

SFA Academy Celebrates Largest Graduation in School History Just Three Years After Opening

Tampa-based Mark Oliver and Strong Faith Athletics Academy mark a milestone May 23rd ceremony with 58 graduates in the school's biggest graduation yet.

TAMPA, FL, UNITED STATES, May 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Strong Faith Athletics Academy, known as [SFA Academy](#), held its largest graduation ceremony to date on May 23, 2026, a milestone that would have seemed unlikely when founder [Mark Oliver](#) opened the school's doors just three years ago. Fifty-eight graduates crossed the stage, representing the most significant class in the school's young history and a tangible sign of what Oliver set out to build when he founded SFA in 2023.



SFA Students At The Graduation Ceremony

SFA Academy is a private, dually accredited school for boys in grades six through twelve, combining rigorous academics with competitive basketball and football programs, dual enrollment options, college-readiness preparation, and personalized learning plans, all under a 12-to-1 student-to-teacher ratio. The school places a focused emphasis on college placement for student-athletes from lower-income communities, and operates one of the largest and fastest-growing Special Olympics programs in Hillsborough County.

“

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Mark Oliver, Founder, SFA Academy

"I started this academy to provide opportunities for youth

who didn't have them and didn't think they deserved them. Today 58 graduates proved that

we're on the right track, and I have no intention of slowing down."

— Mark Oliver, Founder, SFA Academy

Faith is not a backdrop at SFA Academy. It is the foundation. The school's name reflects a belief that strong faith, in oneself, in something greater, and in the potential of others, is what separates athletes who perform from young people who lead. That conviction shapes the culture on every campus, from the way coaches teach to the way students are expected to carry themselves on and off the field.

What began as a single campus has now expanded to an additional five satellite locations: Tampa, Saint Petersburg, Palm Harbor, Brandon, and Dover, serving student-athletes from across the Tampa Bay region and beyond. The school's model integrates athletic development, academic excellence, and entrepreneurial training, with a proven track record of placing graduates into colleges and universities. SFA currently offers football and basketball as its primary athletic programs, with plans to expand to track as the program continues to grow.



SFA Founder Mark Oliver

SFA Academy is part of the broader Specially Fit ecosystem, a network of programs founded by Mark Oliver that includes the Specially Fit Foundation, Oliver Estates and Specially Fit Farm, special needs group homes, and athletic training centers across the Tampa Bay region. The school's campus includes a unique inclusion component where SFA's high school student-athletes interact and train alongside participants from Specially Fit's special needs programs, the largest and fastest-growing Special Olympics team in Hillsborough County.

The May 23rd graduation marks not just a record class size but a proof of concept that a school founded on faith, athletics, and access can produce results in a compressed timeline that most institutions take decades to achieve.

About Mark Oliver

Mark Oliver is a former Division I walk-on football player at the University of South Florida, the first in his family to graduate from college, and a CrossFit athlete ranked in the top one percent nationally for five consecutive years. He is the founder and CEO of the Specially Fit Foundation, SFA Academy, Oliver Estates and Specially Fit Farm, and Olive Apartments. His work spans athletics, education, housing, and disability services, all rooted in a belief that opportunity and support can transform lives.

About SFA Academy

SFA Academy is a private, dually accredited school for boys in grades six through twelve located at 3101 Sydney Dover Road, Dover, FL 33527. Founded in 2023 by entrepreneur and philanthropist Mark Oliver, SFA combines competitive athletics, rigorous academics, and entrepreneurial development to prepare students for college and life beyond graduation. The school also operates an inclusive program for students with developmental disabilities and hosts one of the largest Special Olympics programs in Hillsborough County.

speciallyfitacademy.com

[instagram.com/markolivershow](https://www.instagram.com/markolivershow)

Media Contact:

Mirit Moon

[Moon Media Affairs](https://moonmediaaffairs.com)

moonmediaaffairs.com

813-906-0684

info@moonmediaaffairs.com

Mirit Moon

Moon Media Affairs LLC

+1 702-807-8804

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

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