

Dear Friend of SOMA,

2008 was a truly historic year for Special Olympics Massachusetts. It marked the 40th anniversary of the movement and was filled with breakthroughs that will allow us to make a lasting impact on the lives of our athletes for years to come.

On April 5th, over 700 guests gathered at the Gordon Indoor Track and Tennis Center at Harvard University to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Special Olympics movement. The event was co-chaired by Joanne Jaxtiner and Peter Meade and raised close to \$800,000 for SOMA athletes and programs. The event also inducted 11 new Special Olympics Massachusetts Hall of Fame members.

Another monumental event was held on October 1st as SOMA President Robert Johnson, Marlborough Mayor Nancy Stevens, Yawkey Foundations President Jim Healey, along with Special Olympics athletes, family members and friends officially broke ground on SOMA's new home: The Yawkey Sports Training Center. The 25,000 square foot, state of the art training center will be located on a five-acre site in Marlborough off Route 495, within 90 minutes for 90% of the Commonwealth's population. SOMA's new home will enable the organization to realize greater efficiencies in its field operations, providing higher quality training experiences for a growing number of athletes, volunteers, coaches, and medical professionals. The facility is expected open in October of 2010.

In December SOMA announced a unique and ground-breaking formal affiliation with the University of Massachusetts Medical School. The overarching goal of this affiliation is to make a considerable impact on the quality and availability of healthcare for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Key components of the affiliation include: training and "hands on" experiences for medical students to gain comfort with this vibrant population early in their medical education; providing curriculum that will target the overall improvement in the delivery of healthcare to individuals with intellectual disabilities; and strengthening the Special Olympics Massachusetts Healthy Athlete programs.

Healthy Athletes continues to be an important priority for the organization. In 2008, SOMA conducted six Healthy Athletes Screenings for 629 athletes or 5% of the athletes. In addition two Healthy Athlete educational programs were conducted:

- A Special Smiles dental education program at the Cape Cod School Day Games for approximately 150 students and athletes.
- The Sun Safety educational program for more than 1200 athletes, coaches and family members attending the August Sports Tournament.

In total, SOMA served 11,639 athletes and Unified partners in 2008. We offered 26 sports and a competition schedule of 126 organized events, supported by 12,343 volunteers and coaches. All of this was offered through 348 organized local programs across the state.

All of these accomplishments would not be possible without the dedication and support of our athletes, families, coaches, volunteers and local programs. We are fortunate to have such a strong base of support and appreciate their contributions to a successful 2008.

In the Spirit of Special Olympics,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Johnson", is positioned to the right of a vertical line.

Robert Johnson
President & CEO