Communities in Massachusetts are Becoming more Inclusive. Special Olympics Massachusetts is Stronger Because of you.
Dear Friends,

Thanks to your continued support and the leadership of Special Olympics athletes at all levels, 2016 was a banner year for inclusion. Inclusion takes many forms, from competition on the field to community building our cities and towns and everything in between, in 2016, you made Massachusetts more unified! Here are just a few examples of how you did it:

• We deepened our impact in focused regions throughout the state, working towards building more “Inclusive Communities”. In the Pioneer Valley, Greater Marlborough, Bristol County, and Essex County, our partners in law enforcement, schools, local programs, corporate sponsors, and families will work together to provide a continuum of service for athletes of all ages.

• In partnership with the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, the first annual State Unified Track meet was held at Fitchburg State in May.

• The New England Revolution Unified Team competed in two matches for the first time and members of the Revs hosted a Unified training session at the Yawkey Sports Training Center in Marlborough.

• Special Olympics Massachusetts athlete Rachel Seymour and Unified partner, Aubrey Pilotte represented our state at the annual Special Olympics Capitol Hill Day. They met with the congressional delegation and advocated on behalf of more inclusive opportunities in our schools.

• The first ever Unified Cornhole Tournament “Brokers and Beanbags” was hosted by Boston-based commercial real estate companies as a way to raise money, increase awareness of the mission of Special Olympics, and introduce their employees to Special Olympics athletes. Our goal is to ensure everyone who participates in a fundraising event is given the opportunity to meet and engage with athletes.

Thankfully, we are continuing this great work in 2017. Our 50th anniversary celebration has kicked off with a great call to action: “Choose to Include”! We cannot continue to do this important work without your help. Please look at what you do every day and whenever you can, choose to include!

Thank you,

Mary Beth McMahon
Special Olympics Massachusetts supports athletes beginning at two years-old with the Young Athletes Program. Local programs are available for children starting at eight years-old with School-based competitions providing athletic opportunities through high school, to adulthood. The adult local program sports offerings are our most extensive and include training and competition in 23 disciplines. As long as you want to stay active and compete, we will find a team and sport for you to compete with. Our oldest athlete is 97 years old!
Young Athletes

We’ve only been involved (with Special Olympics Massachusetts) through this one program, which we absolutely loved. We’ve known about Special Olympics for years (Ava just turned 6) but had always heard that athletes had to be 8 years old to participate. We heard about Young Athletes from a friend on Facebook! Gotta love the power of social media. It was thrilling to find out there was a Young Athletes program that Ava could enjoy. And this is a chance for her to blossom and build confidence. We’ve been excited to be part of Special Olympics since Ava was born 6 years ago, so to get the chance to get involved before her 8th birthday is awesome.

The program was such an eye-opener for me. Her confidence built each week and her self-esteem built as well. She was able to come in with confidence, run around, meet new friends, feel welcome and loved. Just the fact that she got to try things she had never done before also built her confidence. It shows her and me that she can do anything! It was a win-win for us!

The program made me realize that she is very physically interested in doing sports! As a non-sports family, we had no idea (except that she runs around the yard kicking a soccer ball all the time!) This confirmed we have a little jock on our hands.

My experience was positive, which is also linked to the fact that my daughters’ experience was so positive as well. Ever since she started Special Olympics, she has been OBSESSED with it! She wakes up every morning and says, “Special Olympics?” She just can’t get enough of it and when we get there, she bounds out of the car, runs into the gym and starts kicking the ball. She just loved every moment of it.

There are opportunities for families to bond, become friends, for their kids to make friends outside their own town, etc. For our kids who have so many challenges, friendship and social situations being one of the most prevalent, any opportunity for our kids to make new friends, or more friends, the better.
Hello, my name is Camille, and I’m 18 years old. I am an athlete in Special Olympics. Every year I participate in different sports. During the fall, I play Unified soccer. This was actually the very first sport I played for Special Olympics. I first played soccer when I was only 8 years old. I saw my two older brothers playing and I wanted to join the fun as well. This is what started my love for Special Olympics, and I am super thankful for that. I still do soccer every fall, and it is just as fun now as it was back then.

During the winter, I do traditional 10-pin bowling. This is one of my favorite things to do in the winter, since I'm not big on playing in the snow. I don’t do much during the season. Bowling really adds the fun into the winter. Every week starting in December, we go to the bowling alley to practice our skills and it’s so fun! I look forward to practicing every week.

My absolute favorite event however, is track & field during the spring. I’m a big fan of running, so the track events are definitely something that I love to look forward to. It’s fun to race against other athletes, even if I don’t run the quickest. The other thing I do in the field is the standing long jump. Even though I'm not the best at jumping, I don’t focus on that. I focus on having fun, because that is all that matters.

Special Olympics has given me a lot of new friends that I wouldn’t have met anywhere else in the world. I have also gained more confidence in my abilities through the sports that I do. It’s given me a bigger purpose in life, rather than just holed up in my room doing nothing. I would tell newcomers in Special Olympics that they will gain more confidence in themselves and that they will make many new pals through the sports. Trust me, it will change your life forever. As this is my 10th year doing Special Olympics, I can say proudly that it has changed mine.
2016 was a milestone year for the Special Olympics / Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association partnership. For the first time, there was a state-level competition to determine a State Champion in Unified track & field. In the inaugural event, over 30 schools competed for gold and a place in Massachusetts High School sports history.

These programs are key to the continued growth in Unified Sports. High School-based programming provides meaningful athletic and social opportunities to athletes with and without intellectual disabilities. They Play Unified on the field and live Unified off the field.

“As a whole, my school has become unbelievably inclusive and the r-word is not thrown around.”

- Aubrey Pilotte, Grafton High School Senior
In 2016, the New England Revolution partnership with Special Olympics Massachusetts took another step forward. For the first time, the Revs Unified Team competed in two matches – a home game against New York City FC Unified and an away trip to take on the Red Bulls Unified Team. Throughout the summer, the Revs

- Hosted a soccer clinic at the Yawkey Sports training Center
- Held their 2nd annual Bowl for a Goal Fundraiser presented by Arbella Insurance
- Sent James & Julia Keith to the MLS Unified All-Star Game presented by ESPN.

Inclusive sports opportunities remain the focus with the New England Revolution. Special Olympics Massachusetts thanks the Revolution president Brian Bilello and his team for their commitment to the mission.
Dear Law Enforcement Torch Run supporters,

My son, Ron has a therapeutic mentor that takes him out into the community for two hours a week to work on social skills and appropriate social interactions. Ron REALLY loved working with you and the other officers at Cop on Top, last December in Chicopee. What you, and the other participating officers, may not realize, is the positive impact you have on athletes that is truly life changing for them. Most kids with disabilities like Ron (Ron has Autism and PTSD) are easily scared by situations involving police and emergency personnel. All too often, these kids will resort to reflexes which include fight or flight. Flight being the most terrifying as the parent of a child that oft does this. My son has ZERO safety awareness in a stressful (to him) situation and fleeing into a parking lot or busy street is a very likely (albeit terrifying) result of his escalated anxiety. No matter how often we practice safety, stress and anxiety trump any pre-taught lessons and we, as caregivers are solely at the mercy of his mind to process that information... it’s often not what we hope for despite repeated trainings.

Back to his mentor... She was pulled over on the highway for a light on her vehicle that was out. Ron was in the back seat. She was terrified that the approaching officer would evoke a less than desirable action from Ron. The highway itself being the most scary scenario... Ron sat quietly while the state trooper came and went from her window. While waiting, she asked Ron if he was ok and if he understood why she was stopped. His words have us astounded and so grateful for all of the work that you and every officer does every day. The work that you do with LETR to support Special Olympics is something that there are not enough thank yous for.

Ron’s response to his mentor: “The officer stopped you to keep you safe. Your light is out and you might not know and it might cause an accident for you. He’s helping you. Officers help all of us every day. They help me for Special Olympics and they help me know that if I am ever unsafe, they will help me. They helped me when all of them were at Walmart ‘On Top’. They are helpers. We shouldn’t ever be afraid or run from them. They’re the good guys.”

Sincerely,
The mom of a little boy that has lots of reasons to be scared, but because of the actions of LETR officers, he can see that you ARE the helpers.

“Thank you will never be enough”

The Law Enforcement Torch Run ® (LETR) is a year-round fundraising and awareness building program, designed to allow members of the law enforcement community the opportunity to support Special Olympics athletes who live, work and compete in their local communities.

In Massachusetts, the LETR ran 40 events in 35 communities in 2015, raising over $550,000 and increasing local awareness of Special Olympics programs in communities across Massachusetts.
2016 Fundraising Events

TORCH RUN  Tip-a-Cops  Over the Edge
5k Road Races  CRUISER CONVOY
POLAR PLUNGES  Dream Ride
Cop-on-Tops  Truck Pulls
MOTORCYCLE RIDE

35 Events  50 Departments  129 Officers in Annual Convoy  506,843 Dollars Raised through LETR Efforts

MASSACHUSETTS
Revenue Sources

- Events 50%
- Individuals 26%
- Corporate 13%
- Investments 2%
- Other 1%
- Foundations & Other Grants 6%
- Government Grants 2%

Expense Percentages

- Programs & Services 87.7%
- Fundraising 9%
- Administration 3.3%
Donate Online or by Mail
Please visit www.specialolympicsma.org or mail your donation to:
Special Olympics Massachusetts Attn: Donations
Yawkey Sports Training Center
512 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752

Double or Triple Your Contribution with Employer Matching Gifts
Many companies match charitable contributions made by their employees. Ask your employer if they offer a matching gifts program, (most do!) then simply obtain the form, fill out the required information and send it in with your donation—we'll take care of the rest!

Legacy Gifts
Create your own legacy by making a planned gift to Special Olympics Massachusetts. Through planned giving, you can ensure that the life-changing mission of Special Olympics is carried on for years to come. These gifts can be in the form of a bequest, gift annuities, or by naming Special Olympics Massachusetts as the beneficiary of your life insurance, securities, real estate or retirement.

Make a Five-year Commitment
Many of our donors and families have made a commitment to give annually for the next five years. Please join this commitment to grow and improve Special Olympics sports and change communities across Massachusetts.

Honoring a Loved One
A commemorative gift to Special Olympics Massachusetts adds extra meaning to special events such as winning a medal, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, retirements, thanking a colleague or coach or memorializing a loved one while supporting the continuance of vital sports programs and services to our community.

Donations of Goods and Services
Special Olympics Massachusetts relies heavily on friends to donate goods and services. Examples include venue space and time, signage, transportation, audio equipment, technology, music and/or DJ services, gift certificates, food & beverage, but generally do not include used sports equipment.

Corporate Partner
Whether it is a year-round partnership or an event specific sponsorship, companies have the opportunity to enhance their image, introduce new products and strengthen business and shareholder relationships, all while boosting employee morale. Partnering with Special Olympics Massachusetts provides a direct gateway to the Massachusetts community. Our top level partnership packages are designed with one goal in mind: to exponentially raise the sales bar for our Corporate Partners.

For additional information, please contact Nick Savarese at 508-485-0986 x217 or via email at nick.savarese@specialolympicsma.org.