

St. Mary's Men Club donation helps support Special Olympics in Florence

In every corner of the state, Special Olympics Oregon is changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

Now it is Florence's turn.

Local organizations, including St. Mary's Men's Club, are donating to bring Special Olympics sports to the area.

Bowling is the first Special Olympics sport organized in the Florence area, with practices being held Tuesdays from 4 to 6 p.m.

Anyone who has been identified as having an intellectual (or cognitive) disability by a medical professional is eligible to be involved in Special Olympics. Athletes must be at least 8 years old to compete. There is no upper age limit.

However, athletes can participate in practices at age 6.

There is no cost to join Special Olympics, or any cost to train or compete. Special Olympics raises funds through sponsorships, private donations and special events.

Special Olympics athletes train intensely for at least eight weeks prior



COURTESY PHOTO

Dan Gilday, St Mary's Men's Club treasurer (far right), presents Linda Stent (center), Director of Special Olympics, with a check for \$500 for use by Special Olympics. Also present were Special Olympics' athlete Jake Pearson (far left) and his father, John Pearson.

to each State Games event. Volunteer coaches are responsible for training the athletes, must pass a background check and complete a certification program prior to becoming Special Olympics coaches.

Special Olympics Oregon serves more than 8,000 participants with intellectual disabilities through participation in 14 Olympic-type sports over three sports seasons.

Through its signature sports programs, athletes gain self-confidence, social competency and other enhanced skills, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendships.

St. Mary's Men's Club donated \$500 to Special Olympics.

For more information contact head coach Linda Stent at 541-991-3161 or email her at lstent@charter.net.

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