



Step Into Action Guide



Special Olympics
Ontario



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Introduction

What is *pahl*?

pahl (Physical Activity and Healthy Living) is a program created to promote healthy active living to individuals with an intellectual disability across Ontario.

The ***pahl*** Project aims to enhance the ability of Special Olympics athletes and students to train and compete, and empower them to invest in their overall health and well-being.

To accomplish these goals, the project is focused on the delivery of specific programs, such as Step Into Action, Healthy Athletes, TRAIN, and High Performance Training for our elite athletes.



What is Step Into Action?

Step Into Action is an interactive program designed to improve the fitness, health and well-being of each participant. The tracking feature of the website enables participants to visually measure their physical activity and nutrition in a fun and novel way, helping change their perceptions and behaviour towards living an active healthy lifestyle.

The 'Step' component of the program includes any type of activity that can be measured by a pedometer, such as: walking, jogging, running, participating in sports, or even dancing.

On the website step.specialolympicsontario.com:

- **Athletes/Students** can track their steps and nutrition while visually seeing their progress over time;
- **Coaches/Teachers** can download nutrition and physical activity resources, and also, track the progress of all participating athletes/students.

The **Step Into Action** program supplies pedometers and resources (free of charge) for coaches, teachers, volunteers who register as a Program Leader and create a program.

These resources are designed to educate the athletes/students about goal setting, nutrition and physical fitness; with the ultimate goal of helping them along the path of incorporating an active and healthy lifestyle into their daily lives.

Finally, **Step Into Action** aims to develop the participants skills in the following areas of: **goal setting, goal achievement, responsibility, accountability, and computer literacy.**

Step Into Action in Schools

In October of 2005 the Education Minister announced a new mandate called DPA (Daily Physical Activity). This new program ensures students in the elementary program receive 20 minutes of continuous moderate to vigorous exercise per day to promote learning and health. Although DPA is an elementary mandate, secondary teachers have had great success with their students after implementing the Step Into Action program in their classrooms last year.

The Step Into Action program is designed to meet the needs of both elementary and secondary students regardless of whether or not they are using it for DPA. The program offers a general framework that is often a starting block for educators to modify to create a framework that is functional for them. Each session involves a proper stretching period, warm up, mini health lesson and stepping activity.

Typically, walking is the stepping activity of choice enabling students of all ability levels to participate as a group. The ministry mandates that DPA is 20 minutes of continuous exercise so teachers can add the non-activity components (i.e., warm-up, health lesson) where they see fit. Generally this is done by adding to the time allotted for DPA – an extra 10 minutes should suffice or including it in the students physical education period.

Pedometers are provided so students can track their steps per session and monitor their improvement. Teachers may choose to allow their students to wear their pedometers all day or simply during the allotted time for the program. This initiative is meant to supplement the DPA program but can also be integrated into the Physical Education period.

Encouraging students to track their progress during any physical activity will help them be more aware of their bodies and bodily changes as well as encourage participation and increase commitment. Given the ease at which the Step Into Action program can be modified, it can be done one on one with a student and peer or in a large group. Teachers should feel free to take the foundational pieces of each session (stretch, warm up, health tip, activity) and integrate the activities in the most useful way to benefit you and your students.



Step Into Action in the Community

Community Programs (defined as Special Olympics Sport Clubs or Community Agencies servicing those with an ID) are invited to participate in the **Step Into Action** program. By visiting the website step.specialolympicsontario.com the **Program Leader** can create a challenge according to the ability levels of his or her athletes or community members.

Step Into Action offers **Pedometers** so participants can track their steps per session and monitor their improvement. Encouraging the participants to track their progress during any physical activity will help them be more aware of their bodies and bodily changes. Because of the ease at which this program can be modified it can be done on one-on-one with a coach, volunteer, care-giver and peer or in a large group. Coaches should feel free to take the foundational pieces of each session (stretch, warm up, health tip, activity) and integrate the activities in the most useful way to benefit you and your athletes or community members.



School and Community Engagement

The *pahl* program, specifically the **Step Into Action** program, increases SOO's ability to recruit and engage new participants given the simplicity for a teacher or a SOO volunteer to implement a program. The program is not intimidating and is barrier free; meaning a teacher or SOO volunteer – who does not have a background in sport – can introduce this program in his or her classroom or community without any coaching certification. When introducing the program, students or community members who may not be interested in sport can still participate in SOO because of **Step Into Action**.

Step Into Action can also be used as the main program to get elementary or secondary schools consistently involved with SOO on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. That way, once students reach the age to transition into their community, they are already involved with **Step Into Action**, if not other community sport programs as a result of the connection made to Special Olympics Ontario early on.



Step Into Action Testimony

Marilyn Kennedy, PIP teacher and SERT, St. Francis Xavier SS

As a teacher of students with Developmental Disabilities, I am acutely aware of the statistics that place many adults with DD at risk for many health-related diseases (i.e., type 2 diabetes) due to inactivity and poor nutrition. As we know, developing healthy attitudes and actions as youth paves the way for healthier adult choices. Consequently, walking has been a part of the Planning for Independence program at St. Francis Xavier SS for the past couple of years. However, until we started using the **Step Into Action** program, we did not see the results that we had hoped for (i.e., change of attitude toward walking and better nutritional choices).

I cannot give enough praise to this amazing program! Our students, who used to complain about walking every day, now enthusiastically pronounce that PAHL is their favourite time of day. It does not even require a full period, just 30 – 45 minutes per day, depending on how it fits in with your day. It is a great fit for the ascribed curriculum, which includes **Physical Activity & Healthy Living**. The pedometers provide them with the necessary visual evidence of their efforts and provide us with data to support their improved physical activity. One of the side benefits we have observed is an improvement in the behaviour of some of our students with behavioural difficulties.

We implemented the program in October, after contacting Jules Sylvestre, the PAHL Specialist with Special Olympics Ontario. The materials that he provided, including record-keeping for the activity as well as the nutritional piece, were exactly what was needed to help motivate our students. The program is easy to follow, with hard copy goal-setting materials provided for classroom use and a website that allows us to collect data daily by recording the number of steps taken, as well as individual students' food choices. After some weeks of recording the food choices, our students began to see the patterns of "missing" food groups in their diet (most fruits and vegetables) and began to make the effort to choose more of those foods.

The benefits of this program can be life-changing for people with Developmental Disabilities because it is transferable to their daily lives, now and in the future. While, as educators, we can introduce our students to myriad activities (i.e., bowling, swimming, ball sports) during their tenure in the school system, there is no single activity as adaptable and lifelong as walking. Obviously, the benefits of this program are life-changing and I recommend it to you without reservation.

Notes:

Website Navigation Guide



Website Guide

On the **Step Into Action** website:

1. **Athletes/Students** can track their steps, track their nutrition and visually see their progress over time!
2. **Coaches/Teachers** can download nutrition and physical activity resources, and also, track the progress of all participating athletes/students!



step.specialolympicsontario.com

Program Creation Guide

To create a Step Program for your community club or school, the following steps must be completed:

1. A coach, teacher, parent or volunteer must first register themselves as a **Program Leader** (see page 8);
2. Once registered as a Program Leader, the individual will be prompted to create a **Step Program** (see page 9).

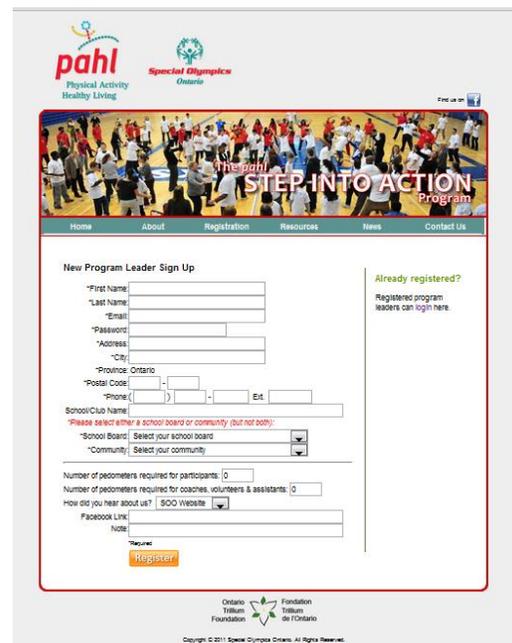
Who can be a Program Leader?

The person who creates a Step Program for his or her athletes/students will be called a **Program Leader**. A **Program Leader** can be a coach, teacher, parent or volunteer. This individual is responsible for:

1. Creating a Step Challenge for his or her athletes/students,
2. Contacting Special Olympics Ontario ensuring your program receives pedometers and resources,
3. Ensuring his or her athletes/students keep track of their steps online,
4. Encouraging and motivating his or her athletes/students to achieve their personalized physical activity and nutrition goals.

Program Leader Registration

1. If you're a coach or educator who wants to register yourself as the **Program Leader**, you can follow these steps;
2. Visit website homepage: step.specialolympicsontario.com
3. Click on the **Blue** button, prompting you to a split screen –sign-in page (left) or registration page (right);
4. To access the registration page, click on the **Orange** 'Click Here to Register' button;
5. On the Registration page, the Program Leader will be asked to provide basic contact information so Special Olympics Ontario can contact and send each Program Leader the required number of pedometers and resources.



Creating a Step Program

1. Once registered as a **Program Leader**, the teacher/coach will be prompted to create a **Step Program** for his or her athletes/students.
2. The web page (see below) asks the **Program Leader** to provide a *program name, description of the program, a start and end date (based on how long you plan to run the program) and what is best for you and your athletes/students*.
3. Once the **Program Leader** has created a **Step Program**, he or she will be sent the required number of pedometers needed for his or her program, one Coach/Educator Resource Guide, and one Athlete/Student Guide.
4. Finally, once a **Step Program** is created, the **Program Leader** will be given a specific link to his or her **Step Program**. This link can then be sent to each athlete or student for them to register online.



The screenshot shows the 'Create New Program' form on the Pahl website. The page header includes the Pahl logo (Physical Activity Healthy Living) and the Special Olympics Ontario logo. A navigation menu contains links for Home, About, Registration, Resources, News, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled 'Create New Program' and contains the following fields:

- *Program Name:
- Description:
- *Start Date: (mm/dd/yyyy)
- *End Date: (mm/dd/yyyy)
- Facebook Link:

A green 'Create Program' button is located below the fields. A blue 'MAIN MENU' button is positioned to the right of the form. The footer of the page includes logos for Ontario Trillium Foundation and Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario, along with the copyright notice: Copyright © 2011 Special Olympics Ontario. All Rights Reserved.

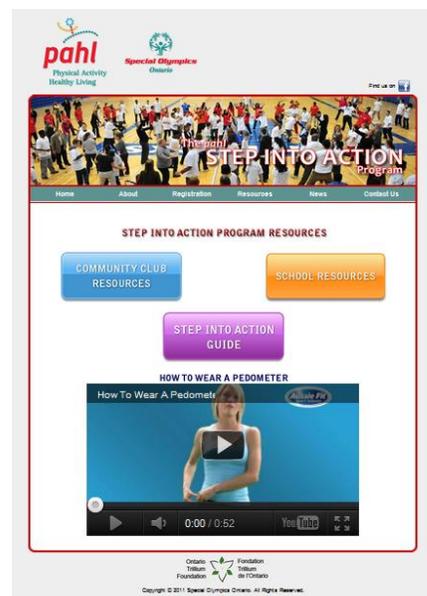
Step Into Action Resources

To access the **Step Into Action** resources online, the **Program Leader** can simply click on the **Red** resource button on the home page.

On the resource page, the **Program Leader** will have the option to click on one or all of the following categories to access specific documents:

1. School Resources (**Orange** button)
2. Community Resources (**Blue** button)
3. Step Into Action Guide (**Purple** Button)

The **Program Leader** can choose which document you want to select and print it off. All resources are in PDF format.



Athlete/Student Guide

A **Step Participant** can be a SOO athlete, a community member, or a primary or secondary school student. These athletes/students are responsible to 'step into action' and record their steps and nutrition on a daily basis.

The screenshot shows the website for the pahl STEP INTO ACTION Program. At the top left, the pahl logo (Physical Activity Healthy Living) and the Special Olympics Ontario logo are displayed. A navigation menu includes Home, About, Registration, Resources, News, and Contact Us. The main content area features several buttons: a green button for 'ATHLETES TRACK YOUR STEPS', an orange button for 'More Info About STEP INTO ACTION!', a blue button for 'PROGRAM LEADERS CREATE A PROGRAM', a red button for 'RESOURCES', and a purple button for 'STEP PROGRAMS'. A large counter displays 'TOTAL NUMBER OF STEPS TAKEN ACROSS ONTARIO' as 1,032,494. Logos for Ontario Trillium Foundation and Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario are at the bottom, along with a copyright notice for 2011 Special Olympics Ontario.

Athlete/Student Registration

An athlete/student can register in two ways:

1. The Program Leaders can send each athlete/student a link to their specific Step Program, OR
2. Have the athlete/student click on the Green Button— Track Your Steps – on the home page.

After clicking on the **Green** button, the athlete/student will be prompted to the page seen below,

For first time registrants and to reach the registration page, the athlete/student will have to click on the **Orange** button on the right hand side of the page.

The screenshot shows the PAHL website registration page. At the top, there are logos for PAHL (Physical Activity Healthy Living) and Special Olympics Ontario. Below the logos is a navigation menu with links for Home, About, Registration, Resources, News, and Contact Us. The main content area is divided into two sections. On the left, under the heading "Athlete Log In", there are input fields for "Username:" and "Password:", a green "Log in" button, and a link for "Forgotten password?". On the right, under the heading "Not yet registered?", there is a description of participant eligibility: "A participant can be a SOO athlete, a primary or secondary school student (SOO athlete or not), or a community member (SOO athlete or not) with an Intellectual Disability." Below this description is an orange button labeled "Click Here To Register". At the bottom of the page, there are logos for Ontario Trillium Foundation and Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario, and a copyright notice: "Copyright © 2011 Special Olympics Ontario. All Rights Reserved."

Athlete/Student Registration Page

1. When registering, athletes/students will be asked to provide a username and password, which will be his or her login information for the **Step Into Action** Program.
2. The athlete/student must remember their login information.
3. The athletes/students have the ability to set individualized stepping goals based on their ability levels at the bottom of this page.

pahl
Physical Activity
Healthy Living

Special Olympics
Ontario

Find us on

The pahl **STEP INTO ACTION** Program

Home About Registration Resources News Contact Us

New Athlete Sign Up

*Username: (For log in to your Step Tracker)

*Password:

*First Name:

*Last Name:

Email:

*Address:

*City:

*Province: Ontario

*Postal Code: -

*Phone: () -

*Date of Birth: 1 - Jan - (yyyy)

Program: None

*Set Daily Goal: 5000 steps per day

[Already registered?](#)
Registered athletes can login here.

Ontario Trillium Foundation Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario

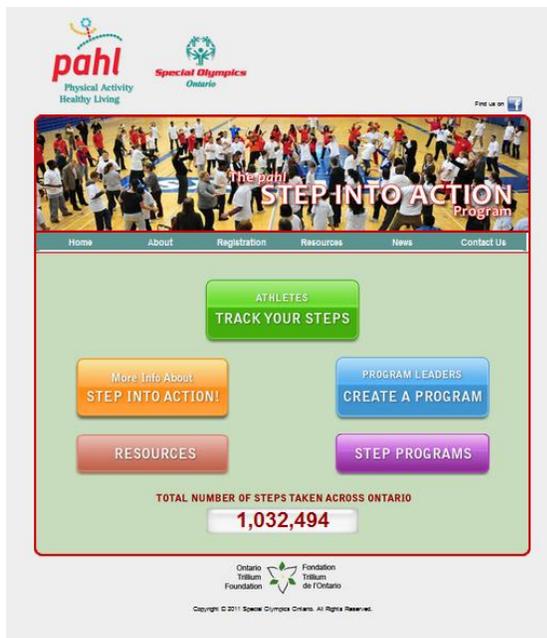
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Athlete/Student Tracking Application

1. Once the athlete/student is registered, they can log on to the website any time to track their steps taken over the course of the day or week.
2. The easiest way to track their steps is to click on the Green button on the home page (see below).
3. Once on the log-in page, the athlete/student can type in his or her username and password (see below).

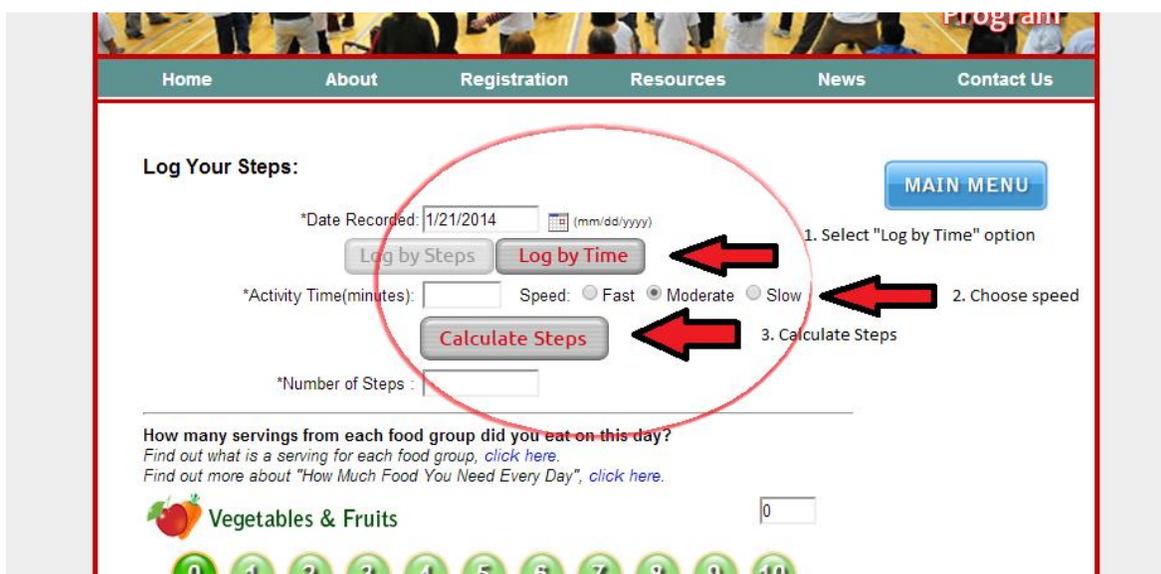
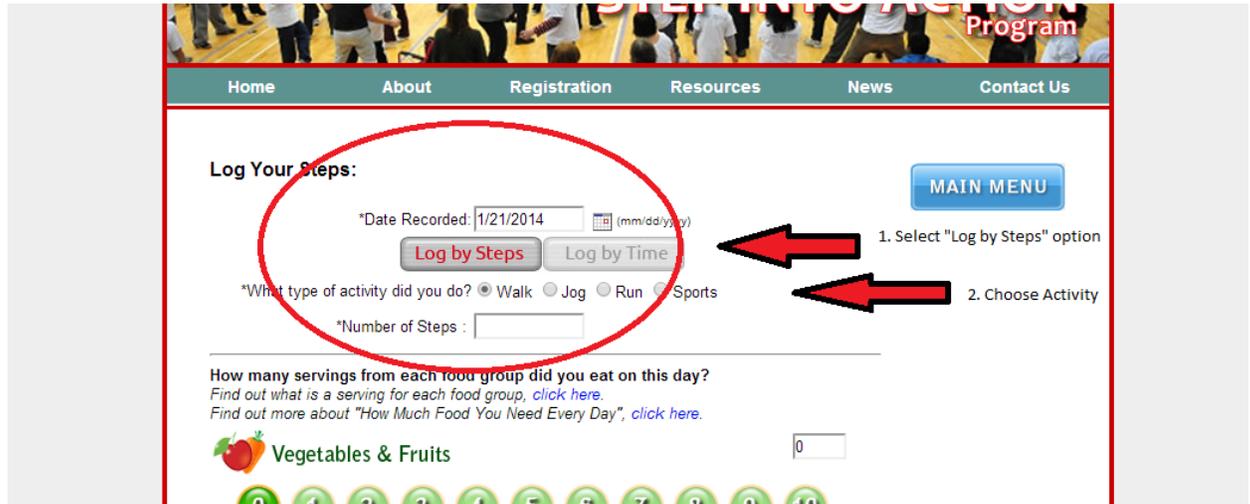
Step Recommendations

In order for the participants to receive maximum benefits from this program, it is suggested the participant 'step' for 30 minutes per day, increasing the duration or intensity on a weekly basis. This time allotment is only a recommendation as each participant's needs, abilities and progress will vary from participant to participant.



Athlete/Student Step Tracker

1. Once the athlete/student has logged-in, they can click on the **Orange** button to log/track their steps for the day.
2. As a part of the tracking tool, the student selects the day they 'stepped', and is then given the option to enter the Number of Steps as per their pedometer or enter the time spent being physically active and the intensity in order to calculate a time to steps conversion.



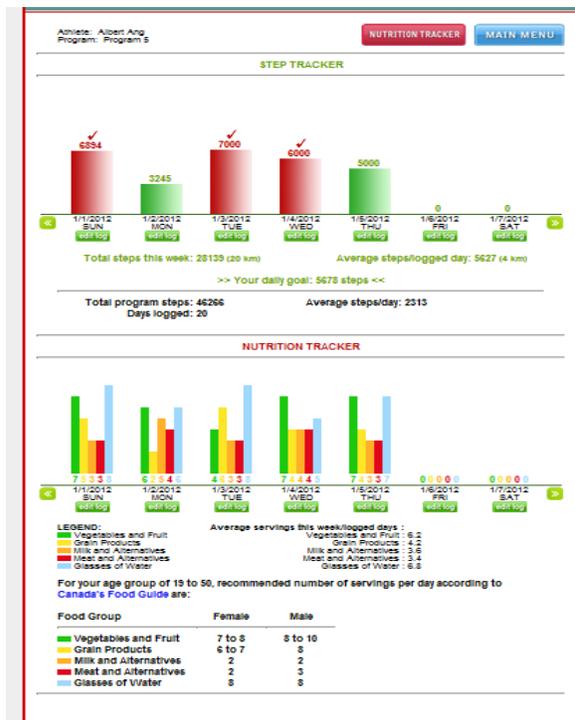
Athlete/Student Nutrition Tracker

1. In addition to tracking their steps, the athletes/students can select how many foods from each food category they ate or drank that day.
2. The athlete/student can also click on the links above the nutrition tracker to learn how much food in each category counts as one serving and how much of each serving the athlete/student should be getting each day.
3. After completing the form, be sure to click the **Green** button at the bottom of the screen to save your data.

The screenshot shows the 'STEP INTO ACTION Program' nutrition tracker interface. At the top, there are logos for 'pahl Physical Activity Healthy Living' and 'Special Olympics Ontario'. Below the logos is a navigation menu with links for Home, About, Registration, Resources, News, and Contact Us. The main form area is titled 'Log Your Steps:' and includes a 'Date Recorded' field (1/11/2012), a 'Number of Steps' field, and radio buttons for activity types: Walk, Jog, Run, and Sports. Below this, there is a section for 'How many servings from each food group did you eat on this day?' with a link to 'Find out what is a serving for each food group. click here.' and another link to 'Find out more about "How Much Food You Need Every Day". click here.' The food groups are: Vegetables & Fruits, Grain Products, Dairy Products, Proteins (Meats & Alternatives), and Glasses of Water. Each category has a row of 10 green circular buttons numbered 0 to 10 for selection. A 'Save' button is located at the bottom right of the form. At the very bottom, there are logos for the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Foundation Trillium de l'Ontario, along with the copyright notice: 'Copyright © 2011 Special Olympics Ontario. All Rights Reserved.'

Athlete/Student Challenge Tracker

1. Once the athlete/student has inputted their steps into the Tracking system, they can return to the main menu.
2. Once at the main menu, the athlete/student can click on the **Green** button, which will take them to the Challenge Tracker page.
3. The Challenge Tracker page allows the athletes/students to visually see their total number of steps taken as well as their nutritional input over the course of the week, month, and overall program.
4. On any days that the student was able to reach their daily Step Goal, the bar will turn red and show a check mark at the top as a clear indicator.
5. Below the Step Tracker, the athlete/student can see the average number of steps/day, their daily goal and the program average of steps/day. Below the Nutrition Tracker, participants are able to see their average servings per week of each food category, as well as the recommended number of servings of each category per day for their age group.



Athlete/Student Incentives

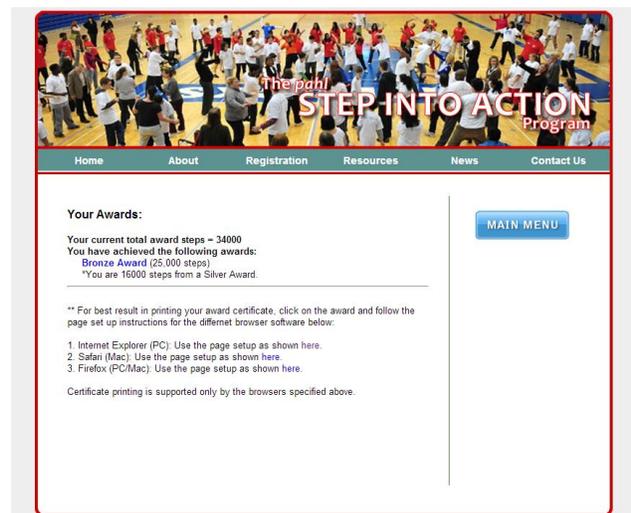
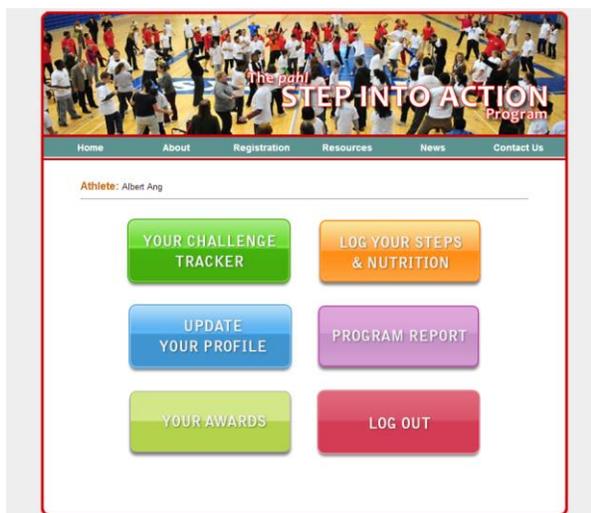
The incentivized structure of the website enables Program Leaders to keep athletes/students motivated and engaged throughout the duration of the program. Similar to most physical activity programs, incentives – outside of the health benefits – need to be present for continued participation in the program.

The incentives of this program are personalized bronze, silver, gold, and platinum level certificates.

- Bronze = 25,000 steps
- Silver = 75,000 steps
- Gold = 250,000 steps
- Platinum = 750,000 steps

Once athletes/students reach the corresponding number of steps for each level, the student or educator can print out a certificate with his or her name on it. Certificates have proven to be a very effective in motivating students to reach these levels, and also, keep them motivated in continuing the program.

Athletes/students can print their certificates by visiting their homepage and clicking on the **Lime Green** 'Your Awards' button (photo on left). To print the certificate, follow the instructions on 'Your Awards' page.



Program Leaders: Tracking and Program Information

Similar to athletes and students, each **Program Leader** has the ability to track and edit the progress of each athlete/student registered underneath his or her **Step Program**.

From the website homepage, click on the **Blue** button. You will be taken to a screen and prompted for your email and password. Once you are finished, click the **Green** log in box and you will be forwarded to the **Program Leader homepage**.



Creating a New Step Program

Clicking on the *Green* button will take you to the “Create a New Program” screen. After you have finished filling in all of the required fields, click the *Green* button at the bottom of the screen to complete the process. If you have completed all of the steps correctly a pop up window will show up on the screen saying that your new program has been created. Click “OK” to proceed.

You will be brought back to the ***Program Leader homepage*** and can navigate from there.



Editing a Step Program

To edit your program during any point of your program’s duration, click on the *Orange* box found on your Program Leader homepage. You will be forwarded to the Edit Programs web page where you can choose to edit or delete your program.

Clicking Edit will bring you to the Update Program Detail Page where you can edit your program through the same criteria as when it was first created. Click the *Green* update button to save any changes.



Inviting Athletes/Students to Join a Program

Once you have finished editing, a **Green** invitation link will appear at the bottom of the screen. Copy and paste this link into:

1. A new tab, where you can manually enter the information of each student/athlete to sign them up for the program, OR
2. An email sent to all of your athletes/students where they can enter the information on their own.

Once registered, each athlete/student will be taken to a confirmation page where they can choose to click the **Green** button to log their first day of steps and nutrition, or return to the **Step Into Action** Homepage and navigate from there.



Updating Your Profile

To update your profile at any time, click on the *Blue* button on the *Program Leader homepage*. This will take you to the same information screen that you filled out during the registration process. Be sure to click the *Green* update button to save any changes.

Program Report

Click on the *Purple* button on the *Program Leader homepage* to view your 'Program Report'. Clicking on the program name that you would like to view will bring you to a page outlining your program.

At this stage, you will see a list of all the athletes/students (registered underneath the specific *Step Program*) organized in a table format.

At the top of the table, there are four categories to view the athletes/students' progress. *Program Leaders* can organize the information by clicking on one of the following four categories:

1. Participant name,
2. Total steps in the program,
3. Total days logged,
4. Average steps/day.

Editing Progress

1. A coach/teacher may need to help his or her athletes/students enter their steps online;
2. The **Program Leader** has the ability to enter in the steps of his or her athletes/students by clicking on the athletes/students name;
3. At this stage, the Program Leader can view the athletes/students **Challenge Tracker** (bar graph);
4. At the bottom of each day of the week, the **Program Leader** can click **Edit Log**, which will prompt the **Program Leader** to the athletes tracking page;
5. Here, the **Program Leader** can update the athletes/students steps and nutrition (preferably with the athlete/student present),
6. Over time, it is hopeful that the athlete/student will be able to log into the website and track their steps on their own!

Notes:

Contact Information:

PAHL Program Coordinator

65 Overlea Blvd., Suite 200
Toronto, Ontario, M4H 1P1
Phone: 1-800-333-5515 ext. 246
Email: step@specialolympicsontario.com

Visit:

pahl.specialolympicsontario.ca

or

step.specialolympicsontario.com

