

# OCTOBER 2018

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS – YORK COUNTY

### NEWSLETTER

## Special Olympics USA Games Seattle 2018

**Bob Laudeman, Guest Reporter**

Throughout the first-week of July two athletes from Special Olympics York County, Jonathan Martin, and Jenny Laudeman, participated in the 2018 Special Olympics USA Games held in Seattle, Washington. As members of Team Pennsylvania, they competed for three days at the Willows Run Golf Club in Redmond, Washington under the direction of Coach Nat Martin.



Jonathan competed as a Level 4, Individual Play golfer, playing nine holes of golf each day on a well maintained, challenging course. Jenny participated as a Level 1 Individual Skills golfer that included: chipping, pitching, short putt, long putt, driver, and five-iron competitions. Both athletes improved their scores each day, and at the end of the competition, Jonathan and Jenny proudly accepted Silver Medals at the Awards Ceremony.

Team Pennsylvania gathered in Philadelphia on Friday, June 29th and flew to Seattle on Saturday, June 30th. Team Pennsylvania included 50 athletes and unified partners, 16 coaches, and SOPA staff, who were all housed in Terry Hall at the University of Washington Campus. The Opening Ceremony was held on Sunday, July 1st at the University of Washington Husky Football Stadium and televised on ABC Sports and ESPN. The competitions, held in fourteen (14) sports, began on Monday, July 2nd and ended on Friday, July 6th. Team Pennsylvania athletes competed in Athletics, Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Golf, Gymnastics, Powerlifting, Unified Soccer, Swimming, and Tennis.



The Closing Ceremony was held Friday evening, and Team Pennsylvania returned to Philadelphia on Saturday, July 8th. Jonathan and Jenny enjoyed competing, but also loved the Opening Ceremony, visiting the Fan Zone, the Mariners baseball game, and sight-seeing in Seattle with their families. Celebrating diversity and inclusion, Seattle was a welcoming city, hosting 3,000 Special Olympics athletes, 517 unified partners, 1,000 coaches, and

15,000 volunteers from forty-eight different states. A total of 7,409 medals and ribbons were awarded throughout the week. The 2018 Special Olympics USA Games provided memories that Jonathan and Jenny will treasure forever!

## **A Time for Reflection**

### ***MANAGER'S CORNER, JEFFREY WITMAN, SOYC MANAGER***

**2018 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Special Olympics. It is also the year Special Olympics Pennsylvania has announced the initial expectations for their reorganization efforts. Much to reflect upon and who better to reflect and ponder possibilities for the future with than York's iconic Special Olympian Loretta Claiborne.**

**I recently asked Loretta to identify 3 keys to the future of Special Olympics. She focused on 1) staying with the mission, 2) maintaining an athlete first commitment, and 3) being sports driven. With each point she added valuable perspectives to everyone involved in Special Olympics on how the organization cannot just survive but thrive.**

**Loretta cited a conversation she had with Eunice Shriver decades ago. Shriver told Loretta that her passion was for folks with Intellectual Disabilities to have a "place to play and not be on the other side of the fence watching." Loretta perceives the mission piece of "sports for individuals with intellectual disabilities" as critical in all planning for the future. She supports Unified programs and sees their value in engaging younger athletes but she urges planners to remember the distinctive values of traditional programs.**

**Loretta has been an important part of many Special Olympics initiatives toward empowering athletes. She views Athlete Leadership activities as critical to providing a much needed "voice" in decision making within the organization.**

**Loretta views the health initiatives of Special Olympics as important and valuable but she reminds all stakeholders to be sports driven in their thinking. Her experience suggests that an emphasis on sportsmanship and high quality training is vital. She warns that "bureaucracies" need to focus on creating opportunities not limitations.**

**Loretta has stated that "God is my strength; Special Olympics is my joy" and at age 65 continues to be exemplary role model. She recalls her advocacy for Intellectual Disabilities at the United Nations and with the US Surgeon General as highlights of her phenomenal participation with and service to Special Olympics. She has been a phenomenal friendraiser for the organization.**

**To be effective you need to be reflective. As we contemplate the next 50 years and the ideal structures here in Pennsylvania for Special Olympics' future we need to listen to the voices of Loretta and others who have sustained lifelong commitments to the organization. The lessons they have learned can provide insights for the future.**

**Two York County Athletes  
Honored  
at Special Olympics – Pennsylvania  
2018 Leadership Weekend**

**Karen Plappert, Guest Reporter**

**Special Olympics PA offers training each year to interested athletes who would like to further their knowledge as either a Global Messenger, Athlete Representative, Health and Fitness Coordinator, or as a coach.**

**Athletes must then attend workshops and complete the necessary requirements. Each year those athletes who have completed their specific training are then honored at**

**SOPA Leadership weekend and graduate as part of the Athlete University class.**



**Two York County athletes were honored as part of the  
2018 Athlete University class**

**Noah Rinehart graduated and received a diploma as a Global Messenger and Michael Plappert graduated and received a diploma in Healthy Lifestyles.**

***Congratulations to Noah and Michael***

**Any York County athlete interested in taking a Leadership role is welcome to join our York County Athlete Leadership team and learn ways to make our county even better.**



**Check with Noah or Becky Rinehart for further information.**

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**Check out our new website for information and upcoming events**

[www.specialolympicsyorkcounty.org](http://www.specialolympicsyorkcounty.org)



**!!!! AN EXTRA LARGE THANK YOU !!!!**

## **SPECIAL OLYMPICS – YORK COUNTY**

### **SALUTES DARNELL ORT**

**By Guest Reporter, Carol Seitz**



**The athletes and volunteers would like to give a huge shout out to Darnell Ort for her 23 years as a coach of Special Olympics Rollerskating. Darnell has trained and prepared handfuls of athletes for tournaments and competitions over her tenure as a coach of rollerskating. She picked up the athletes when they fell down, and she gave them encouragement when they wanted to give up because they could not do a skill or skate fast. Darnell was not only a coach, she was and is still a good friend to everyone she has been in contact with.**

**Everyone at Rollerskating is going to miss you and your smile. We wish you well, and hope you stop in once in a while so you can see our progress and accomplishments in our endeavors.**

**Thanks again for your many years of service.  
Wishing you the very best.**



# Organization Changes are in the plans for Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA)

*Becky Rinehart*

If you read the title to this article and thought, “hey, a SOPA reorganization doesn’t concern me”, think again. The most important thing I realized at the August 2018 SOPA Leadership Conference is that I’m not supposed to think of myself as Special Olympics York County, I need to think of myself and the rest of us as Special Olympics Pennsylvania. The changes being discussed will assert a more centralized model of management, with local delivery of services. The changes are still in draft form, but are intended to correct the following problems for our program statewide:

- The number of athletes served has dropped over the years, and needs to grow
- There needs to be more equitable quality and number of sports experiences to statewide athletes
- The number of volunteers has been declining, perhaps due to the burden of paperwork

A SOPA committee has been working this year on a recommendation to address these problems, and at the conference we were able to hear their proposal, and were asked to provide feedback. The committee shared their research approach, and each committee member, comprised of SOPA staff as well as county-level representatives, presented portions of their work. SOPA encouraged conference participants to sign-up for sub-committees to help put more details into what is now called “THE WAY FORWARD”. Anyone interested in participating in a sub-committee should contact our management team.

Essentially, the proposal would replace the 56 local program management teams (which in our case and the case of most of the 56 local programs in Pennsylvania being totally volunteer-led) with 9 regional management teams, each staffed with paid SOPA employees providing the leadership and administrative support, and regional volunteers providing the athletic training, outreach, fundraising, health and fitness.

If a region decides there is a big demand for a particular sport, then they should decide to offer that sport in various geographies of the region. Regional paid-staff are intended to take-up the paperwork-burden identified as a major obstacle to our growth. Regional programs will not be volunteer-led, but SOPA staff-led. But there will be plenty of roles for volunteers: coaches, fundraising, leadership team member, database management, collecting medicals, ensuring volunteer clearances.

**A proposed regional map is below, showing York in Region 7.**



As you can imagine, there were a lot of questions and concerns – from big healthy programs as well as small struggling programs, which SOPA says they want to hear. The best conversations were about the impact to the athlete, or the potential athlete. Phase 2 is underway – to flush out gory details like where does the money come from and where does it go. By mid-2019, a new organization will be piloted in 1 or 2 regions, with a full transition by 2023.

# SPECIAL OLYMPICS – YORK COUNTY

## VOLLEYBALL AT THE AREA M FALL CLASSIC



**Mark Wilking, Mark Reineberg, Patrick Lee, Skyler Mills Gary Gaver, Victoria Seitz, Tony Piermatteo**

**Steven Butler, Robert Aulen, Not pictured Neil Simon**



**Joel Stein. Troy Hoenstine, Marshall Geesey, Adrianna Vellon, Paul Bowman, Michael Plappert, Not pictured Cynthia Rice**



**William Markline, Mark Ferguson, Matt Billings, Delcie Boyd, Jeff Poff, Tricia Ellis, Wyatt Bowman**



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## BOCCE TOURNAMENT AT THE AREA M FALL CLASSIC.



**First row: Brian Honeychuck, Marlene Shaub, Allen Wargo, Jim Smith  
Second row: Kristen Landis, Dan Landis, Trent Bupp, Scott Johnson**

**Jim Smith & Brian Honeychuck, Gold in Div 2.  
Trent Bupp & Scott Johnson, Silver in Div 9.  
Dan & Kristen Landis, Silver in Division 12.  
Marlene Shaub & Allen Wargo Bronze in Div 10.**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Look for More Information on our Website

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## SACRED HEART DANCE

NOVEMBER 4, 2018

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## 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ROBERT H. GRIFFITH HOLIDAY BASKETBALL CLASSIC

DECEMBER 2018

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## ATHLETE REGISTRATION

JANUARY 2, 2019

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## 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL POLAR BEAR PLUNGE

FEBRUARY 2, 2019

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**PLEASE WELCOME OUR TWO NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM**

***PENNY MYERS WILL BE SERVING AS OUR VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR***

***HEATHER RYAN WILL BE SERVING AS OUR PURCHASING COORDINATOR***

**LOOK FOR THEIR INTRODUCTIONS IN AN UPCOMING NEWSLETTER**

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**SPECIAL OLYMPICS – YORK COUNTY  
IS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS.**

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE OR  
CONTACT ANY MEMBER OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM  
OR THE HEAD COACH OF THE SPORT  
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**CONTACT INFORMATION IS ON THE WEBSITE**