

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

SPECIAL OLYMPICS
1325 G Street, N.W.
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Washington, DC 20005

FAMILIES AROUND THE WORLD

"I have new heroes and they are the parents of persons with mental retardation. They demanded that their children be treated like other children. They said, my children are of value. In 10 or 15 years, we are going to have millions of athletes in Special Olympics around the world and the parents are going to say to everybody, "We won."

Eunice Kennedy Shriver
Founder & Honorary Chair of Special Olympics

"Family is important for the athlete to make him or her stronger. They are the engine of Special Olympics and as more families become involved, more involved will be the athlete. It is important that families be present at all events to provide encouragement and share the joy."

Álvaro Miranda
Special Olympics Peru
Special Olympics International Global Messenger

"Special Olympics provides a lifetime role for families through the Family Support Network and its global community—sharing critical information and fellowship."

Sister of Special Olympics Athlete
Special Olympics Uganda

"Special Olympics has so inspired me by its originality and the happiness that emanates from this program that I wanted to invest my time as a "families" volunteer."

Mother of Special Olympics Athlete
Special Olympics France

"Having a brother with Down syndrome has taught me to accept and appreciate the differences in people. Everyone has value. People with disabilities are awesome."

Younger brother (age 12) of Special Olympics Athlete
Special Olympics Illinois (USA)

"My experience taught me ... that the real disability is that of a human being who is unable to use his abilities to provide a more fulfilling life for people with mental retardation."

Father of Special Olympics Athlete
Special Olympics Egypt

"As his mother, I will care for him the rest of his life, and he deserves the same opportunities as others."

Mother of Special Olympics Athlete
Special Olympics China

FUNDED THROUGH THE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS OF KIM SAMUEL-JOHNSON AND THE SAMUEL FAMILY FOUNDATION.

The Family Support Network provides a programmatic structure in which Special Olympics families reach out to new families to welcome them into the Special Olympics community. Family Support Network objectives—to support families, to develop partnerships with community organizations, to train new Family Leaders—all contribute to Special Olympics' primary goal of increasing the number of athletes participating in the movement worldwide.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS
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Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation for the Benefit of Persons with Mental Retardation.



FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

Through my sons ... I have learned what is important in life.

Through my sons ... I have made wonderful friends who see me for what I am.

Through my sons ... I have become part of the Special Olympics Family Support Network which allows me to give support to others in a similar situation.

Through my sons ... I feel that I am making a contribution to society.

Through my sons ... I have been blessed.

Patricia Hickey
Family Leader, Special Olympics Ireland



Special Olympics

5/03



Special Olympics

A RAY OF HOPE, A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD

FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

When parents learn that their newborn or expected child has mental retardation, they are often faced with a crisis of conscience. In an instant, the joy and anticipation that these parents were experiencing turns into anxious questioning: What does the future hold for my child? What can we do? How will we cope?

Then they tell us how Special Olympics delivered a ray of hope.

Through year-round sports training and athletic competition, Special Olympics builds self-esteem, fosters courage and teaches valuable lessons about striving, winning, losing and trying again. A recent Yale University study found that athletes participating in Special Olympics benefit from:

- Improved physical fitness and sports skills
- Enhanced self-confidence and social competency
- Greater readiness for employment
- Better preparation for independent living
- Increased ability to make personal decisions
- Improved friendships and family relationships

Through Special Olympics, more than a million athletes — and their families — are discovering that a bright future lies ahead.

The Family Support Network is based on the premise that the family members of present and future Special Olympics athletes are valuable and have an important role to play in Special Olympics outreach. The Family Support Network connects Special Olympics families with new families of a child with an intellectual disability and provides supportive links and information.

Using traditional and multimedia outreach methods, Special Olympics forms a supportive global community of families with a common experience.

The Family Support Network creates opportunities for family members to:

- Become advocates for the Special Olympics movement;
- Match Families to share ideas, issues and common interests;
- Volunteer in their loved ones' athletic training; and
- Encourage new families who can benefit from Special Olympics to join.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

Yes! I would like to learn more about the Family Support Network. Please contact me.
I am a (please mark applicable boxes):

- Athlete Family Member
 Care giver Special Olympics Staff
 Community Partner Volunteer

Family Name _____ First Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State/Province _____ Country _____ Zip/Postal Code _____
 Telephone _____
 Fax _____
 E-mail _____



Special Olympics

Visit www.specialolympics.org or email family@specialolympics.org for more information.