



Journey to Pennsylvania

Leanna Krogmann, Franklin County Global Messenger



Special Olympics has been an important part of my life for the past fourteen years. While living in Missouri, I went to USA games twice and World games once. My first trip to USA Games was in 2006 in Ames, Iowa in track and field. My second trip was in 2010 at Lincoln, Nebraska in swimming. I was chosen for Team USA in swimming and traveled to Athens, Greece for World Games in 2011. I received 3 medals, including one gold medal. This was an incredible life experience.

World Games gave me the opportunity to use my global messenger skills to speak to community groups about the importance of funding for Special Olympics. I lobbied legislators in Washington, DC in 2010 on Capitol Hill Day for the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Act to maintain funding for Special Olympics. As a result of the push from myself and other athletes around the country, the Act passed. I met several members of the Shriver and Kennedy family. Mrs. Shriver started Special Olympics 50 years ago, and her son, Dr. Timothy Shriver, has taken her vision above and beyond what anyone could imagine.

Last year I moved from Missouri to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania and joined Franklin County Special Olympics. I was welcomed to the volleyball team with open arms and went to State games at

Villanova. I have had lots of fun in the sports of bowling, swimming and long-distance walking/running here. Special Olympics has always provided opportunities for me to meet new people and make many friends, including athletes, coaches, and volunteers. This was especially important to me when I moved to Pennsylvania.

Since moving here, I have been to Villanova for Fall Festival twice and Penn State for Summer Games once. I have met new friends through Special Olympics. Last March, I was asked to give a speech at the Central Bowling Sectional, which I really enjoyed. I have also joined the Franklin County Athlete Leadership Team, which has helped me get to know athletes better. We are sharing our ideas with the local Management Team and trying to be leaders within our sports activities. In comparison to my involvement with Special Olympics of Missouri, there were more sports offered in the community in which I lived. I competed year around in swimming, track and field, tennis, golf, cheerleading, bowling, basketball, and softball. In Pennsylvania I have only participated in four sports. My future aspirations include helping our local program grow and improve. As an athlete, I hope to be able to participate in golf next year. I also look forward to making more friends and continuing my leadership training started in Missouri by attending the Athlete Leadership University here in Pennsylvania.

Leanna Krogmann is a Global Messenger from Franklin County and has been participating in Special Olympics for 14 years in Missouri and Pennsylvania. Leanna was a member of Team Missouri during the 2006 and 2010 USA Games and a member of Team USA during the 2011 World Games.

My Athlete Leadership Growth from 2017

Colt List, Lawrence County Athlete Representative and Global Messenger



My name is Colt List and I am 35 years old. I have been involved in Special Olympics in Lawrence County for 13 years. I have competed in Aquatics, Bocce, Bowling, and Volleyball. During this time, I have developed lifelong friends, mentors, and the discipline to achieve any goal that I set for myself. For the past four years, I have been an Athlete Representative for the Management Team in Lawrence County. As a member of this team, I participate as an active member and am given the opportunity to interact in group discussions and provide input from other athletes. This position has helped me to understand that Special Olympics would not exist today without the time, energy, and dedication of our volunteers.

In the past year, I added to my leadership skills by becoming a Global Messenger. This awesome program provides the public speaking and presentation skills training in order for me to share with confidence, in my own words, about Special Olympics. The program taught me that Special Olympics inspires hope, confidence, and courage, and I want to share my experience and help other athletes achieve their goals.

Also in the past year, I have completed Athlete Representative II, which helped me expand my governance knowledge. With the help of other Athlete Representatives in my County and our Mentors, we set up an Athlete Leadership Team. The team consists of 5 other athletes. We are currently working on getting a newsletter going and publish it on a monthly basis. We are also implementing a program where we recognize one male and female athlete of the month for their outstanding sportsmanship. I also got to conduct Athlete Input Surveys at the Western Spring Sectional last April, where I got to ask athletes about their event experience.

Being a part of Athletes Leadership gives athletes the opportunity to share ideas and opinions with other athletes and gather input on various topics and allow us to share important findings at Athlete Input Councils at both the local and state level. I feel that this is important and gives the athletes a voice and feel that we are contributing to the success of Special Olympics. Special Olympics has given me the platform to help other athletes see that they can achieve goals that they set for themselves and make new friends in an environment that is accepting and encouraging.

Colt List is an Athlete Representative and Global Messenger from Lawrence County and has been participating in Special Olympics for 13 years. Colt became the first Athlete Leadership Team Chair in Lawrence County and served on the Western Fall Sectional Committee in 2015.

Bethlehem City Special Olympics Gives Back

Bethlehem City Athlete Leadership Team



Every year at Christmas time, Bethlehem City's Athlete Leadership Team (ALT) selects a community service project for the whole program to support together as a group – they call this annual project *"BSO Gives Back"*. *BSO Gives Back* is our way of saying "Thank You" for the wonderful support their athletes receive throughout the year, and acts as their Christmas gift back to our community. This year the BSO ALT decided to collect food for families who relocated here to Bethlehem following the devastation of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. Many of these families arrived here with only the clothes on their backs, and had limited or no financial resources available to them. These families were relying heavily on the breakfast and lunches their children could receive from school during the week, but the upcoming holidays meant there would be 11 straight days without those meals for their children. Our ALT Team decided that providing food for these families would help ease some of their worries over the holidays.

On December 16th, members of the ALT and other BSO volunteers worked side by side with friends at The Bethlehem Area School District to sort, pack, and distribute the food donations they collected. In addition to the significant amount of non-perishable food collected by BSO, the school district secured a large donation to purchase frozen pork roasts to distribute with the food boxes. BSO collected enough food to provide a large box filled with food, as well as 2 pieces of frozen pork to well over 50 families who were experiencing losses that no one can't begin to imagine.

The ALT members and other athletes did a fantastic job - they worked hard assembling food boxes & bagging up the meat for the families, they were cheerful and warm while greeting the families when presenting the food boxes, they jumped in to help when there were families who needed

help carrying the food to their cars, they were moved by the kindness and friendship they found there that day, and they all represented Special Olympics so incredibly well.

All the families in Bethlehem Special Olympics were asked to bring nonperishable food items to the annual Christmas Party that took to the Northeast Middle School to pack in boxes. The families came to the school on a Saturday and picked up the food. The families were very grateful and appreciated our kindness. The teacher who was working with the families said she was very thankful to all of us at Bethlehem Special Olympics for the food donations".

The Athlete Leadership Team of Bethlehem Special Olympics would like to say a sincere "Thank You" to everyone who donated their time, donated food, or donated gift cards to this project! The collective effort made a huge impact on dozens of local families this holiday season - it was absolutely beautiful.

In addition to providing Local Program related input, each Athlete Leadership Team (ALT) is also asked to support initiatives within their community inside and outside of Special Olympics. If you are a part of an ALT and want to share a story on helping the community in the next edition of SOAR, please see the instructions on page 12.

Ready for Action

Jordan Schubert, Athlete Leadership Coordinator



Every time I think about it, it's really amazing to realize that I'm almost halfway through my second decade of participating in Special Olympics. It's also a perfect coincidence that I have a chance to win my 50th medal the same year of Special Olympics' 50th Anniversary. Last year was filled with a lot of highs points that have led me to achieve some personal bests in both basketball and floor hockey. At the same time, there were some low points that took me a while to get over.

What I've learned in now my 14th year of participating in Special Olympics is to always celebrate accomplishments. However, I've also learned that failure can make you more appreciative of what the Special Olympics mission is all about. In floor hockey, I scored four goals, twice the amount I scored the previous year. I also became a better passer and puck handler. I thought floor hockey would be an easy sport to pick up, however, it has taken me two years to fully get a grip on the game, and in some ways, I feel I'm still learning a lot.

Last year in basketball, it was the 5th year I had spent with my team, the Blue Streaks. This was the longest I had spent with one team in any sport. Back when I lived in Illinois, there were a lot more athletes which led to more age appropriate teams and divisions (8-15, 16-21 and 22+), which meant I never spent more than four years with a single team, since I moved to Pennsylvania right after graduating from high school. Staying with one team for a long period of time has taught me the value of trusting one another. We won a lot of games against some really good teams,

especially at the Eastern Spring Sectional and Summer Games. Unfortunately, our bid to have our name added to the USA Games drawing came one point short. I'll be honest, it took me more than six months to fully get over that loss. However, I always prefer losing close games to teams that are at or above our ability level instead of dominating teams that are below us.

One of the common misconceptions of Special Olympics is that it's just for kids. While I accomplished a lot in Special Olympics in my early years, looking back on it now, I don't feel like I was really challenged in my youth. When I was 13, my basketball coach had to pull me out a lot of times just so the other teams had a chance to score a basket. I really felt I was most challenged when I started in high school when I had to work hard just to get into a game. By pushing myself each year, I gained a better attitude and better appreciation for Special Olympics. That all paid off my senior year when I was named team captain.

As an adult participating in Special Olympics, I've been challenged every way possible in both of my sports. When I first moved to Pennsylvania, I had to start all over just like when I began high school. Through good times, I've learned to always remain humble so I don't get too down on myself when things don't go my way. It's been a long, complicated learning experience, but I feel I'm coming around. Even when I lose, I feel victorious because I have teammates, coaches, friends and family that are always by my side. That will always outrank any gold medal.

Through victory, I gain confidence. Through defeat, I gain knowledge. I'm ready for some high level competition in 2018, and I hope every other athlete is too.

Jordan Schubert is the Athlete Leadership Coordinator for Special Olympics Pennsylvania and has been participating in Special Olympics for 14 years in Pennsylvania and Illinois. Jordan is also a graduate of West Chester University in 2015.

2018 Winter Games Athlete Input Survey & Athlete Input Council Results

Athlete Input Survey Grading System: Percentage of answers selected as "Excellent"/"Better" plus one half percentage of answers selected as "Average"/"Same) divided by X (X=Total # of graded questions) = Overall Grade

Example: 80% Excellent + 20% Average ÷ 2= 90% (A-)

134 Surveys Completed as of 2/7/18

Survey Breakdown by Sport:

- Alpine Skiing: 69 (51%)
- Cross Country Skiing: 19 (14%)
- Snowshoeing: 45 (34%)
- Speed Skating: 1 (1%)

First Time vs. Returning Athlete:

- First Time: 23 (17%)
- Returning: 111 (83%)

Grades:

- Experience compared to previous years:
 - 74% Better + 20% Same ÷ 2= 84% (B)
 - 7 athletes answered "Needs Improvement"
- Overall quality of competition:
 - 84% Excellent + 16% Average ÷ 2= 92% (A-)
- Food and beverages:
 - 75% Excellent + 21% Average ÷ 2= 86% (B)
 - 5 athletes answered "Poor"
- Opening Ceremonies:
 - 91% Excellent + 7% Average ÷ 2= 95% (A)
 - 2 athletes answered "Poor"
- Olympic Village:
 - 80% Excellent + 16% Average ÷ 2= 88% (B+)
 - 47 athletes did not attend
 - 3 athletes answered "Poor"

Overall Grade:

- 89% (B+)

Additional Comments:

- Healthy Athletes was awesome.
- Better direction for the different skill levels (Alpine).
- Finish line was not well marked (Alpine).
- Enjoyed bringing in banner.
- Ice made it difficult to compete (Cross Country).
- Salads were good.
- More gluten free options.
- Bring meals to snowshoe and cross country venues.
- Best Opening Ceremonies I've seen.
- Couldn't see speakers at Opening Ceremonies.

Athlete Input Council Results

Approximately 20 Athletes in Attendance

1. Were there any delays in your competition schedule?
 - Busses were delayed going to and from Cross Country venue.
 - Directions were unclear for snowshoeing.
2. Were there enough healthy food and beverage options at meals?
 - Hard to tell which salad dressing was which.
 - No doughnuts at breakfast, serve them during dinner.
 - More variety of fruits.
3. Is there anything you would like to add/change for Opening Ceremonies and/or other extracurricular activities?
 - Not a lot of room in the plaza.
 - More media coverage.
 - Arts and crafts in Olympic Village.
 - More games at Olympic Village like checkers that are adult friendly.
4. Do you have any other questions, comments and/or concerns about Winter Games?
 - Better signage to find Healthy Athletes.
 - Water at each competition venues.
 - Bigger level signs at Alpine.
 - Give volunteers more specific information on how to help athletes.
 - Better communication between athletes and course officials.

Thanks to all the athletes that attend the Athlete Input Council and completed Athlete Input Surveys at Winter Games! Athlete Input Councils take place at all State Competitions and Athlete Input Surveys are conducted at all Sectional and State competitions. If you're unable to attend an Athlete Input Council or complete an Athlete Input Survey at any State or Sectional Competition, but have questions, ideas or concerns to share, please contact Senior Competition Director, Gina Reid at greid@specialolympicspa.org.

Important Notices

Jordan Schubert, Athlete Leadership Coordinator

Athlete Leadership University Update:

Tentative 2018 Athlete Leadership University Schedule:

- Athlete Representative I* and Global Messenger I:
 - April 21st-22nd, 2018 in Claysburg, PA.
- Athletes as Coaches and Healthy Lifestyles:
 - Summer, 2018 in Western, PA.
- Athlete Representative II and Global Messenger II:
 - Fall, 2018 in Eastern, PA.

*If you are interested in attending the 2018 Athlete Congress, **YOU MUST** take Athlete Representative I.

Athlete Leadership Team Reminder:

All Athlete Leadership Teams (ALTs) are required to submit their minutes to me following each meeting. Minutes can be sent via:

- E-mail: jschubert@specialolympicspa.org
OR
- Mail: Attn: Jordan Schubert, 2570 Blvd. of the Generals Suite 124, Norristown, PA 19403
OR
- Fax: Attn : Jordan Schubert, 610-630-9456

2018 Athlete Congress:

The 2018 Athlete Congress will be taking place from August 24th-26th at the Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center in State College, PA. Only one Athlete Representative and Athlete Representative Mentor per Local Program may attend. All athletes must have taken Athlete Representative I in order to attend.

Updated Athlete Input Council Expectations:

Athlete Input Councils are hosted at each State Competition to educate athletes on important Special Olympics Pennsylvania updates and allow competing athletes to share their event experience. Non-competing athletes (i.e. Athletes as Coaches, Health and Fitness Coordinators, general event volunteers, spectators, etc.) are permitted to attend Athlete Input Councils,

however the goal is to ensure all competing athletes have their voices heard. Non-competing athletes that have ideas, questions or concerns may speak with the facilitator(s) once the Athlete Input Council has concluded.

Athlete Leadership Facebook Group:

Are you on Facebook and want to communicate more with your fellow athletes? Send a friend request to Jelsea Schrob (a combined name for myself, Jordan Schubert and Director of Programming Projects, Chelsea Drob) to be added to SOPA's Athlete Leadership Facebook group. This group is a great way to interact with athletes, as well as receive the most up to date Athlete Leadership information. If you're not on Facebook, creating an account is quick, easy and free!

Email Address Update: I would like to be able to reach as many athletes as possible. If you haven't received any emails from me, or your email address has changed in the last year, please email me at jschubert@specialolympicspa.org.

Share Your Story: If you would like to share a story on Winter Games, State Floor Hockey, State Figure Skating or any other Special Olympics experiences, please e-mail me at jschubert@specialolympicspa.org by March 31st for a chance to have your story shared in the Winter Edition of SOAR.