



Special Olympics FUNfitness Clinical Director Training

Special Olympics FUNfitness is organizing a training for FUNfitness clinical directors for June 2014 in connection with the Special Olympic US National Games which are occurring in Princeton New Jersey. The Special Olympics program in South Carolina is really excited to start FUNfitness and would like us to train 1-2 people.

FUNfitness is a fitness screening event designed to be conducted by physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students. FUNfitness was first developed as a flexibility screening for Special Olympics Summer World Games in North Carolina, and then expanded into a full fitness screening in 1999-2000 by American Physical Therapy. It is a core component of Special Olympics *Healthy Athletes*®. **FUNfitness** was designed to assess flexibility, functional strength, balance and aerobic fitness needed for successful participation in both daily and sports activities. A one-page flyer with a more extensive description is attached for your review.

Let me provide more background on the *Healthy Athletes* Program: In the late 1990's, Special Olympics (SO) recognized the need to address some of the healthcare needs of their athletes that were not being addressed by the larger health care community. They commissioned an extensive literature review, and defined significant disparity in healthcare for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities around the globe. In order to begin addressing these disparities, advocating for change, and educating healthcare professionals and the public, Special Olympics, Inc. initiated a program called **Healthy Athletes**®.

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® is a program designed to help SO athletes improve their health and fitness, leading to an enhanced sports experience and improved well-being. Athletes receive a variety of health services through clinics conducted at SO competitions, while healthcare professionals learn about the health needs of these athletes and gain confidence and satisfaction in volunteering their skills to this underserved population. Health data gathered at events are important for planning, programs, gaining support, and improving policies.

The key objectives of Special Olympics Healthy Athletes are:

- Improve access and health care for Special Olympics athletes at event-based health screenings
- Make referrals to local health practitioners when appropriate
- Train health care professionals and students in the health professions about the needs and care of people with mental retardation
- Collect, analyze and disseminate data on the health status and needs of people with mental retardation
- Advocate for improved health policies and programs for person with mental retardation

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes currently includes these disciplines:

- [FUNfitness](#)

- [Health Promotion](#)
- [Healthy Hearing](#)
- [Opening Eyes](#)
- [Special Smiles](#)
- [Fit Feet](#)
- [MedFest](#)

If you have more specific questions about Special Olympics, please review their website at <http://www.specialolympics.org>. Specific information about Healthy Athletes can be accessed at http://www.specialolympics.org/healthy_athletes.aspx. Information about FUNfitness can be found at http://www.specialolympics.org/Sections/What_We_Do/Healthy_Athletes/Healthy_Athletes_FUNfitness.aspx

Our ongoing way to spread the word is to conduct FUNfitness Train the Trainer sessions in the United States and other Special Olympics global regions. We invite physical therapists from various states and countries to attend each session, so they can learn about FUNfitness and take it back to their state or country.

If you could help us identify 1-2 people that we could contact and potentially invite to the training in New Jersey, I would really appreciate it. We are hoping to have candidates identified by the end of February to allow time for proper security checks.

Thank you so much for your consideration! I am including a FUNfitness fact sheet for additional information. Please contact me if you have any questions.

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