

Looking Back

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**Special  
Olympics**  
Arizona

# 2019 Annual Report



# LOOKING BACK ON 2019

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It was a huge year. You gave your time, resources and heart to our communities and created more impact than ever before.



## A Letter from our CEO:

Looking back over the past year, I can truly say 2019 was a year of great progress for Special Olympics Arizona (SOAZ). The organization grew in nearly every aspect, due to tremendous support from community partners. The most influential growth took place with the implementation of Unified Sports programs in an additional 111 schools, taking the overall total to 261. This growth means the message of inclusion and acceptance is reaching thousands of youth in Arizona. Unified sports pairs those with and without intellectual disabilities on the same teams together to not only benefit from physical fitness, through sports training and competition, but to benefit socially and mentally. Unified sports has proven results of school culture change, increased confidence and true friendships.

Special Olympics Arizona would not be the organization it is without its volunteers. In 2019, 22,856 volunteers freely gave time as a day of event volunteer, youth leader, Games Management Team (GMT) member, Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) member, health clinician or coach. Volunteers ensured athletes had high quality training and competitive opportunities in 20 different sports, raised funds so athletes may compete at no cost and provided free health screenings by certified health professionals.

SOAZ was also honored to be recognized in November as a "Starting Five" organization by Phoenix Suns Charities and Devin Booker receiving \$100,000 towards an inclusive space in the new Special Olympics Arizona Office and Distribution Center. The space will allow for athlete and youth leadership trainings, coaches trainings, Unified music practices and anything else we can dream up.

I believe Special Olympics Arizona to be a special organization, an organization of athletes, volunteers, partners and staff proud of their past and excited about their future. I am grateful to all those who made our accomplishments possible this year.

As we work together to build a strong future, we will all continue to live our values, and apply the high standards embodied in the Special Olympics mission each and every day.

Sincerely,

Jamie Heckerman

President and CEO, Special Olympics Arizona

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## The Vision of Special Olympics

Special Olympics is an unprecedented global movement that improves the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and the lives of everyone they touch. The organization empowers people with intellectual disabilities to realize their full potential and develop their skills through year-round sports training and competition. Special Olympics believes that consistent training is essential to the development of sports skills, and that competition among those of equal abilities is the most appropriate means of testing these skills, measuring progress and providing incentives for personal growth.

## Mission

The mission of Special Olympics Arizona (SOAZ) is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

## Impact



**93%**  
Of every dollar  
goes to programs



**FREE**  
To all participants



**100%**  
Inclusion



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## The Jones Family

Meagan, Quincy and Emily Jones started their involvement in Special Olympics Arizona back in 2011 in Florence. With the help of very dedicated coaches we participate in basketball (3 on 3, then graduated to 5 on 5), track & field, pentathlon and bocce ball.

In 2014, after graduating from Florence High School the Jones Siblings continued their adventure in Chandler, AZ. Since joining Chandler's programs they have become involved in floor hockey, softball, bowling, cheer and soccer.

They split participation between Mesa and Chandler as it was hard to leave friends behind after moving. Through Special Olympics Arizona all three of siblings have personally grown in the areas of self-confidence, good sportsmanship, and the caring for fellow special Olympians.

Megan, Quincy and Emily would like to send all SOAZ Supporters a very heartfelt Hug and High-five.



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## Conner Smith

My name is Conner Smith, and I am 26 years of age. I have been a Special Olympic athlete for the past 21 years. My first ever Special Olympics sport I played was soccer. My first coach in Special Olympics was Kathy Reeves, I always called her Miss Kathy, and I am thankful for her because, she was always patient with me at soccer practice. She was a happy coach. During my very first soccer season, I made friends with John Fisher, Curtis Champagne, and Chris Troy. We are still friends today.

When I was younger, I did not get invited to birthday parties, but having my Special Olympics friends, I always was invited to their parties, and we had so much fun.

I then became involved with other sports besides soccer, and my friendships began to grow. I played basketball, went bowling, and was on the swim team, and track and field.

By the time I reached Jr High School, it was difficult to fit in, to talk to people, and make friends, I did not try out for sports. I had the physical ability to play, but it was hard to concentrate, focus, and think quickly. Being able to participate in Yuma Special Olympics have the chance to play sports, and learn new skills. In High School I did make some friends, and they accepted me for who I am, and we are still friends, even though we graduated.

Since becoming a Yuma Special Olympic Athlete, I have had many opportunities for participation in sports that I love, and have been able to travel to competitions, and speak about what Special Olympics means to me.

I have met NFL quarterback for the New Orleans Saints Drew Brees, Jimmy Graham, Mark Ingram at the NFL free 60 experience in February 2015. It was a chance to meet professional athletes, and play football with them. Our Yuma Athletes have traveled to Phoenix for a basketball clinic with the Phoenix Suns. I have had the privilege to carry the torch for Opening Ceremonies, for LETR with our law enforcement officers.

My proudest moment was being selected for the Arizona Unified Basketball Team. We traveled to Abu Dhabi, in March of 2019 to represent the United States at World Games. Our team placed 4th out of 31 teams. Special Olympics Arizona has given me all these opportunities.

I want to help other athletes have fun, and be their friends, and make sure that they are not bullied.

# YEARLY FINANCIALS

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## 2019 Financial Review

**9.2 M**

Overall Revenue

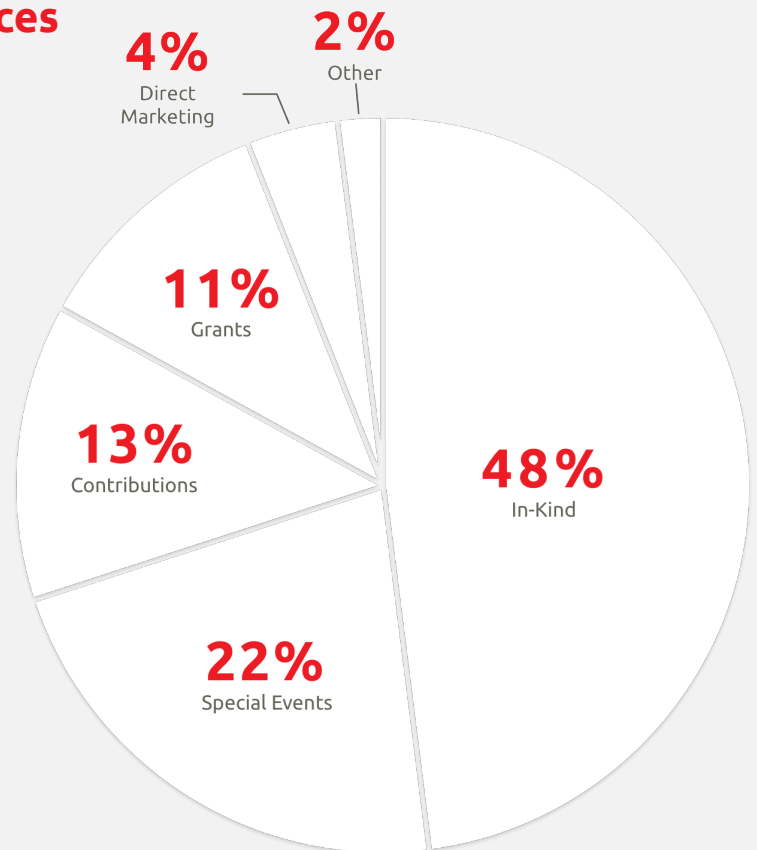
**9.1 M**

Total Expenses

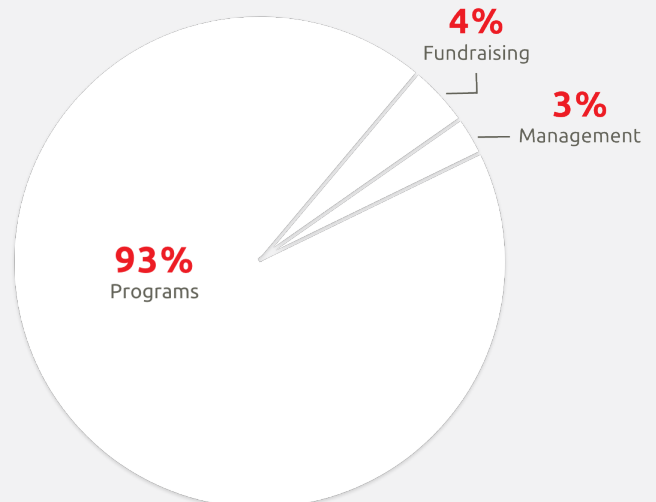
**6 M**

Net Assets

## 2019 Funding Sources



## 2019 Funding Uses



# 2019 BY THE NUMBERS

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**122,128**

Volunteer  
Hours

**24,743**

Volunteer

**21**

Sports  
Offered

**6**

Regions Across  
Arizona

**440**

Competitions

**760**

Coaches

**21,461**

Athletes, Unified Partners,  
& Young Athletes

**FREE**

To Participate for All Registered Athletes

**93%**

Of Every Dollar Goes Directly to Programs & Competitions



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Law Enforcement Torch Run

## **Athlete Leadership**

Health Messenger

Global Ambassador

Athlete Input Council

Athlete Advocacy

## **Inclusive Health**

Healthy Athletes

Healthy LEAP into Fitness

Sex Ed & Healthy Relationships

Family Health Forums

## **Unified Champion Schools**

Unified Sports / Arizona  
Interscholastic Association  
Unified Sports

Young Athletes

Transition

Inclusive Youth Leadership

National Banner Recognition

Whole School Engagement

Unified P.E.

## **Unified Activities**

Unified Ukulele

Esports

Unified Robotics

SOAZconnected

Unified Arts & Crafts

***Special  
Olympics***  
*Arizona*



“  
Let me win.  
But if I cannot win, let me be  
brave in the attempt.”