both floor hockey and soccer. He was a coach for Team Alberta for three national games: London 2010, St. Albert 2012, and Vancouver 2014. He is the head coach for floor hockey and soccer during the regular season. One year Vince and his co-coach for floor hockey purchased dress clothes for their floor hockey team to wear so they could proudly look professional at competitions. Currently, Vince is sharing his wisdom and knowledge to mentor a former Special Olympics athlete in his journey towards becoming an assistant coach.

## Hayley Goring

#### Affiliate: Red Deer Length of Service with Special Olympics: 9 years Sport: Swimming

A leading force for Special Olympics' aquatic program in Red Deer, Hayley Goring has been the head coach for the past three years and was the assistant coach several years prior. While attending university this past year, Hayley made a weekly drive from Edmonton to Red Deer each Wednesday to coach. She also volunteered with Edmonton aquatics program as the lead coach when no one else was available for the job. In addition to coaching at both Edmonton and Calgary, she took on the role of training coach with Red Deer athletes on Team Alberta and became part of Team Alberta as an assistant coach. She prepared weekly lesson plans for her assistant coaches and student volunteers from Red Deer College, mentored them in their duties and encouraged their participation in local and out of town competitions. Red Deer's program has more than doubled in numbers since Hayley took over as head coach and has expanded from 1 to 2 hours each week. Her drive and love of the swimming program's success has no boundaries.

# *Motor Dealers Association of Alberta Community Leadership Award*

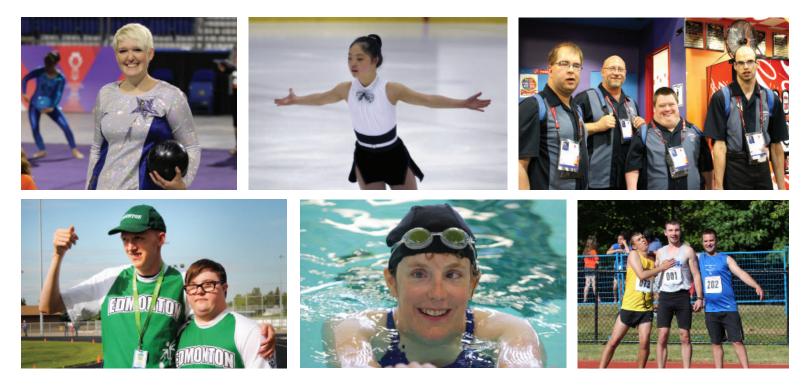
**Lethbridge** is defined by their dedication and commitment. In the past year, the AMC went through a big turn over and the new AMC members stepped up to take on the responsibilities of running a successful program. They took on new challenges with vigor by starting new programs like bocce and rhythmic gymnastics, and hosting a powerlifting competition. They have eagerly supported national fundraising initiatives and has continued to maintain a good partnership with Lethbridge's Motor Dealers Association. There is no doubt that innovative leadership and support in Lethbridge will provide dynamic sports programs and awareness for our 120 athletes in the city.

# Murray Koch Youth Development Award

**Red Deer** has gone above and beyond to build the Young Athletes Program. Laying a strong foundation in 2013, they combined the Active Start and Fundamentals program which has continued to gain more interest from parents and volunteers. Their athlete and participant numbers are climbing with the program having 15 registered young athletes. They have fostered a strong partnership with Red Deer College creating a robust pool of student volunteers from the Adapted Physical Edmonton Program and facility use of their gym for youth programs. With the continued growth of numbers, Red Deer is able to divide the gym into two sections to run the Active Start and Fundamentals separately for the athletes that have the ability to develop fundamental movement skills to reach their full potential. We foresee an exciting future and growth for Red Deer's young athletes program.

# LETR Community Spirit Award

**Camrose** has, since becoming involved with the LETR, put great effort into growing their signature event, "Free our Finest." This event is well organized and utilizes the entire community including all First Responders, local sports clubs, local artists, and other community partners. The Special Olympics Alberta - Camrose affiliate works right alongside the officers the whole way through, giving this event a level of organization and athlete engagement that shines as an example of truly volunteering together. Camrose also sent both an officer and an athlete to this year's Final Leg in Vancouver- the dynamic duo, Matthew and Rocky, showed the rest of Canada what this partnership is all about.



"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." – Special Olympics Athlete Oath



# Thanks for Being Our Champions MDA



What started in 1985 as a small celebrity golf tournament in Red Deer evolved into one of the largest, and most successful annual golf tournaments in Alberta.

Edmonton motor dealer, Murray Koch and car dealers across Alberta got together and decided that collectively the industry needed to give back to their communities. From that point, the MDA and Special Olympics Alberta have shared a unique bond. A union that started as a simple idea and

blossomed into a province wide relationship which has changed the lives of athletes, families and communities.

Now, 30 years later the Motor Dealers' Association of Alberta (MDA) celebrated their momentous partnership with us this past year in Red Deer, back to where it all started.

With the collected efforts of all the dealers in attendance, the MDA raised over \$350,000 towards Special Olympics Alberta with a total of over \$5.8 million overall.

"I have to say I am honoured and proud to be a part of not only this event, but of this industry. 30 years is a significant milestone for any charity event, and all the dealers and suppliers are extremely proud of their contributions towards Special Olympics Alberta over that time period," said Garrett Scott, MDA Vice Chair of the Motor Dealers' Association of Alberta.

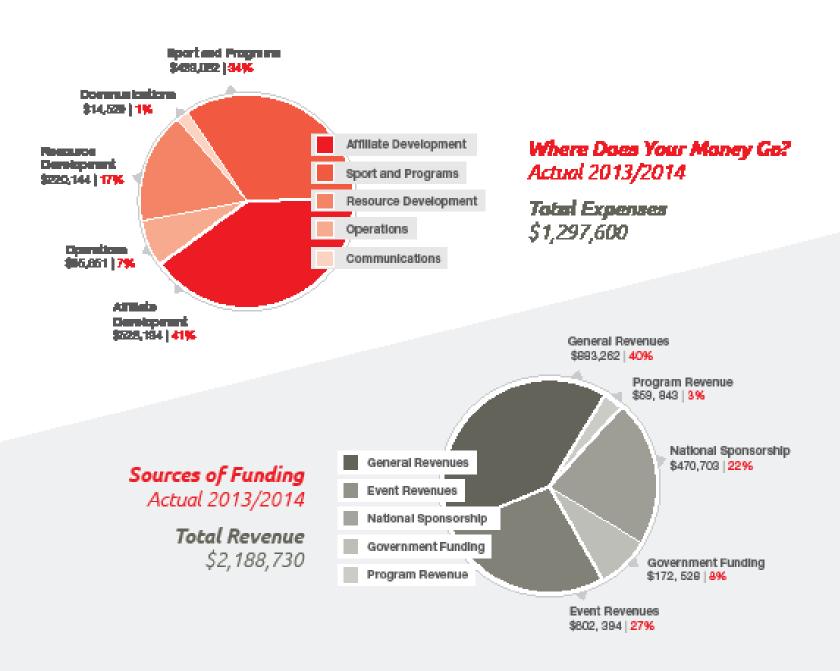
MDA proudly contributed 100 per cent of the proceeds from the Charity Classic towards sustaining sports programs in over 100 local communities across the province for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics has grown to reach 3,000 athletes in over 140 communities across Alberta. Through MDA's devoted support, programs have grown in complexity and scope and now provides services for toddlers to seniors.

Thank you Motor Dealers' Association of Alberta! We value your support and friendship and are truly grateful for allowing our life changing work to be possible.



# Financial Information



## Donors over \$1000, includes all Special Olympics communities in Alberta

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\*Please note that this list does not capture our overwhelming support from our donors in Calgary

# **Provincial Partners**













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Coca-Cola Canada Special Olympics Canada Foundation Bain & Company TSN Home Hardware Signature Authentics

# Silver

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# Friends

Canada Post Community Foundation Canadian 5 Pin Bowlers Association Rub A535

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# Provincial Sport Council

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## Affiliate Representative Council

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# Athlete Leadership Committee

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# www.specialolympics.ab.ca

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