



Sport of the Month



December

This month's theme: **inclusion**

Goals:

- Students will understand the meaning of *inclusiveness* and *acceptance*.
- Students will understand how including others positively impacts their community.
- Students will recognize how excluding others negatively impacts their community.
- Students will be able to identify ways in which they can promote inclusion and acceptance.

Alpine Skiing in Special Olympics

Alpine skiing is a demanding sport, and athletes must be in good physical condition to compete successfully and safely. Also called downhill skiing, alpine skiing requires endurance, strength, and quickness. Special Olympics offers cross-country skiing as well.

How do Special Olympics activities impact students? Here's how one teacher answered:

"Some of the most positive outcomes came through the students working together."

Week 1:

Ask students to close their eyes and think about their school. Have them answer the following questions:

- If you were asked to describe your school using three words, what words would you choose?
- What does the school look like when you see it from the street, as you enter it, and as you move from place to place?
- How does your school look different now than it did on your first day?
- How might it look different once you've graduated?
- What aspects of the school make it unique?

Next, challenge students to draw, photograph, or videotape a "picture" of their school from their own perspective. (You may wish to give students time to walk around the school.) Have students present the images they've created. Did any students create the exact same image? Ask students: How can people who go to the same school see it from completely different perspectives? If you were to give the school a grade related to your own picture of it, what grade might you give and why?





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Week 2:

Take Action!

- Create a Partners Club—a school-based club that brings together high school students with Special Olympics athletes. The students train for different sports together and may also spend time enjoying social activities, too. Join in! To learn more, visit <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>.

Begin by reminding your students about the Week 1 discussion and have a brief few minutes to refresh your students' memories about the images they developed. Now ask students to think about how their school may "look" to someone with an intellectual disability. You may want to review the definition of intellectual disability: someone who has a lower IQ, has limitations in the skills needed for daily living, and who shows these traits as a child.

Now ask your students the following:

- What three words might students with intellectual disabilities use to describe the school?
- Would the classrooms look the same to someone with an intellectual disability?
- What about the cafeteria? The gym? The other kids?

Week 3:

Gather your students and, after a brief reminder about the value of inclusion and acceptance, explain how to play Frozen Bean Bag. Here's how it works: All players have a bean bag that they balance on their head. Students walk around the designated playing area trying not to drop their bean bags. If a student drops his bean bag, he is frozen. To be freed, another player must try to replace the bean bag on the frozen student's head without dropping her own bean bag.

Have your students lead this activity for a younger group of students. When the game is finished, have your students lead a discussion of how this activity related to the ideas of inclusion and acceptance. Point out that students benefited when everyone helped each other, rather than just certain friends and classmates helping.

—adapted from *Get Into It!*



December events:

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Week 4:



Program Spotlight: Movies That Move

The Movies That Move project, designed through a partnership between Special Olympics Project UNIFY® and Film Clips for Character Education, uses clips from popular films and TV shows to spark meaningful discussion in the classroom. The four themes explored on the Movies That Move DVD include

- different abilities
- the power of words
- acceptance
- youth leadership

To request a free DVD with the Movies That Move film clips, visit <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>.

Motivate your students to make their school and community more inclusive for people with intellectual disabilities. A good place to get started is at the Wall of Face found at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>. Invite students to watch several of the videos. Then, using their journals, have them answer the questions that the Special Olympics athletes answered, except change Special Olympics to just “sports.” For example, why were you inspired to first get into sports? Why do you continue to participate? Students can interview one another, then compare and contrast their answers to those of the Special Olympics athletes. How are the sentiments the same? Are students surprised by this? What other questions would they ask the athletes if they could?

