

Giuseppe Montemurri: Global Family Leader Europe Eurasia



I am the very proud father of Filippo, a 26 year old Athlete currently involved in basketball, football and bowling, after having been a very good swimmer since he was 6 years old. My wife Patrizia and I have been involved as Special Olympics family members for the past 15 years. We got involved when we were looking for a pool where Filippo could swim, and a Team that could help him not only to increase his talent but also to teach him the true values of sport.

Special Olympics was a real revelation to us and we understood soon the opportunities this Movement can provide both for Athletes and for families. This is the reason why we decided to actively cooperate with Special Olympics Italy in order to help families to understand the great potential of their children.

I still remember the day we went to the Down Syndrome People Association shortly after Filippo was born. On that day we met a mother who gave us a great message of hope and concreteness: “your kid will be terrific if you will help him in the right way” was the sense of her speech. Over the years we have understood that she was right and seen how families can give a true, real support to other families of people with intellectual disabilities. So, my wife and I committed ourselves to gather more and more families, to participate as volunteers and to get in touch with organizations and association to bring them near Special Olympics.

As Family coordinator I took advantage of my experience in Organization to create an efficient Family Support Network all over Italy.

I developed the program with these goals:

- to choose in each Italian Region a “regional Family coordinator” who could locally improve the Family program, and in each Team adhering to Special Olympics a “Team Family coordinator” in order to reach most of families;
- to organize a program to constantly get in touch with families;
- to promote the diffusion of information and documents for families, creating and participating both in sports and/or specific events and participating in efforts to foster the inclusion in the Society of people with intellectual disabilities;
- to help families to be proud of their children, of their talents and of the efforts they daily do
- to find the best ways to increase the number of families involving them actively as volunteers, fundraisers, to act as links with institutions, media and so on;



- to establish links with associations and organization working in the area of intellectual disabilities
- to organize National and local Family Campus to join families and help them to share information and their problems, but also their enthusiasm and feeling of belonging

At present our Family Network is very proactive in organizing events, meetings, conferences, contacts with media and institutions and my feeling is that we are increasing our enthusiasm and wish of participating and acting.

As Global Family Leader my goals are to cooperate with Special Olympics International to develop the Family Support Network, to recruit more and more Families into Special Olympics, to improve Programs such as the Young Athletes and Athlete Leadership programs and to share and witness my past experiences.

I am convinced that there is a lot of work to do because we should understand that speaking about inclusion we have to fight not only to include our children into the Society but also to make people understand that they have to include themselves with persons with intellectual disabilities too. They don't have to "accept" our children: they have to recognize them as members of the Society for all intents and purposes.

Giuseppe (Pino) Montemurri