

Caledon Special Olympics athletes preparing for Provincial Games

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After a long wait, Caledon Special Olympics athletes will be attending the Special Olympics Ontario Spring Games.

The games will be held from May 23 to 26 in Waterloo. The games were originally supposed to be held in 2020, but had to be put on hold because of the pandemic.

Over 750 athletes from all over Ontario will be going to the games to participate in powerlifting, gymnastics, basketball, 10-pin bowling, and swimming competitions. Four athletes from Caledon will be competing in swimming and one will be competing in 10-pin bowling.

Eduarda Domingues, a long-time volunteer with Special Olympics, was one of the people to help start Caledon Special Olympics and remains enthusiastic about the program.

"It's all about the athletes," said Domingues. "We're trying to get more and more people involved? once you start volunteering you never go back."

Caledon Special Olympics athletes have been training hard for the Spring Games and will soon be finishing up their swimming training, which has been ongoing over the winter. Athletes heading to the games will also receive individual training sessions soon.

Domingues said the excitement of the Spring Games is amazing for the athletes.

"It's so fun," she said.

Seeing new athletes have an amazing time playing sports and making friends is Domingues' favourite part of being involved with Special Olympics. She said it's been great to see new faces getting involved in Caledon.

Domingues shared a story of a new athlete who came out to play basketball this past winter.

The athlete quickly picked up the sport in a scrimmage and his mom was amazed to see how great her son did at a new team sport.

What stood out for the mom was the smiles on everyone's faces, and from that day they kept on coming back each week. Domingues said Special Olympics is great because athletes are encouraged to try new things while still having safety and fun as the top priority.

"Some athletes are very competitive, but for a lot of these athletes this is their social time, this is their friend circle," said Domingues. "It's just as much social as it is sports and competition? friendship is just as important."

Caledon Special Olympics is a non-profit and its goal is to keep sports as inexpensive as possible for athletes and their families.

There's an upcoming bingo fundraiser for Caledon Special Olympics.

It's taking place from 1 to 3 p.m. on May 5 at Delta Bingo in Brampton. Tickets for the event are \$20, with all proceeds going to Caledon Special Olympics. More information about the event can be found on Caledon Special Olympics' website.

Jason Scorgia, a well-known Caledon Special Olympics athlete, is competing in bowling at the upcoming Spring Games. He said

he's been enjoying practicing over the winter, and he recently got second place at a bowling tournament.

Scorcia and his fellow Caledon Special Olympics athletes will be going for gold this May, as they travel to the games that are the pinnacle of competition for Special Olympics athletes in Ontario.