

THE STORIES

TEAM HONG KONG

A Supportive Father

Mr. C. Greig comes from Sidney, Australia. His son, 24, took part in gymnastics at the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games and Mr. C. Greig came to support him, acting as a family member. Greig's son has competed in Special Olympics for 10 years. Apart from gymnastics, his son is also a swimming, bowling and tennis athlete. He always takes part in local competitions held by Special Olympics and this is the first time that he had the honor to join in such a large, international event. Greig's son had finished all his gymnastics events and Greig didn't know his result. It is because, in his opinion, we should not focus on the result but what effort he had made in the competition. Greig went to the venue to support his son when he competed and his son has done very well this time. He feels very happy and is proud of him.

Regarding the feeling of Special Olympics, he claimed that sport is good for everybody, including people with mental retardation. This is also an invaluable chance for people with mental retardation, letting them show off their talents and get respect from others. Sometimes his son may feel upset, and Greig he will joke with him and make him happy again. Greig also said that all is excellent in Special Olympics and that he hopes more people can join in, not only athletes, but also more volunteers.

Lastly, Greig would like to thank the employer of his son since he let him take leave to come to the Games. He admitted that his son is very lucky. This makes us feel that support from society, not only their family members, is also essential for the athletes. In this case, if the employer of Greig's son hadn't approved his leave, he couldn't join the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games and would have lost an opportunity to exchange his experience with others he had never met before. Therefore, all members in the community should support people with mental retardation. It's fantastic.



TEAM MISSOURI

Imagine learning a new sport at summer camp and then being picked to go to World Games. When the tennis coach informed Rebecca's mother that she was going to be going to World Games for individual skills in tennis her mother was quite surprised. However, watching her compete in the individual competition today, one would have thought that Rebecca had been holding a tennis racket since she was old enough to be in Special Olympics.

Rebecca was very serious and focused in her final competition today. She was very adamant about doing her very best. Rebecca has participated in Special Olympics for track and field and bowling as well as tennis and says that she cannot tell what her favorite one is.

Rebecca feels like the best thing about World Games has been Collin Farrel and getting an autograph from Maria Shriver on the back of her name tag. Rebecca's family is here supporting her at World Games and she is glad that they are very proud of her. Her coach refers to her as a "giggle box," especially in the dormitory.

Rebecca has been staying at the Kings Hospital, which is the oldest boarding school in Ireland. She says that she especially likes the potatoes they serve there.

"My favorite part about getting back and forth from the events is being able to have my own taxi driver, David, who takes me everywhere I need to go," says Rebecca.

According to her coach, Kathy Meyer, "Rebecca is so motivated and focused she has done an unbelievable job learning how to do her tennis skills. She has improved the most of all of the tennis players. I am so proud of her. Every day I have watched her get better."



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TEAM TENNESSEE

Have you ever met someone or saw something that totally changed you? Well, that is what happened to Carlos Fernandes. Carlos is the Chairman of Special Olympics Peru. He has not always been involved with Special Olympics, but all it took was a video. Carlos was in the marketing department when he worked for Coca-Cola. He was in charge of sponsoring huge events that held fundraisers. His sister was the first person to ever mention Special Olympics to him. He told her it sounded good and he would like to hear more. They were having a huge conference and there was a video shown about Special Olympics. The video had the song, "One Moment in Time," playing in the background. He said, "When the video was over I was crying like a baby in the back of the room." From then on Special Olympics has been a part of his life and will continue to be forever. I asked Carlos how we can spread Special Olympics. And he simply replied, "All you have to do is talk about it, because once someone hears it they fall in love with it forever." "I also practice athletics, winning many medals as well. I have won a gold and a silver medal in Emirates, two gold and two silver in Qatar, three gold and three bronze in Morocco, and a gold and a bronze medal in Lebanon. My favorite athlete is Talal Mansour.



TEAM JAPAN

フットボールをしていて嫌な事は何も無い」こう話すのはAlex Garciaさん、7月に誕生日を迎える15歳です。彼には9人姉妹、8人兄弟がいて、彼はその末っ子ですでおじさんです。彼は大家族に生まれましたが、皆働くが、結婚しているので、現在食事の時などは彼1人だそうです。

彼は養護学校に通っていて、4年前にここで紹介されてスペシャルオリンピックスに参加しました。彼は小さい頃からスポーツが好きで、現在スペシャルオリンピックスではバスケットボール・フットボール・フロアホッケーのプログラムに参加しています。そして、「これが初めてのワールドゲームだけど、世界に行けるのがうれしい。そしてダブリンでは、女の子がとってもかわいい。きれいな人が多いよ。」と語っています。

彼は今回フットボールにエントリーしていますが、バスケットボールの方が好きなんだそうです。今回のワールドゲームでは、フットボールのコーチが彼の事をスカウトしました。コーチは彼について「彼はシュートとキックが得意で、今まで出会った中で一番技術力のあるアスリートです。特に彼にキック力は強くて、なおかつコントロールも出来てで、点数がよく取れる。現在彼のポジションはディフェンス。」と語っています。また彼も将来の目標について「将来はフットボールを子供たちに教えるコーチになりたい。僕のコーチのようにになりたい。」と語っています。そして、フットボールをしている時に嫌な事は何も無いと断言しているので、きっと今の彼はフットボールも大好きなんだと感じました。

彼らはインタビューの直後14:30から3位決定戦をします。それについて尋ねた所、「(相手は)ナミビアだよ。もう僕たちはゲームにやる気満々。僕は100点シュートを決めるよ。もし勝てたら、今夜はみんなで大喜び・大騒ぎ、パーティーさ。それから、お母さんと学校の先生に電話で結果を報告したい。」と頼もしい返事を返してくれました。そして、「インタビューされた気分はどう?」という質問には「すごく重要な人(有名人)になったような気持ちだよ。大会のためにフットボールをやって来て、ここダブリンでインタビューしてもらえた事がとても嬉しい。」と言ってくれました。そして最後に2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games Nagano Japanについて尋ねた所、「今そのためにフロアホッケーをやっているよ。また代表になって日本にも、行きたいと思っている。」と既に2005年の世界大会へ行く気満々である事を示してくれました。

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TEAM EGYPT

The Medal Collector

We have seen many great champions in Special Olympics who won many medals and honored their countries. Adnan A. Al Sharshani is one of these champions.

"I am an athlete from Special Olympics Qatar. I am 23 years old. I have two brothers and two sisters. My father is a policeman. I work in a wood workshop.

"I have been involved in Special Olympics since 1996. I play football. My position in football is defender. My favorite football players are Roberto Carlos and Ronaldo. I won a silver medal in North Carolina at the 1999 Special Olympics World Summer Games.

"One of my hobbies is to play the piano, because I like music very much.

"My ambition is to marry and to be responsible for a family. Special Olympics has given me the opportunity to travel to other countries, learn about their cultures, meet new people and have more friends."

In my opinion Special Olympics has given him self-confidence and made him feel that he is important and famous.

TEAM NAMIBIA

Soccer Coach Muyunda

Global Youth Summit participants from Namibia Chantal Van Wyk (13) in blue and Freda Kambangula (14) interviewing Soccer Coach Raymond Muyunda (Picture taken by Charles Nyambe)

Originating from the North of Namibia in the Caprivi Region but currently working in the capital city of Namibia, Windhoek is Special Olympics Namibia's head soccer coach, Raymond Muyunda. Thirty-one-year-old Raymond born on 15 June 1972 and has been involved in Special Olympics for four years now. Raymond comes from a family of 10, with five male and five female. He is a sports assistant teacher at the Windhoek International School and enjoys playing and coaching soccer.

Raymond was first introduced to Special Olympics when he was nominated to attend an initiative "A" training in track and field in Special Olympics. Upon completion of this course he has been enjoying every moment of Special Olympics. He has, however, met a few difficulties in coping with Special Olympics and still has to meet his day-to-day duties at his workplace, but that has not limited him from doing his best.

During his short experience in Ireland, he is very happy with how the people of Ireland have been hospitable and the beautiful green landscape. His soccer team has pleased him considering that the athletes had to acclimatize from the cold and dry Namibian weather to the wet and mild Irish weather. Raymond has been giving long warm-up sessions to his squad before every game played considering that temperatures have been quite low. Consequently athletes needed much more time to be ready.

Global Youth Summit Partner Freda Kambangula attends Raymond's after-school soccer sessions in Namibia and is so proud to be represented by his coach in Dublin.



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TEAM PARAGUAY

Entre las Raquetas

Gustavo Fuentes de Venezuela tiene 17 años y practica tenis de mesa desde hacen 3 años, comenzó jugando cuando era pequeño en cualquier mesa de la casa.

Los profesores que lo acompañan son Juan Carlos y Vicente Arangure.

Estas son sus primeras Olimpiadas Mundiales, dice que empezó en este año, entró a las preliminares y clasificó, conoció Olimpiadas Especiales por medio de un profesor que se llama Ramon Santana, y que le agrada estar en Olimpiadas Especiales porque le brinda buenas experiencias como por ejemplo esta de estar en Ireland participando de estos juegos.

Tiene ya una medalla de oro en el individual y en grupo una de bronce. Lo que más le gusta de Ireland es que la gente no hace diferencia de raza y que todos los países sean de donde sean se lleva bien.

El vive con su mamá y con su hermano de 19 años que ya está casado y Gustavo está feliz porque va a ser tío. Dice que le gustan los animales y tiene un perro que se llama Chon Alberto. Nos contó también que su padre ha fallecido en el año 1998, pero que él lo recuerda siempre.

En su tiempo libre juega a las cartas (solitario, ajedrez, teinta y uno, y también juega guerra), también cuando escucha música Pop sus cantantes favoritas son Laura Pausini, Avril Lavigne, Shakira, Mebarak y Paulina Rubio.

Su hobby es jugar al ajedrez. Sus comidas favoritas son: las arepas, los tequenos, las empanadas, la carne mechada, la carne molida y le gusta acompañar con un rico refresco.

Es una persona muy deportista, juega basquet, fútbol, y el que más le gusta es el volley.

Estudia herrería que lo conoció por medio de una doctora, los sábados va al colegio IRFA es un colegio para adultos especiales y lo que más le gusta del colegio son los profesores porque son bien cheveres (Buena onda).

Nos contó además que tiene una novia que también vino a Ireland con la delegación de su país y su deporte es el balón mano (handball) ella es María Esmeralda y tiene 18 años y está con ella recién desde hace una semana, ella es blanca de cabello negro y largo, ojos de color marrón claro, mide más o menos 1.60m; y él es moreno de cabello negro, ojos de color marrón oscuro y mide más o menos 1.80m.

Su mensaje para el mundo es que:

“LUCHEN POR LO QUE QUIEREN PORQUE SOLO ASI LLAGARAN A DONDE UNO QUIERE.”

29 JUNE

TEAM ALASKA

He's the Tiger Woods of Bowling

Eric Foo's goal is to become a professional bowler. With his gold medal win in the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Dublin, Ireland, this week, he could be a step closer to that goal.

The 15-year-old from Singapore has been involved in Special Olympics for four years now. His life revolves around bowling, he said.

"Always during my free time I head to the bowling center to practice or play for fun," Eric said. "I am very focused on bowling."

Eric's scores usually range about 160-170. He practiced twice a week to prepare for the World Games.

"All I wanted in the world was a gold medal for bowling at the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Ireland," he said. "My advice to anyone who wants to get a gold medal is to keep trying, and do your best."

Eric goes to a special school in Singapore where he takes all his core classes. He lives with his mom, dad and older brother. His parents are extremely supportive of him and his bowling career. At home, they often come to his competitions to watch and cheer him on. He says the weather in Singapore now is very hot. He has especially enjoyed the cool Irish weather and the friendly people.

His coach supports his goal to be a professional bowler. "He's just as good as anyone else and could easily participate in a club for bowling," Coach David P. Ang told Scholastic News Online. "He has what it takes to go all the way."

Passion for Football

Hours of practice, a good attitude, and a passion for playing football brought the Barbados coach's attention to Joseph C. Browne in 1995 when he was playing with some friends at school. The coach invited Joe to join Special Olympics. At the time, Joe was not aware of the organization, and was excited to play the game of football with organized rules. Now, because of his continued practice, he is a member of the Special Olympics Barbados team.

During our interview with Joe, he remarked that he has made many friends while playing and competing. Joe has won several medals in his country for football, but "Never have I won the gold," he said. Special Olympics Barbados was to compete on Sunday against Special Olympics China for the Gold. His team mates gathered around Joe as we interviewed him, showing their united excitement and infectious enthusiasm. Besides football, Joe also trained and participated in the aquatics and athletics events, but only locally.

Joe, 24, has one brother and sister who come to his Games. He lives with his mom and works every day. When going to high school he attended a separate school for students with special needs for 12 years. After completing his required subjects, he attended a learning center to acquire the training to gain work maturity skills.

"My first full time job was in Canada where I worked as field labor for six months on a tobacco farm," he said. I came back here (Barbados) in 1999 and got help to get a job that stays close to home. I missed my family and friends too much." His coach was glad to have him back on the football team and he has been playing with the same passion he displayed the first time he joined the group.

Joseph now works on construction sites as a labourer, mostly helping with masonry work. He loves pizza and still sees his friends from high school. In fact, some play on the team.

His favorite things about Ireland? "Everything!" What will he do when he gets back to Barbados? "I will work hard at training in football and I might be lucky enough to get another scholarship in the future to go to World Games again."



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