

SPORTLIGHT

Winter 2012



Special Olympics
Michigan
Area 30

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Editor: Mary Adams

THANK YOU!!

Thanks to all of you out there who have supported our program throughout the year! Through your help, our program of sports training and competition have provided our athletes an unique opportunity to further develop their true potential. Without your community spirit and support, our program would not be a success. Thanks for all your sharing, caring, and support!!

WITH AGE COMES EXCELLENCE!!

Can you believe that our newsletter is celebrating it's 24th year? We're happy to bring you all of our Special Olympics events and happenings. This would not be done without your support, whether it be monetary or manpower. A special thanks to QRP PRINTING who prints our quality newsletter. We also thank all the athletes, parents, guardians, staff, friends, and our special volunteers for this special year. We are looking forward to a new year of sports training and competition. Wishing you all a very joyful holiday season!!

2012 SPORTS CALENDAR

Inside this issue is our 2012 Sports Calendar. On the back side of the calendar are our guidelines for attending state tournaments. This is a handy pull-out reference sheet, which we hope you will post on your refrigerator or other convenient place. Make sure you keep a copy of this calendar. If you misplace your copy or have not received one, call Mary Adams @ 832-9443 to receive another one.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS FORMS

NOW is the time to get your Special Olympics form filled out. This form needs to be signed and dated by a doctor and the athlete's legal guardian. If an athlete is their own guardian, they may sign the form. This form is valid for three years. An athlete will not be allowed to participate in a sports event unless the form is updated. The form is available through Mary Adams. Call her @ 832-9433 to see if your form is current.

STATE SOCCER RESULTS

This year, our soccer season really caught on fire; we had 14 new athletes come out so we had to create a new team! Congratulations to our four soccer teams who attended the State Soccer Tournament held in Warren on October 21-22.

The **Gremlins** — coached by Frank How and assisted by Pam Lorenzo — brought home **4th place** in two very close games! Congratulations on an awesome season: *Jameson Baker, Jim Bernard, Jordan Cockrum, Ben Grasmeyer, Ben Guffey, Jeff Hardy, Laura Lorenzo, Cary Rickel, Katie Waters, and April Wright.*

The **Road Runners** — coached by Kathy Peariso and assisted by Wilnic Georges — brought home **1st place** in two very exciting games! Congratulations on a superb season: *Mike Biby, Sara Devericks, Josh DiMercurio, Janet Fitrakis, Elizabeth Gisse, Laura Lamberton, Katie Longstreth, Tony Peariso, Rebecca Pouliot, and Maggie Wolverton.*

The **Hurricanes** — coached by Jon Thiel and assisted by Paul Kalitta — brought home **4th place** in two very thrilling games! Congratulations to all: *Andrew Carey, Ardie Crowder, Kevin Davis, Joe Dopp, Craig Hall, Mike Jarvis, Gabe Kalitta, Harold Kenega, Austin Shaver, Jordan Shaver, Kendall Thiel, Craig Veeder, Jim Warner, and Ricky Warner.*

The **Wildcats** — coached by Mary Adams and assisted by Joey Adams and Shane Talbot — brought home **3rd place!** Congratulations to: *Anna Balch, Amanda Brown, Jazmyn Chandler, Riley Decaire, Colleen Dolan, Jenny Finzel, Rose Fowler, Christina Graf, Roxy Hall, Brooke Leonhardt, Amanda Maltby, James Morr, Annie Ruter, John Talbot, and Justine Wenzel.*

A special thank you to our terrific coaches — Jon, Frank, Kathy, Mary, George, and Pam. You're the best! Thanks also to Ann Gach and Kirk Wright for refereeing our home games! Thanks also to Lori and Kirk Wright, Deb Lamberton, Deb Schultz, and Jerry Kaczynski for being drivers for our various tournaments.

Mary Adams Area Director 5202 Cortland Street Midland, MI 48642 989-832-9443 a30so@chartermi.net	Ann Gach Assistant Area Director 1904 Brookfield Drive Midland, MI 48642 989-631-8662 gach@chartermi.net
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STATE CYCLING RESULTS

This year, the State Cycling Tournament was moved to September to better coincide with the weather. Congratulations to *Jacob Balcirak, Bruce Fahlgren, Ricky West, Adam White, and Jody Willey* who competed in

Cycling @ the State Cycling Tournament on September 10. Jody and Jacob earned two gold medals. Adam and Bruce earned a Gold & Silver Medal. Ricky earned a Gold & Bronze Medal. Congratulations on a job well done! A big THANK YOU to Jeff and Jennifer Adamcik who coordinate this awesome program! And thanks to Rick and Pam Balcirak who chaperoned the athletes at the state tournament.

YOUNG ATHLETES PROGRAM

We are now in our fourth year of this new, exciting program. Lori Wright is our coordinator.

The Young Athletes Program is designed for children aged 2 -7 with intellectual and physical disabilities. The "athletes" will learn foundational skills towards becoming future Special Olympians. We have taken the sports that our athletes currently participate in and adapted them for the younger athletes.

Congratulations to our two newest Special Olympics athletes who graduated from our Young Athletes Program: *Silas Pitt and Haley Cummings!*



Please contact Lori about our Winter Season as dates and location has not yet been determined.

If you have any questions about this program, please contact Lori @ 687-2906. Please spread the word to any little athletes you think might be interested in our program!

WALKING PROGRAM: SURE BUT STEADY!

Walking for fun ... who says exercise has to be hard work?! Join Special Olympics walkers every **Monday night** @ the **Midland Mall** from **6:00-8:00 pm**. You can walk at your own pace, by yourself, or with one of your friends. Come out to walk or just to talk.

December 12 will be our **last Mall Walking day** until after the holiday. We will **return January 9**. Also, Walking will be cancelled if schools are cancelled or due to bad weather. Contact Vince Mathews @ 513-3868 if you have questions.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE FORM

Is your Special Olympics form up to date? If not, an athlete will not be allowed to compete until the form is current. Forms are available through Mary Adams. Call her at 832-9443 to check your form status.



BASKETBALL PRACTICES

Due the increase of athletes in our program, our basketball program has been restructured. Practices are now held on Monday, Thursday, and Friday evenings @ Central Middle School. We have also changed our practice times. Here is our new schedule:

Monday Evening:

BLUE THUNDER TEAM / Coach: Debbie Dodge
7:00-9:00 pm (NEW TIME)
1st Day of Practice—Monday, November 28

Thursday Evenings:

LADY SPITFIRES TEAM / Coach: Deb Lamberton
6:00-8:00 pm (NEW TIME/DAY/LOCATION)
1st Day of Practice—Thursday, January 5

Friday Evening:

MISFITS SKILLS TEAM / Coach: Joann Roy
6:00-7:30 pm (NEW TIME)
1st Day of Practice—Friday, December 2
LAKERS TEAM / Coach: Tina Kocsis
7:30-9:30 pm (NEW TIME)
1st Day of Practice—Friday, December 2

Please note the new times. When scheduling Dial-A-Ride, please make sure you tell them the practice times so we are not waiting at the school for a long time (i.e. Lakers practice is done by 9:30 pm; do not schedule a 10:00 pm pickup).

Make sure to check the Sports Calendar for a list of practice dates. Letters were sent out in early November to all athletes notifying them of which team they will be playing on. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Adams @ 832-9443.

ALPINE SKIING PRACTICES

Alpine Skiing practices will be held on Saturday's during January. Athletes will train at various ski resorts. If you are interested in skiing, contact Ann Gach @ 631-8662.



CROSS-COUNTRY SKI PRACTICES

Welcome to *Jerry and Mary Kaczynski* who are our new Cross Country Coaches!! Practices are held on **Saturday mornings** from **10:00-11:30 am** @ the **City Forest** on **December 3, 10, 17** and **January 7, 14, 21, 28**. We will ski together through the woods. If there is no snow, we will walk through the forest. If you are interested in skiing, contact Jerry @ 907-1824 (cell).

SNOWSHOE PRACTICES

Snowshoe practices will be held @ **Plymouth Park** (meet by Shelter "A" by the pool) from **10-11 am** on **Saturday mornings** on **January 7, 14, 21, 28**. If there is no snow, we will still have practice. If you have any questions or would like to snowshoe, contact Frank How @ 513-0808 (cell).



AQUATIC'S PROGRAM

Practices are held every **Wednesday evening from September thru May from 7:00-8:30 pm @ Northeast Middle School**. John Muisenga is our Aquatics coach and is always looking for volunteers. If interested, please call John @ 631-1034 or email: jamuisenga@charter.net.

AREA WINTER GAMES

Our Area Winter Games will be held on **Saturday, February 4 from 10-1 pm @ Currie East Golf Course**. Athletes from Area 9 and Area 7 will join us for friendly competition. Let's hope for snow!



STATE WINTER GAMES

We will be sending a delegation of 11 athletes to the State Winter Games held @ the **Grand Traverse Resort** in Traverse City on **February 7-10**. Alpine Skiing and Cross Country Skiing will be held @ Schuss Mountain. Snowshoe will be held @ the Grand Traverse Resort. In order for an athlete to attend these games, they must attend the practices, the Area Games, and their Special Olympics form must be up to date.

STATE SENIOR MALES BASKETBALL

The State Seniors Males Basketball Tournament will be held in **Rockford** on **March 23-24**.

In order to attend this tournament, the Senior Male basketball teams need to attend a District Basketball Tournament (we attend the Bay City tournament) and win their respective division in order to advance onto state competition. However, our Females team(s) will attend this State Basketball Tournament.

DISTRICT SENIOR MALES BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The District Basketball Tournament for the Senior Male teams will be held on **Saturday, March 3 @ Bay City Handy High School**. Both of our male teams — coached by Tina Kocsis and Debbie Dodge — will participate in this tournament. Teams that win their respective division will then attend the State Basketball Tournament on March 23-24. Good luck to both teams!!



Would you like to receive this newsletter via email instead of regular mail? If so, please send your email address to: a30so@chartermi.net. Also, if you know of other people that would like to receive this newsletter, let us know!

BASKETBALL SKILLS REGIONAL TOURNAMENT

Our third annual Basketball Skills Tournament will be held on **Friday, March 9 @ Central Middle School, starting @ 6:30 pm**. Last year, we had skills athletes compete for medals from Bay City and Roscommon. Come out and watch the athletes showcase their awesome basketball talents!

Due to the vast number of basketball skills athletes in our program, we have decided to host this tournament instead of attending the State Basketball Tournament in March. Medals will be awarded to all athletes, and refreshments will be served. This is also the last day of practice for our basketball skills athletes.

REGIONAL AQUATIC'S MEET

Our Regional Aquatics Meet will be held on **Saturday, March 17 @ Dow High School from 9-2 pm**. Last year, we had 85 athletes compete from Alpena, Bay City, Caro, Flint, Mt. Pleasant, Roscommon, Saginaw, and Midland. We need volunteers to ensure the success of this regional meet. Please contact John Muisenga @ 631-1034 if you are able to volunteer.



TRACK-N-FIELD / BOCCE PRACTICES

Practices will start on Saturday, April 14 and continue every Saturday through May 12. Practices will be held @ **Eastlawn Elementary from 9:30-11:30 am**. Check our sports calendar for all scheduled practices. If you have any questions, call Mary Adams @ 832-9443.

BOWLING PRACTICES

Bowling practices will be held on Saturday afternoons from **1:30-3:30 @ Northern Lanes** on **April 14, 21, 28 and May 5, 12**. Due to the limited number of bowlers we can take to State Summer Games, athletes are selected beforehand by the Bowling Coach—Joann Roy. Preferential selection is geared towards our athletes in wheelchairs or with limited mobility as they do not participate in our other sporting events. An athlete will be notified by Joann if you are selected to bowl. If you do not hear from Joann, then you will not be bowling and do not need to attend practices.

AREA 30 WELCOMES NEW ATHLETES!

Welcome to the following athletes who have joined our program: *Haley Cummings, Riley Decaire, Jacob Marcellis, Shay McGinnis, Matt Waibel, and Mitchel Young.*



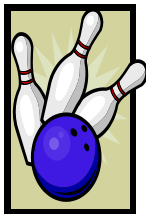
"BOWLING BUDDIES" BOWLING LEAGUE

Bowling Buddies is off to a rolling start ... we currently have 67 bowlers!! Remember, this is not Special Olympics sponsored, which means that Special Olympics does not pay for bowling. This is a bowling league so at the end of the year, we host a bowling banquet —complete with dinner and awards. Note: if a person does not show up for a practice, they will be charged \$3/practice as this money is applied towards the banquet and awards cost.

After five weeks into the season, we have a bowler who bowled a 202 game, in addition to a 146 game. Congratulations to **Colleen Dolan**!! Her average is a 129; keep it rolling Colleen!

Practices are held on Saturday afternoons from now through April. Here are the remaining practice dates:

Dates: November 5.19
December 3.17
January 7.21
February 4.18
March 10.24
April 7



Time: 1:00-3:30 pm
(check in @ 1:00, bowling starts at 1:30)

Location: Northern Lanes

Cost: \$8/week
(includes two games plus bowling shoes)

Who: Anyone!! Can be athletes, volunteers, Unified partners; it's open to all!

We hope you will come out for this new league. If you have any questions, feel free to contact: **Joann Roy** @ 687-7235 or (email) roy_steven@tds.net OR **Tina Kocsis** @ 501-3400 or (email) tj_kocsis@yahoo.com.

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK!!

Check out all the latest happenings with Midland Special Olympics on our Facebook page. Check us out: www.Facebook.com/Midland.Area30.

We have three administrators: Debbie Dodge, Deb Schultz, and Kathy Peariso. Debbie Dodge created our page; however, she currently does not have access to update the page so feel free to contact Deb Schultz or Kathy Peariso if you would like something added to the page.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS 2012 CALENDAR\$

Our special edition 2012 calendar featuring Harley Davidson motorcycles and our very special Athletes have arrived. They are so cool and awesome! We began selling these calendars in August for \$10. We are offering a special price - **just \$5!!** These make great Christmas gifts!! This is such a unique gift, and one that you will treasure!

A very special THANK YOU to **Steve Calkins** and **Chris Noel**, who coordinated this special calendar. They procured many sponsors, the photographer, the cyclists, and put together a very grand calendar. Everyone that has seen it is so impressed! Thank you for all your efforts!!

We wish to extend our sincere appreciation to **Servinski Sod Service** and **QRP Printing**, who were our major sponsors for this calendar. Your community support is to be commended!!

We also wish to thank all the following companies for being calendar sponsors: *Asset Brokers & Loans; Auto Club Group; Boulevard Lounge; C&S Sports Center; Feeny Chrysler Dodge; Garber Management Group; Local Union #12934 USWA; Maple Hill Nursery; Midland Ford-Lincoln-Mercury; Jerry Nizinski; Oscars Restaurant; Jimmey Sequin; and Tri-City Tree Doctor.*

Ann Gach is coordinating the calendar sales. If you would like to order a calendar, contact Ann @ 631-8662 or gach@chartermi.net.

Some athletes have been selling calendars. They are given up to 5 calendars to sell at one time. Calendars will be in an envelope so they can stay crisp and the pages won't bend. The athlete sign a form stating that they are taking calendars and are responsible for collecting the money. If the athlete does not sell their calendars, they return them to Ann Gach. Ann has the form for the athlete to sign. This is a big responsibility, and the athlete should have staff or family support since this can be a lot of money they are handling.

Few points to remember:

- If an athlete wants to sell calendars, they must fill out the form and give it to Ann Gach.
- Do not give the calendar to anyone without collecting the money.
- Monies MUST be turned into Ann Gach. Ann is responsible for all the accounting.
- Any calendars not sold need to be turned into Ann Gach.
- Volunteers/Parents/Staff/etc can also sell calendars. You will also need to fill out the form.
- If you already purchased a calendar and would like more, contact Ann Gach.

Keep up to date with us by purchasing your calendar!!



BOWL-A-THON FUNDRAISER

Mark your calendars now for our second annual Bowl-A-Thon Fundraiser, which will be held on **Saturday, February 18 @ Northern Lanes.**

The entry fee is \$20/person, and includes one hour of bowling. People are encouraged to get pledges towards their entry fee. Of course, we are hoping that people will get more pledges than just \$20!

A flyer will be sent out soon with details, but we want you to mark your calendar for this upcoming event. Please contact Tina Kocsis (501-3400) or Deb Schultz (430-6101) for more information.

FREEZIN' FOR A REASON: LETR POLAR PLUNGE

It's almost that time of year again ... time to jump into icy waters while dressed up in the wildest costume you can come up with. Get together with your most daring friends, and raise money for Special Olympics athletes. It's time to plunge!



The Polar Plunge is made possible by the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) - a group of law enforcement officers and Corrections Department employees throughout the state of Michigan who are committed to raising funds and awareness for Special Olympics Michigan athletes.

We have been invited to participate in the Saginaw/Bay City Polar Plunge. This will be held on **Saturday, February 25.** Deb Schultz is our Polar Plunge Coordinator. Contact her @ 430-6101 or dlksch56@yahoo.com if you would like to plunge and/or have questions.



CANDY FUNDRAISER

Our annual candy fundraiser is currently underway. Candy is \$1/bar and includes: M&M Plain & Peanut; Pay Day; 100 Grand Bar; Butterfingers; Nestle Crunch; Take 5; Caramello; Reeces Peanut Butter Cups; Kit Kat; Hershey Plain & Almond; and Sweet & Salty Trail Mix. The candy is placed in a small plastic basket and very convenient to carry!

Candy will be on sale throughout the year. If you would like to sell candy, contact Deb Schultz @ 430-6101.

FREE ALPINE/CROSS COUNTRY SKIS!!

We have been given an assortment of cross-country and alpine skis. Since we already have many pairs of skis, we are offering these skis FREE to anyone that would like them.



Contact Mary Adams if you are interested in the skis via phone (832-9443) or email: a30so@chartermi.net.

OFF THE CUFF WITH GUFF

by: Ben Guffey, Special Olympic Athlete

Well ... the weather outside is frightful, but the fire is so delightful, but since we have no place to go let it snow, let it snow, let it snow! Alright, I know you guys didn't like to hear my caroling so I guess I'll just have to knock it off. As we all know, there is only one, and I mean only one thing that matters this time of year—Christmas time!

Some of you might ask, "what do we do to shake off the winter blues?" Well, no need to worry because Special Olympics has the answer! Believe it or not, there is still plenty to do in those winter months ahead. We have a variety of indoor and outdoor sports. Our indoor sports include:

- Swimming (which you stay warm and keep cool at the same time)
- Basketball (in which you run and have some great competition to go along with it)
- Walking (great exercise at the mall).

And by the way, who says snow can't be fun? We have Winter Olympics, which offers a variety of activities including: Snowshoe, Alpine Skiing, and Cross Country Skiing—which takes a lot of balance and coordination.

In the last newsletter, I asked if anybody was interested in a personal trainer, and guess what? There have been a few people who have asked me. By the way, I'm trying to get a group of athletes to join Power Lifting, which is not for the faint of heart. This is for athletes with the deepest commitment and determination. We'll be training for six months all the way to Summer Games. Well, I hope to get some calls about it . If you are interested, call me at 832-0983.

Well, I had a lot of fun writing this article. I hope to definitely hear from you again. Take care and have a blessed holiday season.

TA TA for now. This is Ben signing off.

Do you know someone who could benefit from participating in Special Olympics sports training and competition? If so, have them call or email our Area Director—Mary Adams @ 989-832-9443 or a30so@chartermi.net. Special Olympics athletes develop physical fitness and self-confidence that helps them succeed at home, school, and work.





Birthdays

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY To Our
Special Athletes and Volunteers!**

October

Jameson Baker
Karen Bell
Haley Cummings
Jacob Crane
Barb Delacruz
Jill Dennis
Sara Devericks
Janet Fitrakis
John Hall
Don Krajkiewicz
Laura Lorenzo
Vince Mathews
Ken Natzic
Mary Ross
Dustin Sutton
Shane Talbot
Kendall Thiel
Tim Tunney
Matt Waibel
Jeremy Worthington

December

Jordan Altenburg
Mike Bagnieski
Yvonne Bell
Grace Cooper
John Donker
Harold Hutchins
Frank How
Tina Kocsis
Tony Peariso
Matt Schieber
David Stickles
Eric Strack
Jon Thiel
Michael Tiffany
Heather Zablocki

November

Mary Adams
Jacob Balcirak
Rick Balcirak
Randy Bedford
Ryan Brugger
Evan Dagenais
Debbie Dodge
Rob Donovan
Joe Dopp
Ann Gach
Dee Hall
Lindsay Haremski
Sharon Hoover
Mike Jarvis
Grace Lago
Brandon Lajoice
Laura Lamberton
Nikki Larson
Katie Longstreth
Kevin Moe
Steve Roy

January

Jenny Adamcik
Gilian Bond
Rena Costley
Sue Crane
Kirk Cronin
Justin Dyer
Ben Dyste
Cindy Hall
Chris Husted
Mary Kaczynski
Terry Leivo
Silas Pitt
Cary Rickel
Dan Romzick
Eric Strack
Jim Tiffany

THANK YOU!!

A special THANK YOU to the following people and organizations for their generous contributions:

- Irene Agostinelli
- Brian Bailey, DDS PC
- Dow Chemical Employees Credit Union
- Bill & Eileen Finzel
- Julia Guffey
- Bernadine LeBeau
- Midland Civitans Club
- Northwood University—Youth Leadership Program
- United Way of Midland County

THANK YOU to all the volunteers who assisted with our various fundraisers held this Fall:

- Calendar Sales (ongoing)
- Candy Fundraiser (Ongoing)
- Home Run Derby (October 29)
- Law Enforcement Torch Run (September 15)
- T-Shirt Sales (Ongoing)

We participated in the Northwood Auto Show on September 30— October 2. THANK YOU to the following people who graciously volunteered during the weekend (in the wind, rain, and cold temps!): *John & JT Muisenga, Pesj Kennett, Mary & Joe Kaczynski, Karen & Shelby Muehlfelt, Lori Wright & Craig Hall, Bill & Andrew Carey, Arlene Bernard, Kathy & Tony Peariso, Tina Kocsis, Mary Adams, Ann Gach, Deb Schultz, Joann Roy, Marianne Waters, Jody Willey, Rebecca Pouliot, Pam & Jacob Balcirak, and Maureen Drake.* You all are very special!!

A big THANK YOU to **Lt. Roten** and **Officer Wenzell**, of the Midland Police Department, for coordinating the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR), which was held in Midland on September 15. The last time this run was held in Midland was 1994, and we are so happy to have it back again! There was ~30 runners participating in this event. The run started @ the Law Enforcement headquarters and ended in downtown Midland @ Chemical Bank. A special thanks to **Pizza Sam's** who provided pizzas for the runners. Thank you also to *Maureen Donker, Tina Kocsis, Arlene Bernard, Mary Kaczynski, Joann Roy, Deb Schultz, and Ann Gach* for providing refreshments. We look forward to next year's run!

THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!

Thank you to the DOW CHEMICAL DISABILITY EMPLOYEE NETWORK (DEN) for a generous grant! This grant will help cover registration expenses for our State Soccer and Cycling Tournaments and our State Winter Games tournament.

The generosity of the DEN will benefit many of our Special Olympians within our community.

We sincerely thank you for your community support and goodwill!!!





SPOTLIGHT

2011 SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES IN GREECE

by Deb Schultz, Team USA Assistant Golf Coach

World Games....Greece....2011 Adventures....World-Class Competition....AWESOME!! The journey began in Detroit on June 18 when three Special Olympians, their families, State Staff, and two coaches met for a send off breakfast. The Olympians: Molly Hinka (Athletics), Sabre Shelton and David Faust (Aquatics). The Coaches: Deb Schultz (Golf) and Maciej Litkowiec (Aquatics). We left Detroit for a rendezvous with Team USA in Baltimore, Maryland. The next evening, we left for

Shannon, Ireland...a 10 hour flight....and then a 4 hour flight to Rhodes, Greece. Families for our three athletes were planning on meeting us in Athens, but, first....HOST TOWN!!

The World Games host town activities in Rhodes included acclimating to the 90+ degree heat and the high humidity, and the food....lots of pasta, breads, watermelon, olives!! We spent time doing a bit of sight seeing, laundry, and, of course, practicing our respective sports. After a few days, we took an overnight ferry boat ride for 14 hours to Athens, Greece. There was room for 1,300 people on board, and 1,000 were Special Olympics delegations traveling to the 2011 World Games. It was a night of ports of call, great weather, card games, pin trading, and loads of fun.

Once we docked in Athens, it was a short trip to our respective hotels and exploring the local neighborhoods. and Opening Ceremonies at the Panathenaic Stadium. This Stadium is where the first Olympic Games were held. It is grand, as were the ceremonies that welcomed us that evening. From there, it was back to our hotels for a few hours of sleep and then off to training. For golfers, our days started with 5:45 breakfast, 6:15 bus from hotel to the old airport....change busses to get to the Gylfada Golf Course....practice/competition from 8:00 – 2:30...back to the hotel for lunch at 3:15....coaches meetings at 7:00....team meetings at 8:00....dinner at 8:30....and then off to bed by 10:00. Gylfada is one of five golf courses in Greece, and it was a nice 15-minute uphill walk from where the train whizzed by. Not only did we walk every day on the golf course (no golf carts!!), but we also walked....everywhere...and walked...and walked....

We walked on level ground, but mostly on hills as Athens is nestled between the coast and the mountains. There are many modern, paved roads, but there are also many shiny round stone streets. Evenings we toured Athens with our volunteer guides, and when we had a day off, did more touring of the Acropolis, the shopping districts, and the World Olympic competition sites. Some of our group quickly became quite adept at navigating the transportation system...rarely using a taxi....mostly dependent on trains and hoof-power. Athens has a fascinating history; it is the cradle of western civilization and is a host of Greek words and ideas, such as democracy, harmony, music, mathematics, art, gastronomy, architecture, logic, Eros, euphoria, and many others. Athens enriched a multitude of languages, and inspired civilizations. And, it inspired all Olympians to be the best they could be!!

After two weeks of training and competition, touring, sampling the local restaurants for the world-famous gyro sandwiches (with a few French fries tucked inside), we started saying our goodbyes. We were then bused to the Stadium for closing ceremonies late at night on July 4. Again, it was an awesome event that showcased Law Enforcement Officers from around the world, the passing of the flame of hope, and fireworks. And, yes, during the Closing Ceremonies, there were many uniform/shirt trades. After three weeks, we were home safe....reliving all the great moments and new friends....and ready to begin new adventures!! THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!



SPOTLIGHT

MARINE CORPS 10K ROAD RACE

by Jerry Kaczynski

Joe Kaczynski enjoys running, a lot!! So it was no surprise when he wanted to return to Washington DC and participate in the Marine Marathon 10K race. Joe ran the 10K race and finished first in the Special Olympics division and 15th overall of the 2,700 males running the race! Joe enjoyed meeting and the company of Special Olympics athletes from the eastern states last year and was excited to return to once again participate in this 35th year of the Special Olympics athletes running this famous race.

The Marine Marathon event has invited Special Olympics to participate for 35 of its 36 years race history. Special Olympics has a division separate from the normal race age group divisions. The race was held on October 30, and of the 10,000 registered runners, about 7,000 runners actually participated in the 10K race. There were 30,000 registered runners that ran the marathon (26.2 miles) concurrently with the 10K race.

The Marine Marathon has a Charity Village at the finish line where several organizations have tents for runners and volunteers to regroup after the race. This autumn, there was an abundance of rain in the DC area so the Village quickly became a sea of very deep mud. Along with some nice medals from the Marines and Special Olympics, all the runners, volunteers and parents left with a few pounds of DC mud on their shoes.

The after-race celebration consisted of a lunch at the tent, lots of race experiences being shared and some good happy conversations among the athletes, parents, volunteers and marines. All participants received a Marine Marathon medal and placement medals from Special Olympics. The overall winners received awards during the formal presentation of finisher awards.

After the awards ceremony, Joe got to talk Michigan football with the commander of the local Marine base, who is from Michigan. He remembered Joe from last year and asked Joe to return in 2012 and try for a "three-pete"!

2012 SPORTS CALENDAR
SPECIAL OLYMPICS MIDLAND COUNTY

Basketball Practices

Monday/Thursday/Friday evenings
January 5.6.9.12.13.16.19.20.23.26.27.30
February 2.3.6.9.10.13.16.17.23.24.27
March 1.8.9.15.22
7:00-9:00 (Monday)
6:00-8:00 (Thursday)
6:00-9:30 pm (Friday)
Location: Central Middle School

Cross-Country Practices

Saturday mornings
January 7.14.21.28
10:00-12:00 noon
Location: City Forest

Snow Shoe Practices

Saturday mornings
January 7.14.21.28
10:00-11:00 am
Location: Plymouth Park

Alpine Skiing Practices

Saturday mornings
January 7.14.21.28
Location: Various Ski Resorts

Aquatics Practices

Wednesday evenings
January - May
September - December
7:00-8:30 pm
Location: Northeast Middle School Pool

Walking Program Practices

Monday evenings
January - May
October - December
6:00-8:00 pm
Location: Midland Mall

Area Winter Games

Saturday, February 4
10:00-1:00 pm
Location: Currie East Golf Course

State Winter Games

February 7-10
Location: Grand Traverse Resort

BOWL-A-THON FUNDRAISER

Saturday, February 18
Location: Northern Bowling Lanes

Young Athletes Program

Dates to be determined
Location: Contact Lori Wright @ 687-2906

District Male Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 3
Location: Bay City Handy High School

Basketball Skill Regional Tournament

Friday, March 9
6:00-9:00 pm
Location: Central Middle School

Regional Aquatics Invitational

Saturday, March 17
9:00-2:00 pm
Location: Dow High School

State Basketball Tournament

March 23-24
Location: Rockford

Track-n-Field Practices

Saturday mornings
April 14.21.28 / May 5.12
9:30-11:30 am
Location: Eastlawn Elementary School

Bocce Practices

Saturday mornings
April 14.21.28 / May 5.12
9:30-11:30 am
Location: Eastlawn Elementary School

Bowling Practices

Saturday afternoons
April 14.21.28 / May 5.12
1:30-3:30 pm
Location: Northern Lanes

ANNUAL TAG-DAY FUNDRAISER

Thursday/Friday, May 10-11
Location: Various Stores

Area 9 Summer Games

Saturday, May 12
8:00-2:00 pm
Location: Bay City Handy

Area Summer Games

Saturday, May 19
12:00-3:00 pm
Location: Dow High School

State Summer Games

May 31 - June 2
Location: CMU, Mt. Pleasant

Family Hall of Fame Banquet

Wednesday, June 20
6:00-8:00 pm
Location: Plymouth Park, Shelter "A"

Golf Practices

Saturday afternoons
May 5.12.19 / June 9.16.23.30 / July 7
2:30-5:00 pm
Location: Currie Golf Course

Unified Golf Tournament

Saturday, June 23
2:30-5:00 pm
Location: Currie Golf Course

Softball Practices

Tuesday/Thursday evenings
June 5.7.12.14.19.21.26.28 / July 3.5.10.12
6:00-8:00 pm
Location: Dow High School

Summer Sports Classic

July 19 (Golf) / TBD (Softball)
Location: Ypsilanti & St. John's

GOLF OUTING FUNDRAISER

Saturday, July 21
Location: Sandy Ridge Golf Course

Cycling Practices

Monday evenings
July 9.16.23.30 / August 6.13.20.27 / September 4
4:00-5:00 pm
Location: Midland Tridge (Rail Trail)

Soccer Practices

Monday evenings
August 20.27/September 5.10.17.24/October 1.8.15
6:00-7:30 pm
Location: Midland Soccer Complex

State Cycling Tournament

Saturday, September 8
Location: Chelsea

State Soccer Tournament

October 19-20
Location: Warren

AREA 30 SPECIAL OLYMPICS GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDANCE AT STATE TOURNAMENTS

Following are a list of guidelines for selecting athletes to attend state tournaments (i.e. basketball, soccer, track and field, etc):

1. PRACTICE

To qualify for a state tournament, the athlete must attend a minimum of six (6) practices. All of our sport seasons consist of at least an 8-week training program. It is only fair to take an athlete to the state meet who participated in the training and competition versus an athlete who has not. Our philosophy is that an athlete who is not trained will not be ready for sports competition.

2. FREQUENCY

This means how many times an athlete attends a state tournament. Generally, athletes that have never been to a state meet or have not attended one within the past year will be selected. However, there are exceptions. For example, it is the swimming coach's discretion to choose the swimmers; many of our swimmers have been in the program for years, and they may be continuously selected to attend the state swimming tournament. If an athlete participates in all the Special Olympics sport events (i.e. soccer, basketball, softball, etc), *generally* they are not chosen to attend the summer games. WE TRY TO BE AS FAIR AS POSSIBLE. WE WANT EVERYONE TO HAVE THEIR TURN; HOWEVER, THEY MUST FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES TO BE CONSIDERED.

3. INDEPENDENT

The athlete must be fairly independent. The chaperones have responsibility for four (4) athletes and cannot be expected to devote their full attention to just 1 athlete. We do not and will not have time to "pamper" them; one must not stifle the ability an athlete has if allowed to show it. THIS IS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR THE ATHLETE. Let's not ruin it by suffocating the athlete.

4. BEHAVIOR

The athlete must display good behavior. They must be able to take DIRECT ORDERS from the chaperones. They must behave appropriately. We will tolerate misbehavior at times; however, we will not endure misbehavior constantly from anyone.

NOTE: Misbehavior consists of the following: bad attitude, unwilling to listen or cooperate, stealing, unexplained absences, excessive foul language, overly aggressive behavior, running away, etc.

5. ATTITUDE

If an athlete refuses a ribbon or medal at a state tournament, they will not be allowed to attend that specific tournament of a period of 1 year.

6. UPDATED FORMS

In order for an athlete to participate, their Special Olympics Health Appraisal Form must be updated. This form includes two sections: a medical portion, which needs to be signed and dated by a doctor, and the legal guardian section which needs to be signed and dated by the athlete's legal guardian. If an athlete is their own guardian, they may sign that portion. The Area 30 Medical Update Form needs to be updated whenever an athlete attends a Special Olympics competition and/or whenever there are medication changes.



**COME SHARE THE SPIRIT OF
AREA 30 SPECIAL OLYMPICS**

- Send information on enrolling athletes in Special Olympics
- Send information on volunteering for Special Olympics
- Send information on how I can involve my organization
- Accept the enclosed tax-deductible contribution

Name: _____

Address: _____

Mail to: Area 30 Special Olympics, 5202 Cortland, Midland, MI 48642
or Contact: Mary Adams, Area Director (989)832-9443 / a30so@chartermi.net