

PRESS RELEASE



UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN MADRID

Ambassador Costos Sends off Spain's Delegation to the 2015 Special Olympics in Los Angeles

On July 15th, U.S. Ambassador to Spain and Andorra James Costos hosted a farewell reception at his residence for the members of Spain's delegation to the 2015 Special Olympics, taking place July 25th-August 2nd in Los Angeles, California. This year's games will gather 7,000 athletes of all ages to compete in 25 different sporting events. Spain's delegation is comprised of 77 athletes from 10 communities across Spain who will compete in 11 events, including swimming, tennis, bocce, soccer, basketball, and table tennis.

The Special Olympics was an initiative of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the sister of President John F. Kennedy, to offer sports opportunities to children who have intellectual disabilities and shine a light on the need for society to adopt a more inclusive approach toward those with special needs.

What started as a day camp at Eunice Kennedy Shriver's home became an international sports competition when the first games were held in Chicago in 1968. Special Olympics is now the world's largest sports organization for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, providing year-round training and competitions for more than 4.4 million athletes of all ages in 170 countries. Special Olympics strives to create a better world by fostering the acceptance and inclusion of all people, and has been changing lives and attitudes for more than 47 years.

The athletes, their families, and trainers who attended the reception in their honor offered by Ambassador Costos were joined by the Honorary President of Special Olympics Spain, Her Royal Highness Infanta Elena de Borbon, and the Minister of Education, Culture and Sport, Iñigo Méndez de Vigo. During the event, Ambassador Costos recalled that, "Through programming in sports, health, education and community building, Special Olympics is changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, inspiring people in their communities and elsewhere to open their hearts to a wider world of human talents and potential." "We are so pleased to host a delegation from Spain's Special Olympics team here tonight," he said, "honoring the hard work of all of the members of the team in their quest to follow their dreams."



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Miguel Sagarra, President of Special Olympic Spain, thanked the U.S. Embassy for its support. “Special Olympics Spain will continue working to offer more and better opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities to engage in sport and improve their quality of life,” he said. Commenting on the goal of Special Olympics Spain since its creation in 1991, Sagarra noted that “We want institutions and society to support the efforts we are undertaking to ensure that our athletes have equal opportunities.”

For more information about Special Olympics Spain, please consult the attached press kit.



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