



Special Olympics

Montana

Be a fan™

Spirit

Summer 2008

Special Olympics Mission

Special Olympics is a nonprofit, international program of year-round sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

Cal Berryman (left) of Butte Public Schools congratulated by Senior Patrol Agent Cherée Miller of the U.S. Border Patrol



photo by Gregg Edelen



Special Olympics
Montana

Be a fan™

If human achievement can be determined not by speed or strength but by character, then it is easy to see who the most amazing athletes really are. Special Olympics Inc., and Special Olympics Montana wish to remind all people that if they are fans of positive attributes such as dignity, pride, joy, acceptance, inclusion, determination and respect, then they are already fans of Special Olympics. In this issue of Spirit, we highlight many ways you can **Be a fan™!**

If human achievement can be determined not by speed or strength but by character, then it is easy to see who the most amazing athletes really are. Special Olympics Inc., and



photo by Pat O'Connell

President's Message



Bob Norbie at right with Great Falls Hornets athlete Jeremie Onsager wearing Knights of Columbus 4th Degree regalia.

Dear Fans,

Thank you for being a fan of Special Olympics Montana!

How significant is your support? At the recent Summer Games in Great Falls, Missoula athlete Keough Duffy ran up to me, gave me a big hug, and with confidence announced, "I feel really good about myself." When I asked why, she said, "Because everyone here treats me like I want to be."

The joy she expressed about "to be" had everything to do with "to belong." To belong for a Special Olympics Montana athlete is to be like you and me. To be treated the same. Not different, just the same.

If not for your generous support, Special Olympics athletes would not have opportunities "to be" respected and valued members of our communities – core ingredients we need "to belong."

Great Falls Hornet athlete Jeremie Onsager is one of those athletes who found a place to belong thanks to one of our sponsors, the Knights of Columbus. Pictured above in full regalia, Jeremie became a 4th Degree Knight earlier this year. As a member of this distinguished Honor and Color Guard, Jeremie is active in parades, dedications and celebrations. Belonging to communities that invite the best from us makes for a more inclusive world and enables each of us to find joy in living.

Thank you for making this possible!
With much gratitude,

Bob Norbie
President/CEO

Be a fan™ ... Honor Excellence

Athletes Serve on TIRC Advisory Board

Billings athlete Vivienne Shockley and Miles City athlete Isaac Baldry applied for and have been selected to serve on the Montana Transition Training, Information, and Resource Center (MT-TIRC) Advisory Board - through the Rural Institute at the University of Montana. As members of the Advisory Board, they will help MT-TIRC staff determine needed activities, establish priorities, develop work plans, craft products, deliver training and conduct evaluations.

They will serve an 18 month term from May 1st of this year thru October of 2009.



Above: Vivienne Shockley of Billings
Left: Isaac Baldry of Miles City

World Class Team Heads for Boise

Special Olympics World Winter Games will be held in Boise, Idaho February 6 to 13, 2009. Four athletes and two coaches will represent Montana on Team USA.

Chris Zier



Kelly Nichols



Montana Riehle



Rich Potter

Chris Zier of the Missoula YMCA and Kelly Nichols of the Bozeman Schools program will compete in alpine skiing. Zier joined Special Olympics in 2001 and also competes in basketball, soccer, and equestrian sports. Nichols competes in bowling, basketball and aquatics, as well as skiing.

Montana Riehle of the Great Falls Lions will compete in cross country skiing. A Special Olympics Montana athlete since 2004, she also competes in basketball, aquatics and gymnastics.

Rich Potter of the Missoula YMCA will represent Montana in the snowshoe events. A competitor for over a decade, Rich also enjoys equestrian, basketball and bowling.

Vanessa Browning of the Billings

Adults will be an assistant alpine coach. "When I got the letter, I couldn't believe it," said Browning. "This is the culmination of everything I've worked for in Special Olympics." Browning, a certified alpine coach for Special Olympics Montana, has volunteered since 1995. She teaches at Highland Elementary in Billings.

Chuck Kohut of the Great Falls Lions will be a cross-country skiing coach. This will be Kohut's third World



Vanessa Browning



Montana Riehle

Winter Games, having also served as assistant

coach in 1989 in Park City, Utah and in 2005 in Nagano, Japan. Kohut, a Special Olympics coach for 32 years, says "It's still fun. I especially enjoy seeing the athletes learn and improve in the sport, while developing a life time skill in cross-country skiing." Retired from Great Falls Public Schools, Kohut is a member of the Great Falls Cross Country Skiing Club.



State Basketball Tournament, Nov 6-9, Butte

Special Olympics Montana has awarded the State Basketball Tournament to the city of Butte for three consecutive years: 2008-2010. "Originally the annual November tournament was going to be held in Havre, but the athlete numbers jumped to 600. Numbers are still climbing and have caused a lodging shortage in that community," says Dave Snuggs, VP of Sports & Competition. The tournament's Premier Sponsor, Town Pump, is eager to welcome the event to its home-

town corporate headquarters in Butte. Approximately 650 athletes and 180 coaches who represent over 50 teams are expected to participate. "We are thrilled," said Maureen Kenneally, Town Pump spokesperson and the tournament's Honorary Chairwoman. "Opportunities like this bring together the best of humanity as we serve the greater good."



State Summer Games ... Back to Bozeman May 13-15, 2009



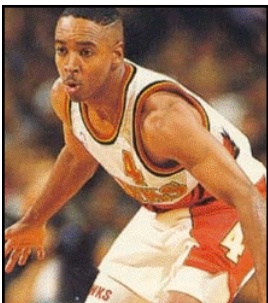
The Special Olympics Montana State Summer Games move between Billings, Missoula, Great Falls and Bozeman on a three-year rotation. For 2009-2011, the Games return to Bozeman where most events are hosted by Montana State University. Attendance is expected to set records when more than 1000 athletes and hundreds of coaches from 75-80 teams across Montana are joined by friends, family members and supportive fans to celebrate the joy that is uniquely Special Olympics.

Whitefish for Winter 2009

Special Olympics Montana will conduct its State Winter Games February 22-24, at the Whitefish Mountain Resort on the Big Mountain. 2009 marks the fourteenth consecutive year that the State Winter Games have been held at Whitefish Mountain Resort. Over 300 athletes and Unified Sports® partners from 23 teams are expected to compete. Competitions include alpine skiing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing and snowboarding. Floor hockey is also scheduled.



Dinner With Spud Web



Spud Web

Spud Webb began playing basketball at an early age and dreamed of being in the NBA. Although he was much smaller, he could always jump higher than the bigger kids. Webb, the 5' 7" Slam Dunk Champion, shares his amazing story during two evenings in the "Dinner With Champions" series presented by First Interstate BancSystem. The events take place at the Holiday Inn convention centers on Monday, September 8th in Billings and Tuesday, September 9th in Bozeman. The fundraiser benefits Special Olympics Montana athletes. Call Ryan Acra at 800-242-6876 before September 1 to make reservations. For more info visit www.somt.org.

Leadership Conference

Calling all Athletes, Area Directors, Coaches, Volunteers, Family Members and Fans! Set aside September 19-21 for a trip to Great Falls and plan to join the Special Olympics Montana staff for a fun and informative weekend of training, education, updates and inspiration.

Conference highlights:

- Hands-on training for athletes in photography; becoming Global Messengers; bocce demonstration.
- Level II and IV coaches training in athletics with Joe Ouert, long-time Special Olympics coach. Ouert attended World Games in both Ireland and North Carolina as a Team USA athletics coach. Level II bocce training also offered.
- Area Directors annual meeting
- Information and general sessions for families and volunteers

Registration materials available beginning August 15, 2008

Distinguished Service Awards Banquet

Special Olympics has come a long way since its inception in 1968. The 2008 Distinguished



Service Awards Banquet will take a lighthearted look back at such iconic 60's treasures as Laugh-In, Mod Squad, the art of tie-dye, the race to the moon and other groovy themes. Break out the peace signs and join the celebration Saturday, September 21 from 6-9pm for dinner, entertainment and honoring the 2008-09 DSA recipients. Register at www.somt.org.

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State Summer Games 2008

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State Winter Games 2008

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Our apologies to any donors or sponsors who may have been overlooked in this acknowledgement.

2008 State Sum

photo by Gregg Edelen



photo by Pat O'Connell

Pulling Together

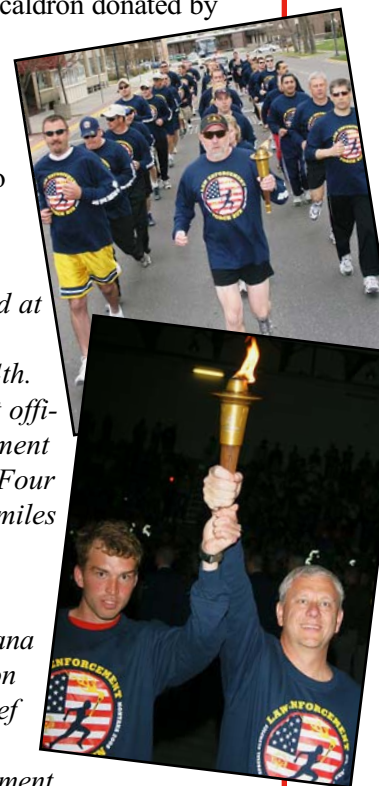
Unified Sports® partner Brandon Miller (left) teams up with Special Olympics athlete Ricky Ray Puzon (right) for the kayaking competitions.

Law Enforcement Torch Run

Thanks to the effort of over six hundred law enforcement officers from across beautiful Big Sky Country, Montana's Law Enforcement Torch Run® delivered the *Flame of Hope* on time for the Opening Ceremonies of the 2008 Special Olympics State Summer Games May 14th in Great Falls. This year's Torch Run relay events raised over \$60,000 for Special Olympics Montana and culminated with the lighting of a brand new caldron donated by Pacific Steel. Together with Law Enforcement Torch Run® Polar Plunges and other local events, LETR expects to raise over \$300,000 for SOMT in 2008.

The Final Leg gathered at the Great Falls Police Department on May 14th. All 55 law enforcement officers pounded the pavement in cadence toward the Four Seasons Arena for 1.5 miles of smiling, waving and singing.

Special Olympics Montana Athlete-of-the-Year Anton Veverka and retired Chief Rusty Wickman, of the Missoula Police Department



photos by Gregg Edelen

Be a fan™ ... Come to Bozeman

Summer Games, Great Falls Montana

May 14-16, 2008

photo by Pat O'Connell



photo by Gregg Edelen



BRYCE HAS ALWAYS LOOKED UP TO HIS LITTLE BROTHER.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS MONTANA

Weston (left) and Bryce Widhalm (right), Great Falls Lions athlete and Unified Partner©, lend their enthusiasm to the 2008 State Summer Games ad campaign produced by Wendt of Great Falls.



photo by Gregg Edelen

New Caldron Unveiled



photo by Gregg Edelen

Pacific Steel and Recycling of Great Falls donated time and materials to create a spectacular new Special Olympics caldron for the *Flame of Hope*. Design work originated with SOMT parent Tom Lyons. The caldron, made of aluminum that breaks into parts, was fabricated and finished with donated labor and materials from Pacific Steel, Gerbers, First Avenue Auto Body and Breen Oil Company. "This will make it much easier to transport," says Ron Hayes, director of marketing at Pacific Steel.

High Street Band

With hot colors and cool tunes, the High Street Band kept the stands jumping at Opening Ceremonies of the 2008 State Summer Games. Band members say on their web site, "It was terrific! The athletes and families were very supportive of each other." The band wrote and performed a new song for Special Olympics called, "Someone Special." The recording is available at www.highstband.com.



Wellness Park Offers Free Health Screenings

350 athletes attended Wellness Park at the State Summer Games where they received free screening and health information at ten venues including: Special Smiles, Fit Feet, Healthy Hearing, Tobacco Free, Hydration, Strong Bones, FUNfitness, Sun Safety, Nutrition, and First Aid. A total of 79 health care professionals from around the state volunteered their time and expertise to staff the various booths.

Thanks to a generous grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Nina Smith from Helena has been independently contracted as Healthy Athletes Coordinator. Smith has begun exploring options for expanding the

Wellness Park to both the State Basketball Tournament and the State Winter Games, as well as to various area games.



Photo courtesy of Nina Smith: SuperTooth fights decay with a little help from friends. To learn more about Wellness Park and the Healthy Athletes initiative, visit www.somt.org.

Come to Bozeman in 2009 ... Be a fan™

Be a fan™ ... Volunteer

Training Camps

October 2007 focused new emphasis on coaches' training with the introduction of two-day training camps as a way to bridge the wide open spaces of Montana and maximize attendees' time. Training camps offer Level II and Level IV training in one weekend, giving coaches an opportunity for a significant jump in certification.

Soccer training camp met in Missoula on what turned out to be a rare balmy weekend in April. Red Lodge hosted the alpine skiing camp in January and basketball camp met last October at the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind in Great Falls.



The Sports & Training department plans more training camps for the future including athletics at the Fall Leadership Conference in Great Falls. Watch your mailbox for announcements, check the calendar on the web site or call the office for more information.

If you would like to host a training camp in your area, call Risë Pelloni at 800-242-6876 for information.



SOMT Volunteer Experience Helps Land Job

At age 13, Great Falls coach Kristi Anderson never imagined her initial step into Special Olympics would impact her life quite as much as it has. "Reg Heikkila recruited me to be a Unified Sports® Partner when I was in 8th grade. I was pretty sure I wouldn't enjoy myself, but here I am ten years later, coaching everything! I fell in love with Special Olympics and it has been an unbelievable and unimaginable experience!"

Great Falls Public Schools values this experience quite highly as well. Kristi was recently hired as a Great Falls High School special education teacher and according to Special Education

Director Sharon Lindstrom, "Kristi's ten years experience with Special Olympics was a definitive factor in our decision to hire her. Our selection committee viewed that as a very valuable asset."



Kristi Anderson with Special Olympics athlete Jamie Darko of the Great Falls Hornets.

Great Falls Schools "Adopt" Teams

"The Adopt-a-Team benefits are huge ... community spirit, character building, involvement make our kids better able to accept all kinds of people," said Donna Jacobson-Baker at North Middle School. Her classroom was among the Great Falls school groups who 'adopted' Special Olympics teams attending the 2008 State Summer Games.

Adopt-a-Team is a project developed by Special Olympics Montana to heighten sensitivity and awareness during statewide events.

Early in 2008, educators across Great Falls initiated 'adoptions' by their classrooms. During the Games, students met with their teams and cheered them on during Opening Ceremonies and competition. Students received a Games t-shirt emblazoned with a special logo: *My School Adopted a Team.*

According to Sasha Moore at Roosevelt Elementary, "The kids got to feel what it was like to do something for someone else – a great experience." Her fourth graders had a bake sale to help purchase snacks, drinks and friendship bracelets for their team.

Following three years of involvement by his student council students, Loy Elementary educator Ben Jaques

shared his enthusiasm: "This program is fantastic and should be continued wherever the games are held."

The Adopt-a-Team project moves to Bozeman for State Summer Games 2009.



Parent Jennifer Gooldy with students from Roosevelt Elementary School

Protective Behaviors Training

Protective Behaviors Training is available online and can be completed in about 10-20 minutes. All Class A volunteers must complete the new training by December 2008. Visit www.specialolympics.org or www.somt.org to complete.

Be a fan™ ... Contribute Financially

Fraternal Order of Eagles Helps SOMT Soar

Special Olympics Montana received a \$31,313.60 donation from the Montana Fraternal Order of Eagles at their recent state convention and awards banquet in Kalispell. Special Olympics Kalispell athlete and Global Messenger, Chrissy Siefke received the donation on behalf of Special Olympics Montana and had this to say: "The Fraternal Order of Eagles are made up of people who really care about us. I'm so happy that they would donate all this money so 2,000 athletes like me in Montana can train and compete in sports." Bob Norbie, Special

Olympics Montana President/CEO echoed those sentiments commenting, "Just as athletes inspire all of us to do our best, the Fraternal Order of Eagles has given above and beyond anything we could have possibly imagined."



Plunge!

Polar Plunges are a cool way for people with warm hearts to support Special Olympics! Over \$200,000 has been raised during Montana's 2008 Law Enforcement Torch Run® Polar Plunges.

Upcoming plunges:

- * Great Falls Polar Bear Plunge, Central & 3rd St during Christmas Stroll, Dec 5th, 2008
- * Stillwater Polar Bare Plunge, Columbus, MT, Beartooth Ford, Dec 4th, 2008
- * Billings Polar Bare Plunge, Lake Elmo, Dec 6th, 2008

Visit www.somt.org for complete event schedule.

Bid!

The annual *World of Winners* On-Line Auction takes place November 17-21, 2008. Place your bids at www.somt.org for the chance to win awesome prizes and the satisfaction of helping Special Olympics Montana serve more athletes with quality programs.

Buy!

Purchase your tickets for the 15th Annual Bresnan Communications/Chevy Raffle tickets from Special Olympic athletes, volunteers and participating sponsors beginning in September and running through the 2009 State Summer Games in Bozeman, May 13-15. See the web site for ticket outlets.

Donate!

Check with your Area Directors and local programs for specific equipment, materials and merchandise they need. The state office of SOMT currently has the following items on its wish list:

- Digital Camera
- Commercial Vacuum Cleaner
- Carpet Cleaning Services

Badlands Bowl – All Star Event



photo courtesy of Kathy Sampson



On the Move Photography/Kara Phillips

2009 Badlands Bowl. Kathy Sampson, SOMT Board member and parent of a

Montana all-star player, was in Miles City and writes:

"Isaac Baldry, the young Special Olympics athlete who gave the opening comments on behalf of SOMT at the BBQ

Friday night, was incredible. He had the athletes in awe with his courage and excitement as he explained his appreciation for the support of the players and Knights of Columbus in supporting Special Olympics. His mom is the coordinator of the Miles City area. He received a standing ovation. Shaun (my son) was right in front and got to experience this young man's emotions and courage first hand. A gift to my son for sure!"

Football is not a

Special Olympics sport but for the past 15 years, the Knights of Columbus and the communities of Miles City, MT and Dickinson, ND have made Special Olympics a priority. Annually in June, 34 all-star high school football players from each state meet on the gridiron to raise money for Special Olympics athletes. Miles City hosted the 2008 event June 21, and due to field renovations at Dickinson State will also host the



N.E.W. Customer Service Companies, Inc., 2006-08 State Summer Games Premier Sponsor, provided unwavering support. From left to right: Ray Zukowski, Sr VP Customer Experience, N.E.W.; Jerry Ask and Aaron Borino, Bitterroot Stars athletes; Beth McFadden, VP Communication Center Operations, N.E.W.; Fred Schaufeld, Founder & Chairman, N.E.W.

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Special Olympics
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