

Let the Games Begin! >>>

Families: Gather 'round your TV sets (sanctioned screentime!), follow #Sochi2014, root for hometown heroes, and get in on some local Olympics action right here at home. **By Melanie Baker**

All eyes will be on Sochi, Russia this February for the 22nd Winter Olympics. Over the course of the games, an estimated 2,500-plus athletes will participate in 98 events across 15 winter sports, all contending for coveted gold, silver, and bronze Olympic medals to bring home to the almost 90 qualified countries sending athletes to Sochi.

Planning for such a massive event is no easy task, and the Olympic committee behind the Sochi games has been working to make their city a winter sports wonderland since winning the bid against short-listed Salzburg, Austria and Pyeongchang, South Korea (prospective host of the 2018 games). In order to transform Sochi into an Olympic-ready world stage, 11 athletic venues were built in two clusters, mountain and coastal, to accommodate the athletes and events. The two areas are located approximately 30 minutes apart by rail, and Sochi is providing a new cluster-connecting rail service to streamline Olympic transportation.

So, which sports can you catch on the tube this February?

- Ice Hockey
- Speed Skating
- Short Track Speed Skating
- Figure Skating
- Curling
- Ski Jumping
- Nordic Combined
- Biathlon
- Skiing
- Alpine Skiing
- Freestyle Skiing
- Snowboard
- Bobsleigh
- Skeleton
- Luge

WEB ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

In 2001, two Westchester fourth-graders at Pocantico Hills School put together a website based on their knowledge about the Winter Olympics, including drawings of their favorite sports and some history of the ancient games. Old news, right? Well, the site—which has since garnered more than 2 million hits—still has a great selection of links for families. We especially recommend the two “cyberhunts” that send your kids in search of facts about the origins of the Olympic games. Go to nymetroparents.com/olympic-links.

Follow the Gold

sochi2014.com/en
nbcolympics.com
teamusa.org
facebook.com/usolympicteam
 Twitter:
[@USOlympic](https://twitter.com/USOlympic) [@Sochi2014](https://twitter.com/Sochi2014)
[@sesamestreet](https://twitter.com/sesamestreet)



Elmo and his friends on Sesame Street are gearing up for the Sochi Olympics, too, providing free digital content during the games at sesamestreet.org. Watch out for a February episode of the PBS fave featuring Olympic figure skater Evan Lysacek. For now, get your tots pumped by letting Elmo teach them a fun Team USA cheer at nymetroparents.com/sochi.

Get in the Spirit!

You might not be flying to Russia, but we've got a few standout ways to catch the Olympic spirit close by.

Beginning Feb. 1: Free Hockey on Horizon

On March 1, USA Hockey and nearly 500 local programs across the country will encourage kids ages 4 to 9 to come to a local participating rink and try youth hockey as part of **Hockey Weekend Across America**. All locations have a limited amount of equipment available for use. Beginning in February, find the closest location to you by searching your zip code and register in advance at tryhockeyforfree.com.

Feb. 1-22: Reading Olympics

You don't need to put on ice skates and ear muffs to join Wilton Library's **Reading Olympic Games**. In celebration of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, the Connecticut library challenges young, independent readers to finish two books within three weeks—or, better yet, three books, or even five books. There will be an awards ceremony on Feb. 22. Read a lot, visit often, and fill in your reading log. And if you don't live in Fairfield County, check your local library for similar programs, or challenge your kids to their own reading Olympics—you can craft medals for consistency, achievement, and effort!

Feb. 19-20: Model-Making Mini-Camp

Got a little designer on your hands? If your child was intrigued by the curves on the icy luge track or any of the other Olympic games' venues, sign him up for some serious model-making at NYC's Center for Architecture Foundation. Children in third-fifth and sixth-eighth grades who participate in Studio@theCenter will use inspiration from their favorite winter sport to create a game that others will be able to play. To register for the three-day program, visit cfafoundation.org/studio.

Feb. 23: Fans Get in on the Action

Ever wonder what the heck curling is? Well, get ready to learn—and try out your curling skills!—as the **USOC Road to Sochi Tour** makes its final stop in the heart of NYC on Feb. 23. Visit Grand Central Terminal from 2-5pm, when fans can get in on some of the action they've watched during the Olympic and Paralympic competition: In addition to the curling strip, there will be a hockey slap shot test, a ski jump and bobsled photo opportunity, a street luge ramp, a cross-country roller ski course, and more. Visit teamusa.org/roadtosochitour.

Looking Ahead: Olympic Heroes Live!

This spring, a trip to the Prudential Center or Nassau Coliseum for **Stars on Ice** will get your family up close with Olympic skaters fresh off their stint in Sochi. See Olympic ice dancing duo Meryl Davis and Charlie White soar on ice with captivating routines. Davis and White picked up silver medals at their first Olympic turn in the 2010 Vancouver games and will perhaps be touting brand new medals from their performance in Sochi. First-time Olympian and U.S. Champion Ashley Wagner will perform solo at both the New Jersey and Long Island shows. For tickets, visit starsonice.com.

Meet a Local Hero

Julie Chu, who graces *Big Apple Parent's* February cover, is competing in her fourth Olympics! Get ready to be inspired.

Julie Chu, forward on the U.S. women's ice hockey team, is headed to Sochi for her fourth Winter Olympic games, fulfilling her “dream and passion to play for her country,” says her proud mom Miriam. Chu, who hails from Fairfield, CT, will be aiming for the gold on the ice alongside her teammates, doing what she loves best. “I saw a spark in her eyes every time she put on her hockey skates,” Miriam recalls about Julie's earlier years.

We sat down with Julie and her mom for an inside look at how a hometown girl who played hockey on a youth boys' team for the sheer love of the game ends up on the world stage (let's just say family support had a heck of a lot to do with it!).

When did you realize you wanted to turn the sport you love into a career?

Julie Chu: To be honest, it wasn't until 1995 when women's hockey was announced as an Olympic sport. Before that, when I started in 1990 at 8 years old, it wasn't even a possibility. I just played because my older brother played. I liked being on a team sport and being active, and that was pretty much my world.

Your family and teammates have always supported your dreams. How has all of the love and support impacted you throughout this endeavor?

I was actually really fortunate that the boys' team I played on was so amazing, so supportive. They treated me like a hockey player, and that's what I wanted. I didn't want to be an outcast girl on the team. My family has been unbelievable, and we talk about this journey that I'm on as “our journey.” There were three kids in my house and we were allowed to make messes. We practiced hockey all over the place and played soccer in the living room and my mom just allowed it to happen.

Miriam, how do you feel about knowing you raised an Olympian?

Miriam Chu: I thank God that I have this incredible daughter and all of my kids. There's something

about [Julie] that just attracts people to her. She's selfless, she thinks about others first, and she's done that ever since she was a little kid. She's honorable and a great daughter.

Julie, what is your proudest moment from your career thus far?

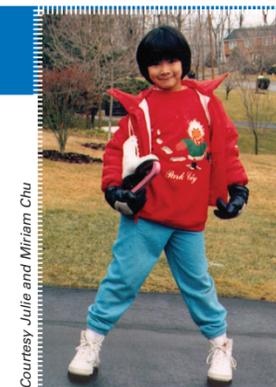
JC: I think it's just being able to make it to four Olympics. I've had amazing teammates, coaches, and my family to help me get there, but just in this day and age, I know how great our national team program is. Being able to be resilient, working hard, not being complacent—those are things our team always pushes for.

What are you most looking forward to with the Sochi games?

Getting the chance to compete and hopefully earning a gold medal. We've worked hard the last four years to be ready for this time. All that work and dedication we've done as a group is going to pay off.

Your entire family has tattoos of the Olympic rings and your hockey number, 13. Did that feel like the ultimate act of support and solidarity? Did you ever expect your parents to get tattoos?

Can I say, I never thought [my mom] would ever get a tattoo. Or my dad! I knew I wanted one, and then leading into 2002, I had just joined the national team and things were falling into place and my dad says, “If you ever make it to the Olympics, I'll get a tattoo of the Olympic rings on my arm.” And he had been so adamantly against it, and I go, “Okay, deal!” So, once I made the team he goes, “Ow, ow, ow,” and I said “What's wrong?” and he said, “I'm just getting ready for my tattoo.” What's so great is that because our



Courtesy Julie and Miriam Chu



Julie Chu, proud member of the 2014 U.S. women's hockey team and (inset) at age 7 on her way to figure-skating lessons

Courtesy NBC Olympics/USOC

family was all about hockey, my mom decided to join, as well as my brother and sister, in this amazing celebration of our family's journey. They surprised me by putting my hockey number 13 underneath [the Olympic rings].

CHU is your family motto for Commitment, Honor, and Unity, and it's also your last name. Was it a motto you all began practicing because of hockey, or have you always believed in that as a family?

I think they were values that were always there, but it wasn't until 2005 and it was because of my parents' 30th anniversary that my dad came up with it. He wanted something to signify and unite our family. They were values that were instilled in us as kids.

Did you know there are eight other athletes from the New York metro area who are competing in the Winter Olympics in Sochi this year? Find out who they are at

[>> nymetroparents.com/sochi](http://nymetroparents.com/sochi)

