



Youth Games Overview:

Special Olympics Oregon and NIKE, Inc. teams up each year for the Special Olympics Oregon Youth Games at Nike World Headquarters. Since 2007, more than 5,000 athletes have participated in this one-day event focused on introducing the basics of popular sports to young people with intellectual disabilities. Inspired by the idea that all kids are made to play, the event helps participants to realize their potential through sport and lead healthier, happier and more successful lives.

The Youth Games are organized through a long-time partnership between Nike and Special Olympics Oregon. Each year Special Olympics athletes participate in sports instruction and competition designed for youth ages 6 to 18. Typically, 400 to 500 Nike employee volunteers, as well as elite athletes, welcome and inspire the young participants to be active. To be a volunteer at this annual event is a proud moment for the employees who land the coveted and limited roles at this event.

As part of the Youth Games, Nike hosts a Unified Champion Schools (UCS) exhibition soccer game between two local high schools. The UCS program combines sport, education, and leadership activities to equip students with the tools and training to create a culture of acceptance and inclusion. Currently there are 125 UCS schools in 29 districts throughout Oregon.

In addition to the sports events, Youth Games also provides support for family members and caregivers of the participants at the tented onsite Parents Pavilion. Parents new to Special Olympics Oregon interact with current Special Olympics athletes and their family members, network with other parents of Youth Games participants, and connect with other organizations that provide services to individuals that experience disabilities.