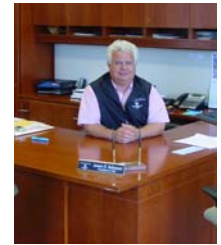


# INSPIRE GREATNESS™



## Special Olympics Alaska



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT/CEO JIM BALAMACI

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### Upcoming Events in 2008:

February 9-10	Head Coaches Training
March 7-9	SO-AK Winter Games
April 5	SO-AK Business Meeting
May 3-4	Head Coaches Training
May 17	Alaska Law Enforcement Torch Run & Pledge Drive
June 13-15	SO-AK Summer Games



## Be a fan

[www.specialolympicsalaska.org](http://www.specialolympicsalaska.org)

**2008 Special Olympics Alaska Winter Sports Season:** The 2008 Special Olympics Alaska Winter Sports Season has begun with over 10 communities and 300 athletes training. A strategic goal of Special Olympics Alaska is to have every Special Olympics Alaska Head Coach certified within the next few years. Sports offered for the winter sports season are: Alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, figure skating, floor hockey, snowboarding, snowshoeing and speed skating. The Special Olympics Alaska Winter Games will take place in Anchorage, March 7-9, 2008 where there are typically over 200 athletes from 8 Alaskan communities competing along with over 500 volunteers.

**2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games:** From 6-13 February 2009, Boise, Idaho, will be the host site for the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games, which will attract more than 2,000 athletes from 100 nations to compete in seven Olympic-type sports: Alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, figure skating, floor hockey, snowboarding, snowshoe racing and speed skating. Visit the 2009 World Games Web site at [www.2009worldgames.org](http://www.2009worldgames.org) for more information. The 2008 Special Olympics Alaska Winter Games will be a qualifier for athletes from Alaska to compete at the 2009 World Winter Games as part of TEAM USA. Alaska will receive a quota from TEAM USA and then follow the Special Olympics General Rules process regarding the selection of Special Olympics athletes to qualify for a world games competition.

**2008 Special Olympics Alaska Summer Sports Season:** The 2008 Special Olympics Alaska Summer Sports Season will kick-off with a Head Coaches Training on February 9-10, 2008 at the Special Olympics Alaska Athlete Training Center and Campus. Coaches training will be offered for the following sports: aquatics, basketball, gymnastics, power-lifting and track and field. The two day course will go over many aspects of coaching techniques and the general rules and philosophy regarding coaching a Special Olympics Alaska athlete.

**Special Olympics Coaches:** Coaches play a unique and indispensable role in Special Olympics around the world. Coaches provide the sports skills and spirit that define a true athlete. In addition, coaches are role models and character builders. Coaches give Special Olympics athletes the most immediate awareness of their own worth, ability, courage and capacity to grow and improve. Here are few of the responsibilities of a Special Olympics coach: (1) obtain necessary facilities and equipment for training, (2) help to recruit athletes and assistant coaches, (3) assist athletes in learning sports skills and applying them in competitions, (4) encourage confidence and self-esteem through sport, and (5) conduct demonstrations in the community. Special Olympics coaches often find that the personal rewards received are equal to or even outweigh the benefits they offer the athletes. Special Olympics coaches have a unique opportunity to work with athletes in competitive situations to assist in their training for life.