

## Inspiring Athlete

What happens when you take hundreds of talented athletes, mix in a healthy dose of competition and place them in first-rate sports facilities? You have the 2004 Special Olympics Fall Games and you get many memorable performances. One of those memorable moments was delivered by Sean O'Rourke, a 27 year-old athlete from Long Island. Sean has competed in a number of different sports and wanted to try something different this year, cycling. He breezed through the trials and when the 15K event started many figured to see him cross the finish line first. Cyclist after cyclist rolled past the finish line in front of Olympic Village and still no Sean. Then, off in the distance, the fans saw something puzzling. In a quick jog, Sean had his bike in one hand and his other pumping as he ran toward the finish line. During the race Sean's back tire went flat. But he was determined to finish. On a windy, overcast, autumn day it was another perfect example of the Special Olympics Athletes' Oath, "Let me win. But if I can not win, let me be brave in the attempt."

## New York, New York

For the second straight year, at the Fall Games at the New York Chiropractic College (NYCC) coincided with the New York Yankees bid for the World Series. As most athletes were cutting a rug at the Victory Dance inside the gymnasium, a band of athletes was outside listening to the Yankees come from behind and beat the Minnesota Twins in Game 4, thus advancing to the American League Championship Series. Once the final pitch was thrown the small group ran into the gym and spread the news. It was fitting that the athletes supported the Yankees, who have hosted Special Olympics athletes at games in the past. As the dance came to a close, Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York" played to a delighted audience.

# 2004 FALL GAMES

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people," said Special Olympic New York President and CEO Neal J. Johnson. "We are so honored that President Nicchi would give us an open invitation to come back and we hope to take him up on that offer in the future."

Despite a forecast full of rain for much of the day, the clouds gave way to a few breaks of sun and the athletes provided bright smiles on the faces of all. "It was another great Fall Games in the Finger Lakes Region," said Peter Lawrence, Director of Competition for Special Olympics New York. "The New York Chiropractic College once again went out of its way to make the athletes, coaches, volunteers, and fans feel welcomed and their fantastic facilities helped to provide for a memorable weekend."

## Healthy Athletes at Fall Games

The mission of Special Olympics Healthy Athletes is to improve athletes' ability to train and compete in Special Olympics. Healthy Athletes is designed to help Special Olympics athletes improve their health and fitness, leading to an enhanced sports experience and improved well-being.

### Health Promotion

A study done at last year's World Games showed that the majority of Special Olympic athletes are over weight. Health Promotion motivates athletes to make healthy lifestyle choices to improve their long-term health.



### Healthy Hearing

When was the last time you had your hearing checked? Our athletes can get it checked at any of our state games. Healthy Hearing provides screenings for athletes, corrective and preventive services when needed and studies the prevalence of hearing loss in Special Olympics athletes.

### Opening Eyes

Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes provides screenings, educates athletes, parents, and coaches about the importance of regular eye care it also increases knowledge of visual and eye health needs of persons with intellectual disabilities through research.



### Special Smiles

The mission of Special Smiles is to increase access to dental care for Special Olympics athletes, as well as all people with intellectual disabilities. Athletes get oral hygiene education to help ensure they are doing an adequate job of brushing and flossing, as well as nutritional education to understand how their diet affects their total health.

### Fit Feet

Many Special Olympics athletes suffer from foot and ankle pain or deformities that impair their performance. Athletes are not always fitted with the best shoes and socks for their particular sport. During Special Olympics competitions, athletes receive foot and ankle screening, for deformities, and are checked for proper shoes and socks.

