

## Christina Wins Big at Special Olympics!

By Nicole Doucette

Athlete, self-advocate, and BACI receptionist, Christina T. returned from the National Special Olympics competition at UBC with three Gold and two Bronze medals! Christina competed in the Rhythmic Gymnastic competition, which includes four different events: Hoop, Rope, Ball and Ribbon. She received Bronze medals for both the Hoop and Rope, and Golds in Ribbon and Ball, leading to her overall Gold medal in her Division of the Rhythmic Gymnastic competition. Congratulations, Christina!

Christina got involved with Special Olympics many years ago while attending the BACI Summer Teen Program. One day at the pool, she swam a race with her close friend who was also a part of the Teen Program.



*Christina with her 5 (heavy) medals!*



*Christina on the podium with her BC teammates who swept the medals for the Rhythmic Gymnastic events!*

As it turned out, her friend's mom was the Executive Director of the Special Olympics in BC, and suggested Christina should get involved – specifically with the competitive swimming.

In the 2006 National Special Olympics in Manitoba, Christina won several Bronze and Silver medals in swimming events. However, she didn't love swimming and wanted to try something different. She switched to gymnastics, which requires flexibility, good technique and general athleticism.

Christina loves rhythmic gymnastics because of the music, the equipment and because it is great exercise. She started training twice a week after her

stunning performance in the Qualifiers and Provincial competitions, as she was able to qualify for the 2014 National Special Olympics that were held at UBC in Vancouver from July 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>.

Christina really enjoys being involved with the Special Olympics because of the outgoing coaches and volunteers, the new friends she has made within the BC team and around Canada, and the atmosphere of support and fun.



The BC Special Olympics team, which Christina describes as very close friends!

Christina's first place performance in this year's National Division B competition has qualified her to be the alternate for the Special Olympics World's competition in Los Angeles in 2015.

Good luck, Christina, in all your future competitions!

If you or someone you know is interested in participating, volunteering or coaching for the Special Olympics, you can find out more information on their website [here](#).