Aligning Occupational Therapy and Special Olympics: Maximizing Global Participation for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

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Camilo Mejia
Down syndrome Board of Directors
Ambassador Special Olympics
The Forces...

**Occupational Therapy**

“Helps people across the lifespan participate in the things they want and need to do through the therapeutic use of everyday activities (occupations).”

*American OT Association*

**Outcomes:** Participation, Performance, Occupational Justice

**Special Olympics**

“Through the power of sports, people with intellectual disabilities discover new strengths and abilities, skills, and success...find joy, confidence, and fulfillment, on the playing field and in life.”

*Special Olympics USA*

**Outcomes:** Inclusion, Health, Justice—morally right, equitable, & fair
The Team

Patricia Schaber
Occupational Therapist
Alpine Ski Coach

Camilo Mejia
Special Olympics Athlete
Alpine Skier since 2000
OT Adapted and Graded Activity for the “Just Right Challenge”
OT Motivates.... Builds Social & Therapeutic Relationships

My Best Friend Beau

My Family

My Girlfriend

My Team
Goal Directed Activity
My Goal: Special Olympics Austria 2017

Camilo’s Competing on Team USA in the World Games
Opening Ceremonies
Schladming Austria

It was amazing - 10,000 fans cheering as we entered.

Behind the stage is a black diamond ski hill. To light the Olympic flame, 50 skiers came down the hill with torches.

Jason Mraz sang.
OT... Life Changing
So Happy!!!
My video went viral!
Occupational Therapy
101 countries
550,000 members
World Federation of Occupational Therapy

Special Olympics
172 countries
4.9 million athletes
Special Olympics International

Together We Can
Change the World!