



GRAND TRAVERSE
RESORT AND SPA

Special Olympics Michigan Winter Games Return to the Resort

ACME, Mich., January 30, 2023 – Get in on the action as the Special Olympics Michigan Winter Games return to Grand Traverse Resort and Spa! More than 500 athletes and Unified partners from more than 60 counties across Michigan will be in Traverse City January 31 – February 3. Activities take place at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, Schuss Mountain at Shanty Creek Resorts, and Howe Ice Arena at the Grand Traverse Civic Center.

“This group is without a doubt one of our favorites,” says Scott Firman, Director of Rooms Administration at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa. “These athletes, coaches, and volunteers bring such energy to our property. Their positive attitude spreads to our staff. You can’t help but smile, be happy, and cheer them on. We are thrilled to have the Special Olympics Michigan Winter Games returning.”

This marks the 44th Special Olympics Michigan State Winter Games. More than 900 competitors, coaches, and volunteers will gather in person to participate this year and celebrate sports for all. Sports competition includes snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, alpine skiing, snowboarding, figure skating, and speed skating. All events are free and open to the public.

“Winter Games is a great way to kick off the year with our first statewide competition,” said Tim Hileman, President & CEO of Special Olympics Michigan. “We gather for several days, celebrating the power sport has brought us together. You can feel the positive energy from our athletes, volunteers, and staff. It is infectious and unmatched.”

Wertz Warriors are the presenting sponsor of the 2023 State Winter Games. Wertz Warriors is a group of nearly 100 dedicated individuals who travel on snowmobiles for a 900-mile endurance ride from Clinton Township to Petoskey, raising money and awareness for Special Olympics Michigan athletes. Wertz Warriors was created by Vic Wertz, who had a dream to underwrite the Special Olympics Michigan State Winter Games. Since his dream became a reality in 1982, Wertz Warriors has raised awareness and more than \$14.3 million for SOMI athletes. This year is the 42nd ride for the Wertz Warriors.

The Special Olympics Michigan Winter Games kick off on February 1 with time trials. Wertz Warriors arrive at the Resort for snowmobile rides before the opening ceremony at 7:00 p.m. On February 2, sports competition takes place at all venues, followed by the closing ceremony and victory dance beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Special Olympics Michigan Winter Games are still looking for volunteers. If you are interested in helping with the special events, please contact somi@somi.org.

Media images are available [here](#).

About Grand Traverse Resort and Spa

Nestled among the freshwater beaches and hardwood forests of Traverse City, MI, Grand Traverse Resort and Spa is miles away from ordinary. Featuring nearly 600 guest rooms and 86,500 square feet of meeting space, the 900-acre property is one of Michigan's premier resort destinations. The Resort is also home to three championship golf courses, the renowned Spa Grand Traverse, and *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence winner Aerie Restaurant & Lounge. Visit grandtraverseresort.com or call 800-236-1577 to learn more.

About Special Olympics Michigan

Special Olympics Michigan Inc. (SOMI) provides year-round sports training and athletic competition to more than 23,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities and Unified partners (athletes without intellectual disabilities). Athletes develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, and experience joy while participating in the sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship among their families, Special Olympics athletes, and the community. SOMI is a non-profit organization supported almost entirely by corporate and individual gifts and events. The generosity of Michigan organizations, individuals, and statewide businesses enable the program to continue.

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