



MER Wave



May 2023

Already May and time for a new newsletter. The year is flying as coaches prepare our athletes for the up and coming July State Games and not to forget our athletes attending World Games in June.

Anyone who has a “high five moment”, drop us a line or photo @ melbourneeasterranges.newsletter@specialolympics.com.au so we can celebrate your achievements in the next copy of the “MER Wave”

Everyone please join the correct MER facebook page details of our MER facebook page are - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100088344894963>

Editor, Sue Hartley

Important Dates

Monthly meeting is the first Monday of the month @ 7.30pm Knox Italian Club Karoo Road Rowville. We would love to see you there.

World Games 17-25 June Berlin.

State Games 1st and 2nd July

Opening ceremony Saturday 1st July
Arrival 9am commences at 9.15am
Casey Stadium, 4 Terry Vickerman Building
65 Berwick-Cranbourne Road Cranbourne East

Uniforms - A bit of advice: For all our uniforms, please take care of them, do not wash them with other colours, especially our MER Red Polo tops. If you require uniform please discuss and order through your respective coaches, then they will send orders to Michael M.



Vice Chair Message

Hi everyone,

After our great National Games there has been a buzz around our club with 2 of our athletes leaving for the World games in June.

During the past months, we’ve been supporting our 2 athletes with fundraising events, we wish all the very best to Justin and Samantha and have a great time in Berlin, enjoy the World games and give it your best. Be proud of your achievements no matter what, as we are proud of you both!

A big thanks to our Leadership team, our Coaches, our Athletes’ leaders and all our volunteers for their time, their support and for all the hard work they put in during the past few months.

We thank the Leadership team and athletes as over the past months we attended Special School Expos, important to be seen at these events to spread the Special Olympics inclusion movement using sport, health and education.

Over the past months we welcomed new coaches, athletes and Fundraising officer, we are sure that they will be great and make a difference in helping the MER team. We are still looking to fulfill our Chair and Secretary positions, as we continue to look for the right people for these important roles.

To our athletes... always be proud and happy of what you do, you are all special, ask for help

when needed, always be at training with a great and positive attitude, praise your fellow athletes, help each other on and off the courts, and most of all ENJOY and have fun in your sport.

A big thanks to all our volunteers and parents that are always there to help.

Keep smiling, it's addictive.



Michael Migliaccio
ViceChair & Bocce coach

VOLUNTEERING WELL WORTH IT

An Article from the ASI "Discover personnel fulfilment through sport volunteering"

Inspired by her father's long-term dedication to sport and the local community, Theodora Niakolas has been a passionate sport volunteer for more than 20 years.

Growing up in Warrnambool, VIC, as a child of Greek immigrants, she learned how sport could help build connections.

"My dad became involved in the football club and became a sponsor," she said. "My dad and my mum were very good in getting involved in the community."

This sense of community inspired her own volunteering journey.

Theodora volunteers as a Sport Coordinator for the Melbourne Eastern Ranges Special Olympics club, which is dedicated to providing opportunities for people with an intellectual disability.

"In my role I coordinate all training sessions, venues, coaches and volunteers to provide a safe, respectful and enjoyable experience for our athletes," Theodora said.

"One of my most important duties is to be a mentor to our athletes and help them develop skills and confidence in all aspects of their lives."

Theodora is extremely grateful to have found personal fulfillment through her volunteer role.

"I absolutely love my role. It fills my heart to know that I am helping people who need a bit of extra help.

"I get back twice as much as I put in when volunteering, I wish I had more time to do it."

A testament to Theodora's kind-hearted and caring nature, the connections she has developed with the athletes at her club run far deeper than a purely sporting relationship.

"I often get phone calls from our athletes just to say 'hi'. Sometimes they just need someone they can call and hear a friendly voice.

"I love that I can do those little extra things for them, there is nothing more rewarding."

Theodora believes volunteering has had an immensely positive impact on her and her family's lives and encourages everyone to get involved and experience the same benefits.

"Go for it! Volunteering is such a rewarding experience, it really will expand your life and you will discover the real value of being a part of something bigger than yourself," Theodora said.

Ready to get involved?

Visit ausport.gov.au/findaclub to start volunteering today!



Theodora Niakolas, left, at the Special Olympics Australia National Games along with Christine Williams.

Volunteers are vital for any organisation. We at MER greatly appreciate the efforts of all our volunteers as we could not exist without your input.

FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

We have been busy raising funds to support athletes Justin and Samantha who head off to world games representing their respective sports swimming and basketball.



Bunnings Sausage Sizzle – attended by both world athletes and their supporters. Thank you to those who volunteered.

Williams Family far and wide, Sam Godden, Michael Green, Matthew Whateley, Phil Parsons, Noel Medson, Gary Schultz, Ian Hampton, Richard and Julia Eynaud.

Swimming raised funds for Justin by way of a swimathon. Thank you to all swimmers for their endurance and all friends of MER who supported by counting the many laps and words of encouragement to our exhausted swimmers.

Justin's co-workers organised a fundraiser at Burwood Lawn Bowls . Many of our athletes and their families tried their hand at lawn bowls, some more successful than others. A great effort which was well supported and great time had by all.



SPORTS



Athletics Knox

Date to be advised



Aquatics at Knox Leisureworks

Weekly on Sunday mornings (check your session with your coach)

New updated signage at Knox Leisureworks



Basketball at Nunawading

Basketball Stadium Weekly on Sunday from 1-3pm.

New reversible training Tops, these will be presented on June 18th.





Bocce at Knox Italian Community Club, 99 Karoo Road Rowville

Commencing Fortnightly April until the end of September Fridays @6.45pm

(19 March) Echuca Inter-club Bocce Tournament.



Four MER athletes attended the tournament. Nicole Hampton, Michael Ross, Taylor Sullivan and Samantha Turner all enjoyed good weather and the great atmosphere of the Moama Bowling Club during an enjoyable competition.

The results were:

First place winners: Samantha Turner & Michael Ross

Third place winner: Nicole Hampton

Fourth place winner: Taylor Sullivan

Before the competition commenced, the LETR representative, Tegan who came all the way from home base of Kerang, fully engaged with all of the athletes and then led them on a short torch run around the bowling green. All athletes enthusiastically engaged in this activity.



The artificial court surface proved a little difficult for those athletes accustomed to compacted sand but this just adds to the complexity of the sport of Bocce.

After the competition ended all joined together to enjoy a meal in the Bowling Club's Bistro.

Many thanks to Sue Hawkins and her volunteers for hosting this event. Hopefully we can expand this tournament next year.

Many thanks also to LETR for supporting the event to the delight of the athletes.



FINDING HER PROJECT



SDS School Program



MER Bocce Interclub – LETR Guests

Come and try Bocce,
a non-Strenuous Game for all ages.



Tennis

In conjunction with All Abilities Ferntree Gully
Tennis Club

Weekly Thursday 5.30-6.30pm



Ten Pin Bowling at Chirnside Park
Oz Bowl weekly Saturday 9am start



Lynne Glaisher former ten pin bowler and swimming MER athlete recognised in the "Finding Her" project at Her Place Women's Museum Australia – wonderful achievement Lynne

<https://findingher.org.au/?fbclid=IwAR2W0wJ6c9VgSm6u1wLc5uE8oi5zkGNvk5VMGE3rZNXFmSw1m1rtUzpThH8>

All training schedules are available from your coaches, sport coordinator or can be accessed on our website.



Hope everyone is remembering to hydrate, eat healthy and exercise daily to ensure we do not let those winter bugs that are around at the moment take hold.