

Mira Morsi: Representing Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region



Mira Morsi: Am 44 years old and a mother of a child with ID, slow learner. Omar is 17 years old now; he is an equestrian, aquatics (swimming) and football athlete. He also plays Drums and another Egyptian musical instrument named Tabla.

When he was born, I was really shocked as it was my first time ever to know about such cases. All my family members were parallelized and nobody knows what to do but thanks GOD I started my long success trip by searching and asking everywhere to get him on the right track. Also, it was a real challenge to find the suitable school for his case. It was like a miracle. I always believed in my son and his rights to learn and live like any other human being. In Cairo, Egypt, it was very rare to find school with integration but finally I was able to do. Omar now is in

grade 10 in the American division in the MILS school in Giza and I am still dreaming that he can one day go to the university.

On the other side, he was refusing the idea to train with athletes with Down syndrome. He was always telling me that he's not like them. Thus, I managed to train him in private sessions to overcome this issue and make him more self-confident and occupy his time usefully. Then after some time he became a member of Special Olympics. In 2009, he started his 1st competition and he won many times and recently was awarded the Silver medal as an equestrian athlete in the 7th 2010 SO MENA Regional Games in Damascus, Syria.

Since 2007 & till now, I am the head of special needs committee in Heliopolis club. At that time I found more than 30 children with disabilities, different ages and different cases. Their families was eager to have them live their life in a normal way and to be accepted by other people in the club. As a family, I wanted to help the families not to suffer like what I passed through before, so I founded this committee hoping to be able to help them get their children rights, giving the adequate advice and share best practices of my successful experience with Omar. I made many trips and got specialized coaches in different sports to give the chance for all of them to enjoy and have nice time, to make friends. We organized camps outside Cairo to teach them how to be independent, also to learn music so we became like a big family. We organized a big festival with other clubs so they can play together with other athletes, also to widen our society and share experiences as families.

My hope is to find real opportunities for my son and all other children with disabilities for education & suitable employment. Also, the best buddies to play the role of good friends as all of the athletes have social problems and they deserve the equal treatment as regular people. They are all gifts from GOD.

