

Toyota Celebrates Teamwork and Inclusivity at the Special Olympics Unified Cup

July 12, 2018



PLANO, Texas (July 12, 2018) – Next week, Toyota will further demonstrate its global commitment to inclusion as the presenting sponsor of the 2018 Special Olympics Unified Cup in Chicago, held from July 17-20, 2018. Both Special Olympics and Toyota share the same goal in creating a society without discrimination through sports and a commitment to a sustainable society through mobility.

Toyota has a long history with sports that goes back over 80 years, when the company first opened for business and at the same time organized a track and field team. Since then, the principles learned through participating in sports—teamwork and continuous improvement—have guided the company both internally and externally.

These values also carry over into Toyota’s evolution, as it has moved from producing looms, to cars, and now, a wide range of mobility solutions. As a company dedicated to helping people move across town, across a room, and through life, Toyota believes in an inclusive, barrier-free world, where everyone is free to be the best we can be. This desire to inspire others and challenge currently held values for the company’s first-ever global initiative, “Start Your Impossible”, which was launched last year and highlights humility, hard work, and overcoming challenges—all themes that carry over into team sports.

Special Olympics is focused on creating an inclusive community around the world through sport. Through their “unified sports”, everyone, regardless of intellectual disabilities, plays together while understanding and respecting each individual’s character and differences.

“During my school days, I was completely devoted to field hockey and learned the importance of fighting as part of “one team”,” said Akio Toyoda, president of Toyota Motor Corporation. “In Special Olympics, sport is not the only challenge; even daily life can be a battle to people with intellectual disabilities and those who support them in everyday life. A truly inclusive society, like the one being represented by ‘Unified Sports,’ is one where people with intellectual disabilities are not just supported by those charged with helping them, but where people with and without disabilities live side by side, grow up together, and learn from each other. It is this type of society that Toyota wants to contribute to. Our partnership with Special Olympics has given Toyota a teammate, and we will challenge this quest together.”

“At Toyota, we believe that movement is a human right, and that when a person is free to move, anything is possible,” said Ed Laukes, group vice president, Toyota division marketing, Toyota Motor North America. “With Special Olympics, we share the common goal of creating a more mobile and inclusive society. Together, as a team both on and off the field, we’ll work to give everyone the ability to make their dreams come true.”

Regionally, Toyota has been involved with local Special Olympics chapters since 1986 and sponsored the 2015 Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles. In 2017, Toyota entered in to an agreement with Special Olympics International to become a Global Gold Partner through 2022. In addition, Toyota is also a Global Unified Sports Partner through 2020, and a Special Olympics Unified Cup Partner for the duration of the Chicago games.

“Special Olympics is excited to partner with Toyota and showcase the power of inclusion through sport on the global stage,” said CEO Mary Davis. “The Special Olympics Unified Cup presented by Toyota will unite athletes from all over the world and demonstrate that when we train and compete together, we break down barriers and change the game for inclusion.”