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A New Year is upon us! This month we will take a brief look back at some 2020 Special O.

Despite a global pandemic that strangled the world (and continues to do so), Special Olympics was far from defeated. Although our specific Local was only active until the shut down began, we are ready to restart both swimming and bocce when we are given the green light by provincial health and Special O head office.

Elsewhere in British Columbia…

Competitions, both virtual and in-person were paramount before and after Covid-19 was identified. The biggest was the National Games in Thunder Bay Ontario where Team BC’s 143 athletes picked up 145 medals!

One heartwarming story happened during a curling match. Team Leprechauns from Burnaby/Richmond witnessed an athlete of another team become distressed after an error in play. The team laid down their brooms, and comforted the player until they could continue. S.O. Beautiful!

Although 2020 was a big number, Special O had it’s own great numbers!

1000 S.O.B.C athletes participated in virtual events and activities!

2,441 people were reached via Facebook Live!

13,983 views were reached on SOBC’s Health Resources website!

58 athletes took part in the very first Virtual Competitions.

And Special Olympics celebrated 40 years of making a sincere and strong difference!

As the original self-taught athlete reporter in SOBC I am pleased to see that formal training is underway to encourage others to blaze their own path!

On December 15th, fifteen athletes from around B.C. completed SOBC Virtual Athlete Reporter training! They built skill sets such as storytelling, technology, and social media. Originally created by SOBC Victoria’s PR Coordinator Andrea Boyes and Public Speaking Organizer Tess van Straaten, this program was also led by SOBC Communications Manager Megan Pollock. All who participated showed terrific abilities in writing, interviewing, storytelling and filming.

Meanwhile, facemasks have become an essential fashion trend and SOBC has entered into the game by designing and distributing masks to athletes across the province. The masks come in red or black and are emblazoned with the SOBC logo.

While fundraising has been limited this year, financial assistance has continued. We are grateful for grants from the District of Sechelt and the Town Of Gibsons and the SCRD for our swim program. We also appreciate the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation whose donation helped purchase the SO logo masks and Covid supplies for bocce.

This New Year holds hope and promise for the future in Special Olympics and the world as a whole. Here’s to it!

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