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YMCA and Special Olympics Ohio to provide memberships at no cost to athletes

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Special Olympics Ohio (SOOH) and the Ohio Alliance of YMCAs (Ohio YMCA) announced that they are partnering to provide memberships at no cost for registered athletes and approved private providers who meet certain eligibility criteria.

“This is an incredible partnership to benefit our athletes and community-based organizations,” Special Olympics Ohio CEO Jessica Stewart said. “Not only will our athletes be able to enjoy the benefits of exercise, but they will also be able to spend time training for their year-round competitions. Our athletes will have the ability to improve all aspects of their lives through the opportunities our Ohio YMCAs have to offer.”

To be eligible, each SOOH athlete will be contacted by their local community-based organization and instructed to fill out a request form. Once it is indicated that the athlete has a current physical on file and is in good standing, they will receive a confirmation letter from their local organization. This approval, either digitally or on letterhead, can then be brought to one of the participating Ohio YMCAs.

In addition to the free membership, SOOH athletes will receive one personal training/wellness coaching/wellness instructor session at no charge. Training and meeting space will be available at no charge for athletes as well as volunteer and employment opportunities.

SOOH will offer training in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as well as other educational training opportunities for the YMCA staff at no charge. SOOH will also help with funding and resources for YMCA facility enhancements and/or equipment for athletes’ and members’ use.

Ohio Alliance of YMCAs Executive Director, Beth Tsvetkoff, added; “Our YMCAs enthusiastically embrace and support this partnership, and look forward to continuing to build on the success of our organizations. Meeting the needs of communities we serve is at the heart of our mission, and this partnership will help ensure we are elevating diversity, equity, and inclusion work throughout Ohio and help all people reach their full potential.”

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Special Olympics Ohio is part of the global inclusion movement using sport, health, education, and leadership programs to empower people with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics Ohio provides year-round sports training and competition in 19 different sports for 20,000 children and adults, 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.

For more information go to SOOH.org.