



YEAR IN REVIEW FROM SPECIAL OLYMPICS BC – VICTORIA

Despite half of our sport season being cancelled due to COVID-19, Special Olympics BC – Victoria still had a number of memorable moments in 2019-2020.

Given that it was a National Games year for our fall/winter athletes, the season started off with athletes eagerly training to be their best!

We were really excited when our Special Olympics World Games gold-medal-winning alpine skier Michael Langridge was asked to be a keynote speaker at the Sports Celebrities Festival presented by Wheaton Precious Metals with the Vancouver Canucks, helping raise vital funds for Special Olympics BC and the Canucks for Kids Fund. Michael did us very proud, delivering a



fantastic speech about his experiences with Special Olympics and the moment he won the gold at the 2017 World Games in Austria. Michael is pictured above right with Canucks forward Brandon Sutter, his fellow featured speaker for the night, during the Sports Celebrities Festival Parade of Athletes (photo courtesy of Jeff Vinnick and the Vancouver Canucks).



In February, Mark Hamblett (pictured at left) won a bronze medal in speed skating at the 2020 BC Winter Games. Mark traveled to those Games with his coach Greg Ross, and they were also joined by Kailee Bowman who went to coach the SOBC figure skaters.

Also in February, a number of our athletes and coaches headed to Thunder Bay for the 2020 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games. Under the tutelage of her coach Kaehlen Allison, speed skater Liz Ashton came home with two gold medals and one silver. Matthew Schultz and Aaron Taylor came home with silver along with their teammates from the Team BC Vipers floor hockey team. Our curling team consisting of Drew Denny, Kevin Nunn, Danny Pace, Patrick Reid, and Drew Sabourin had a strong fourth-place finish under the watchful eyes of their coaches Dave Bodie and James Amarelo. Also representing Victoria at these

National Games were Kyle Eriksen, who went as a coach for the Team BC Cougars, and Jean Tetarenko and Jason Yan who went as mission staff. Liz Ashton is pictured at right in action at the National Games.

Throughout the season we have had the opportunity to participate in a number of fundraisers with our community's members of the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics BC. Our athletes

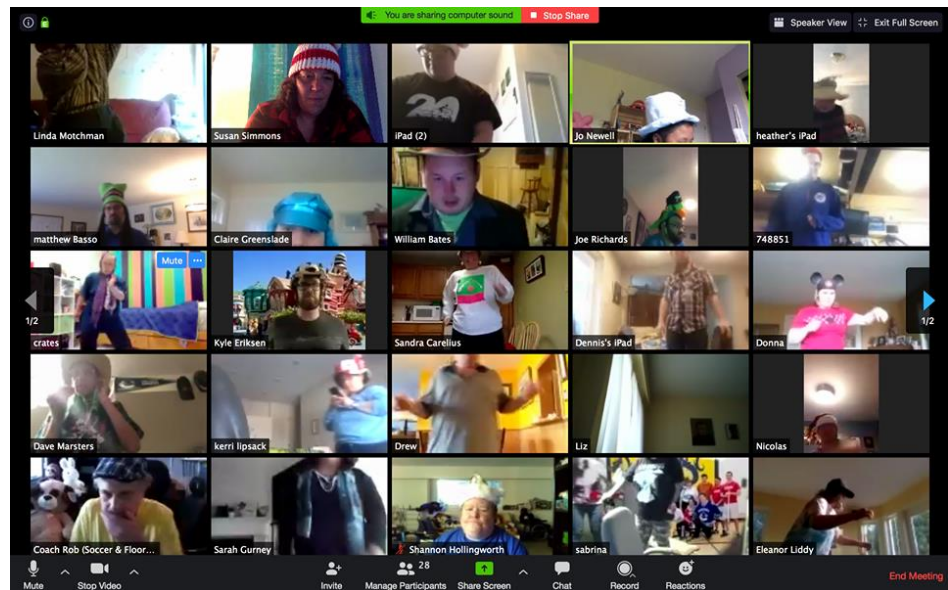


appreciate so much the relationships they have built with these amazing members of our community. What they have done for us goes so much more beyond just raising tons of money. Every year the experiences we share with the LETR officers are a highlight.



Our final highlight for this sport season has to be our Zoom Room with coaches Susan Simmons and Kyle Eriksen! As soon as our sports got halted because of the pandemic, Coach Susan set up a way for athletes to exercise together online.

Coaches Kyle and Susan are there for our athletes every night of the week. Most nights they exercise together, and occasionally they have a social night where they do different things like sing-along songs, talent shows and show-and-tell art. We would like to thank Susan and Kyle for going above and beyond for our athletes during this difficult time.



Overall, despite our spring and summer sports being cancelled due to COVID-19, we had a great season! We can't wait until things go back to normal and we can all be together enjoying our sports again.