



## Get to know you SOLA Staff

Name	John Guzzardo
What is your role/title at SOLA and explain what it is you do?	President/CEO; oversee the strategic direction and overall operations of Special Olympics Louisiana
What is your favorite part about working at SOLA and for our athletes?	Seeing the joy and excitement on the faces of our athletes is what keeps me motivated. I cannot attend a practice or competition without being inspired by the courage, determination and happiness that the athletes of SOLA share with all of us. They are truly an inspiration for each other, but also for those of us who are fortunate enough to be a part of their lives through Special Olympics.
Describe SOLA in 5 words.	Powerful. Inclusive. Diverse. Limitless. Unified.
What did you want to be when you were growing up?	I grew up with parents who both taught special education so being around people with differences was always a part of my life, but my parents always taught me the importance of giving back and serving others. Like many kids, I'm sure I wanted to be a doctor or a fireman at some point, but after an early start to my career in the travel industry I quickly realized that I needed to do something with more purpose. I've now worked in the nonprofit world for 25 years and wouldn't trade it for anything!
What is something people would be surprised to know about you? Or what is your hidden talent?	I love to cook and find relaxation and a sense of accomplishment when I am able to create a dish for family and friends. I rarely cook the same thing twice, and love to experiment with creative dishes that challenge me. I've been fortunate to travel all over the world and experience foods from many different cultures. This has made me gain a great appreciation for all types of food.
What do you enjoy doing in your free time?	I spend a lot of time with family and friends in my time away from work. Besides cooking (which I do a lot of when I'm not working), I also enjoy traveling and exploring new places. I don't watch a lot of TV, but my go-to's are typically documentaries. I'm not a huge reader, but my favorite author is Mitch Albom, and I find his books to be inspirational and uplifting. I am fortunate to be surrounded by amazing people who give me happiness. My wish for every athlete at SOLA is to have a positive support system that lifts you up and celebrates your successes every day!