



TO: District and School Contact Persons
FROM: Steph Reisinger, Registration Coordinator
DATE: January 1, 2019

SUBJECT: SPECIAL OLYMPICS PA AREA M GAMES REGISTRATION INFORMATION

It's that time of year again! Planning for the 2019 Special Olympics PA Area M (SOPA- Area M) Games at Messiah College is well underway. The games will be held on **April 11** at Messiah College. This letter describes the registration process in detail, and includes the following topics:

- **Important information regarding a rain-date**
- Overview of SOPA Area M Games Registration Process
- School Point of Contact Information
- Attendance at a Local Event
- T-Shirt Contest
- Annual Joyful Spirit Award
- Registering Athletes for SOPA Area M Games
- Preparing Medical Forms
- Day of Games Overview
- Summary of Important Dates and Deadlines
- Area M Games Contact Information

This year all registration information and forms included in this email will also be available on the local Special Olympics website by mid-January (www.sopam.org)

Please read the enclosed information carefully and save it for later reference. There is a lot of information here, and it may save you (and me) a phone call later...

!!!Important Information regarding the Rain Date!!!

Amazingly we haven't had to reschedule this event due to weather in more than 15 years and over those years it has grown, currently serving nearly 1,200 athletes from 4 counties. An event this size requires a significant commitment from our volunteers (>2,000) and our very gracious host, Messiah College. On the day of Games Messiah cancels classes, enabling us to "take over" their campus and allowing their students to volunteer for the event. Last year's inclement weather made us recognize that it is unrealistic to reschedule an event of this magnitude. Therefore...**there is no rain date. We'll only cancel in the event of a safety issue, and if we cancel there will be no make-up.** For inclement weather such as the cold, icky muck we had last year, we will hold the games and it will be up to you (the schools) to determine whether to bring your athletes. Thank you for your understanding and pray for SUN.

Overview of Registration Process

The following steps summarize the registration process. Each step is described in more detail within the letter:

1. Review this registration information
2. Return (via email) the attached spreadsheet of the current school and district points of contact to **Steph** by **February 6, 2019**.
3. Return (via mail) athlete T-shirt designs to **Steph** postmarked by **February 6**, if your athletes are submitting entries. You can also scan and email your entries.
4. Determine which Local Games Event you will be attending, and contact the appropriate Local Games coordinator to register your athletes for that event. Attend that Event.
5. Fill out an *Area Games registration form* for each athlete who will be attending Area M Games at Messiah, and return the forms to **Steph** by **March 1**.
6. For athletes without a current medical on file with Special Olympics, obtain a completed medical form from the athlete and return it to the **Special Olympics office** by **March 1**.
7. If you are submitting a nomination for the Joyful Spirit Award, return the nomination form to the **Special Olympics office** by **March 1**.
8. Carefully review the *Registration Verification Report* that you receive from Steph in **early April** to ensure that athletes were registered properly, and review the detailed instructions for the day
9. Attend the Area M Games at Messiah College on **April 11** and enjoy the day! (No rain date)

School Point of Contact Information

A School POC spreadsheet is included ([2019_School_Contacts_Form.xls](#)). Please fill out this spreadsheet to include everyone from your district who should be on the mailing list for all of the upcoming Registration Information for the 2019 SOPA Area M Games. You don't have to consolidate all information for your district on to one spreadsheet (you can send multiple spreadsheets), but please be sure that I receive information for everyone. All school registration mailings will be done via email – please be sure to include both the email address and phone number for each Point of Contact. Also, please be sure to include your mailing address, so that we can send you the field event ribbons after the games. Email your completed spreadsheets back to Steph by **February 6, 2019**. *Please note that anyone whose name is not included on this sheet may not be included in future mailings.*

Local (Qualifying) Events

Local Events are separate, qualifying events for the Area M Games. According to Special Olympics rules, each athlete who attends the Area M Games should have previously attended a Local Event. Scores from the Local Events are provided to Area M Games by the Local Event Directors, and we use them to create fair heats in the Area M Games competition events.

Local Events are handled separately from the Area M Games. **Registering an athlete for the Area M Games through the process described in this email does not automatically register them for a Local Event.** You must register your athletes separately for a Local Event, through the Local Games Director. If you need assistance in identifying an appropriate Local Event to attend, please don't hesitate to contact the Area M office.

T-Shirt Contest

We will once again sponsor an art contest open to any Area M Games athlete to design the logo for the T-shirt for the 2019 SOPA Area M Games. Please refer to the enclosed Contest Flyer -[2019ArtContest.pdf](#)

- for more information. All entries must be postmarked by **February 6, 2019** and sent to Steph. The winner will be recognized during opening ceremonies and win a prize.

Joyful Spirit Award

Once again, the annual Joyful Spirit Award will be awarded to an athlete participating at Area M Games who embodies the mission of Special Olympics PA – experiencing joy and demonstrating courage while participating in Special Olympics. The award will be presented during Opening Ceremonies at Area M Games. For more information and to nominate an athlete, please see the attached form: Joyful Spirit Nomination Form for schools and return nomination forms to the Special Olympics Area Office by **March 1, 2019**.

Registration Forms

Please complete an appropriate event registration form for each athlete from your school/district who will be attending the Area M Games and return them to Steph by **March 1, 2018** at the address listed at the bottom of this letter.

All athletes must be pre-registered (there is no on-site registration). The following forms are included:

1. Athlete Registration Form for track and field events *ENTRY LEVEL*
([2019SchoolEntryLevelTrackRegistrationForm.pdf](#))
2. Athlete Registration Form for track and field events *TRADITIONAL LEVEL*
([2019SchoolTraditionalTrackRegistrationForm.pdf](#))
3. Registration form for Participants under 8 years of age
([2019SchoolUnderEightRegistrationForm.pdf](#))
4. Registration form for Swimming Events
([2019SchoolSwimmingRegistrationForm.pdf](#))

There are two track and field registration forms, one for ENTRY level, and one for TRADITIONAL level, including specific events. AN ATHLETE MAY ONLY PARTICIPATE IN EVENTS FROM ONE LEVEL - THEY CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN EVENTS FROM BOTH LEVELS.

Note that we are requiring you to enter the date that the athlete's medical was signed by the physician on the registration form. If the date you enter is more than three years before April 11, 2019, you will need to provide a new form by the medical deadline.

*****IMPORTANT***** At recent games, we have had athletes with medical issues, such as food allergies, that we should have been aware of immediately (without taking time to look up the medical form). **PLEASE INCLUDE MEDICAL INFORMATION THAT WE SHOULD BE AWARE OF AT THE GAMES ON THE ATHLETE'S REGISTRATION FORM: MEDICAL CONDITIONS, "OTHER". THERE IS AN AREA ON THE FORM FOR YOU TO WRITE THIS INFORMATION.** Any info written here will be printed on the Buddy Card.

The minimum age for an athlete to participate in the competitive events is 8 (by game day). Younger athletes may attend the event and participate in Olympic Village but cannot compete. If you will be bringing under age participants, in order for them to be registered for Olympic Village and paired with a buddy we must have a valid medical and registration form for each under age participant.

After we enter the registration information in the computer, I will send out a report to each school point of contact in early April containing the registration details for each athlete in your school. It is each school's responsibility to review this report and provide any changes back to me by the due date (provided when the report is sent).

Medical Forms

Each athlete must have a complete and up to date medical form on file at the Special Olympics Area M Office in order to participate in the games. Please note the following:

- **!!!DO NOT SEND MEDICAL FORMS TO STEPH!!!** – instead, send the completed medical forms for your athletes directly to the Special Olympics office (contact info at the bottom of this letter) by March 1
- Note: we will review the forms carefully for completeness. Please be sure to fill them out in their entirety, and make sure they are signed by a physician and that they contain either a valid Social Security Number or an Insurance policy number. The rules come directly from Special Olympics PA organization and we are required to comply.
 - *If your forms are incomplete, **please don't send them** – we will not accept them. This causes frustration and extra work for you and frustration and extra work for us.*
- You can download a blank medical form at the Area M Special Olympics website (www.sopam.org)
- Medical forms are valid for three years from the date of the physician's signature on the form. If you need to know the medical status of one of your athletes, please don't hesitate to contact the Area M Office at any time.
- **IMPORTANT:** Please note that the medical deadline is March 1 2019. **THE MEDICAL DEADLINE IS FINAL THIS YEAR. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT MEDICALS AFTER THIS DEADLINE, NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Day of Games Overview (Logistics, Lunch, and Bus Arrivals/Departures)

The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of the day of games -- I'll provide more detailed information in a future mailing the week before the games.

Schools should arrive at the Messiah College outdoor track facility between 8:00 – 9:30 am on April 11. There will be warm-exercises for the athletes at the track prior to Opening Ceremonies, and Opening Ceremonies start at 10:00.

After unloading from the busses, a volunteer buddy will be assigned to each registered athlete with a valid medical form. The buddy will stay with the athlete through the day and help them get to their assigned events. **Every year, more and more schools bring their own volunteer buddies. This is a great volunteer experience for the older students in your district (buddies must be 16 or older) and it streamlines the registration process.** If you are interested in bringing your own volunteer buddies, let me know and I'll connect you with the volunteer coordinator.

Free lunches will be provided for *athletes and volunteers only*. Lunches include turkey and cheese or ham and cheese sandwiches with fruit and a cookie. Drinks are also provided. Students with special dietary needs who cannot eat the lunch provided should bring a packed lunch. For teachers and spectators, lunches are available for purchase at the concession stand.

The procedures that we followed for unloading and loading busses is the same in previous years. It is summarized briefly below and additional information will be provided closer to the day of games.

- Your bus will be directed to drop you off at the Messiah Track. After you are dropped off we will park all of the school district busses, except lift busses, at the church lot on the other side of the campus. At the end of the day, you will be shuttled back to your bus in this lot. Shuttle busses will run continuously from 12:30, to shuttle school participants to the church parking lot where the busses are parked. Lift / handicap busses will be unloaded and loaded behind the concession stand.

If you or any of your chaperones would like to purchase a T-shirt, they will be available at the souvenir table. Please let me know the approximate number and size that you need so that we are sure to order enough.

Summary: Important Area M Games Dates:

Activity / Paperwork Due	Date
School Point of Contact Information due <u>to Steph</u>	02/06/2019
T-shirt Art due <u>to Steph</u>	02/6/2019 (postmark by this date)
Registration information due <u>to Steph</u>	03/01/2019
Completed medical forms due <u>to Area M office</u>	03/01/2019
Joyful Spirit Nomination due <u>to Area M office</u>	03/01/2019
Registration Reports distributed to schools / changes due <u>to Steph</u>	Early April (TBD)
Local Times due <u>to Steph</u> (provided by Local Event coordinators)	04/4/2019 (by 4:00 pm)
Area M Games at Messiah College!!!	04/11/2019

Area M Games Contact Information

Steph Reisinger, Registration Coordinator

Address: 598 Beinhower Rd.
Etters, PA 17319

Email: stejore19@gmail.com (preferred contact method)

Phone (mobile): 717-514-0024

Area M Special Olympics Office:

Address: P. O. Box 382
Summerdale, Pa 17093

Phone: 717 732-6756

Fax: 717 732-8414

Email: areamsports@specialolympicspa.org (Shannon, Competition Director)

Email: kdavis.aream@specialolympicspa.org (Kristie, Area M Director)

Website: www.sopam.org

We're looking forward to seeing you all at the Area M Games this year on (*a hopefully sunnier and warmer*) April 11. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,

Steph Reisinger
(Area M Games Director and Registration Coordinator)