

Special Olympics



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Special Olympics Receives Largest Gift in 47-Year History -- Golisano Foundation Commits \$25 Million to Change the Game and Improve Global Access to Health Care for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Gift is Also Tom Golisano and his Foundation's Largest Single Gift

Los Angeles, CA--25 July 2015--[Special Olympics](#) announced today that it has received its largest single private gift in the organization's 47-year history.



Ann Costello, Director of the [Golisano Foundation](#) announced today at the [Special Olympics World Games](#) in Los Angeles, that the Foundation, established by long-time Special Olympics supporter, Paychex chairperson and philanthropist, Tom Golisano, will provide \$25 million to expand Special Olympics'

health services globally for people with intellectual disabilities, a population that lacks access to adequate healthcare and faces significant health disparities.

This gift is not only the largest received by Special Olympics, it is also the largest single gift ever given by Golisano and his Foundation.

It is more than double his initial gift of \$12 million to Special Olympics in 2012, which helped launch the new Healthy Communities initiative in 14 countries and states to ensure that people with ID receive access to healthcare in their communities on a year-round basis. Healthy Communities builds upon SOI's successful Healthy Athletes program, which provides free health exams and some health services at Special Olympics' events.

"This transformational gift will bring critical health services and wellness programs for people with intellectual disabilities to more communities around the world on a year-round basis," said Special Olympics CEO Janet Froetscher. "Through Tom's and the Foundation's initial support we proved in

the last three years that we could open more doors and increase access to care and resources. With this new gift, we can greatly accelerate our activity, engage more partners, train more health care professionals and activate Special Olympics Health Programs in more places around the world. Working closely with the Golisano Foundation we are finalizing a plan for the next five years and beyond, to expand our work and implement the Special Olympics Healthy Communities model in 100 Special Olympics Programs by 2020. Tom and his Foundation have been visionaries and pioneers in helping people with ID. Tom's legacy of breaking down the barriers and expanding access to health care for people with intellectual disabilities is changing the world and Special Olympics is honored to be his partner as we catalyze and scale this work."



Ann Costello

"Our reasons for continuing our support of Healthy Communities are many," said Costello. "Special Olympics has gained valuable experience and demonstrated success during the past three years with the launch of Healthy Communities. Not only did Special Olympics screen more athletes and train more clinicians, it leveraged additional resources; engaged new global partners, health systems and universities; increased access to community-based healthcare services; and empowered individuals and families through education and grass roots support. Going forward we hope to see Healthy Communities move to a transformative scale - inclusive health care for all. That is our shared goal. By expanding Healthy Communities, Special Olympics can accelerate its effort to ensure people with IDD are not excluded from the health care systems

within their communities. As the world's leading global health care provider for people with IDD, Special Olympics is uniquely poised to lead this charge."

Healthy Communities has created system-wide change in how health services are provided in eight countries (Mexico, Peru, Romania, Malawi, South Africa, Malaysia, and Thailand) and six U.S. states (Arizona, Florida, Kansas, New Jersey, Wisconsin and New York). Working with partners in governments, non-governmental organizations, health care systems, fitness facilities, and others, the program has increased the visibility and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. It has implemented continuing education programs, changed dental school curricula, enhanced health services and insurance coverage by governments, and trained health volunteers.

People with intellectual disabilities are part of one of the largest and most medically underserved disability groups in the world. Millions with intellectual disabilities lack access to quality health care and experience dramatically higher rates of preventable disease, chronic pain and suffering, and premature death in every country around the world. In developing and developed countries alike, people with intellectual disabilities are consistently the most marginalized population subset - a status that comes with horrific health outcomes. Barriers that contribute to this include stigma and discrimination, insufficient or lack of health care provider training, over-attributing symptoms to a particular condition which results in conditions being untreated and undiagnosed, limited prevention education reaching this population, limited self-advocacy, cultural beliefs, increased poverty and poor enforcement of laws and policy to protect this population.

Over the past 18 years Special Olympics has grown to become the largest global public health organization specifically focused on people with ID. Led by the Golisano Foundation, and supported by other organizations globally and locally including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Special Olympics is making strides for ensuring inclusive health and working with corporations, organizations, universities, hospitals, and health care professionals to do more to ensure people with intellectual disabilities are not excluded from the health care systems within

their communities.

Since 1997, Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program, also supported by Golisano, has been providing free examinations and education for people with intellectual disabilities across the areas of audiology, dentistry, health promotion, optometry physical exams, physical therapy and podiatry. The award-winning Healthy Athletes program and the more than 135,000 health care professionals trained on the specific health care concerns of people with intellectual disabilities have provided more than 1.6 million free examinations to Special Olympics athletes worldwide in more than 130 countries. Special Olympics now maintains the largest dataset on the health of people with intellectual disabilities.

About Special Olympics

Special Olympics is a global movement that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports, every day around the world. We empower people with intellectual disabilities to become accepted and valued members of their communities, which leads to a more respectful and inclusive society for all. Using sports as the catalyst and programming around health and education, Special Olympics is fighting inactivity, injustice and intolerance. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown to more than 4.5 million athletes in 170 countries. With the support of more than 1.4 million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers 32 Olympic-type sports and more than 94,000 games and competitions throughout the year. Special Olympics is supported by individuals, foundations and partners, including the Christmas Records Trust, the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics, The Coca-Cola Company, The Walt Disney Company and ESPN, Lions Clubs International, Mattel, Microsoft, P&G, Bank of America, Essilor Vision Foundation, the B. Thomas Golisano Foundation, Finish Line, The Safeway Foundation, and Safilo Group. Visit Special Olympics at www.specialolympics.org. Engage with us on: [Twitter@specialolympics](https://twitter.com/specialolympics); fb.com/specialolympics; youtube.com/specialolympicshq; instagram.com/specialolympics and specialolympicsblog.wordpress.com.

Tom Golisano and Golisano Foundation

B. Thomas Golisano, an entrepreneur, philanthropist, and civic leader, is Chairman of Paychex, Inc., a national leader in the payroll and human resource industry. He has demonstrated ongoing generosity and commitment to numerous non-profit organizations and has been recognized for his achievements and endeavors by many organizations and national publications. The Golisano Foundation, which he established in 1985, is the nation's leading foundation dedicated exclusively to helping organizations that assist people with developmental disabilities. In addition to the Foundation's contributions, Mr. Golisano has been very generous to many other institutions and organizations, his philanthropy totaling more than \$250 million. For more information see golisanofoundation.org.

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