

Triumph



Special Olympics New York • OCTOBER 2001

Patriotism was the Theme as Athletes Took the Field in Saugerties

The red, white and blue was displayed proudly during 2001 Fall Games weekend.

Despite a short rainstorm on Saturday morning, the athletes and coaches who came to Saugerties on Oct. 5-7 for the 2001 Fall Games enjoyed a successful competition during what turned out to be a beautiful and sunny weekend.

The nearly 800 athletes participated in Cross-Country, Cycling, Equestrian, Golf, Soccer and Softball during a weekend that started with a patriotic and exciting Opening Ceremonies on Friday night.

Athletes paraded onto the soccer field at Cantine-Veterans Memorial Complex waving American flags and were greeted by



SONY Staff

The Capital District team marches into Opening Ceremonies holding tightly to Old Glory.

members of Saugerties High School sports teams. After a ceremony that included a powerful rendition of our National Anthem by New York City singer Traci Kern and the appearance of members of the Hudson Valley Giants, a semi-professional football team, the crowd was treated to a fireworks display.

On Saturday, Softball, Soccer, Cross-Country Running and Cycling competitions were held at Cantine-Veterans Memorial Complex. The quality of the complex played a large role in the Fall Games going to Saugerties.

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Cingular Extends Special Olympics Fund-Raising Promotion

Customers to receive special rate in exchange for a \$20 donation.

Cingular Wireless has announced it has extended a cause-related marketing campaign that offers customers special rates in exchange for a donation to Special Olympics.

Through the end of the year, Cingular customers who donate \$20 to Special Olympics will be eligible for a special rate plan that includes free airtime, unlimited calls on nights and weekends, nationwide long distance and more.

The promotion was first offered in June and July only. Citing the success of the campaign, however, Cingular officials said the deal would continue through December in select Cingular markets across

the country, including those in upstate New York.

Neal J. Johnson, president and chief executive officer of Special Olympics New York,

praised the decision, saying that the promotion has

provided much needed public awareness and financial support, both of which improve athletic and social experiences for the 40,000 athletes served by Special Olympics New York.

"I would like to thank Cingular Wireless for recognizing that this promotion has enough momentum to be sustained for several more months," Johnson said.

"There's no doubt that this extension will have positive and long-lasting benefits for

our athletes."

For information on Cingular Wireless services, call 866-CINGULAR or visit www.cingular.com. ■



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Get up to date information on the official Web site of Special Olympics New York at www.specialolympicsnewyork.org.

A Message from the President

Neal J. Johnson is President & CEO of Special Olympics New York, Inc.



In the past several weeks, we've been taken out of our routines by the tragedies of Sept. 11. Life, however, is returning to normal. Here are some examples:

- Kathi Nolan, Area 7 coordinator since 1992, was inducted into the Sports Museum of Dutchess County Hall of Fame (Page ??).
- Area 4 athlete Debbie Dempsey, was inducted into the Westchester Sports Hall of Fame. She was part of a class that included football legend Art Monk and the late great broadcaster Marty Glickman.
- Although it wasn't planned, patriotism became a theme at the Fall Games Opening Ceremonies (Page 1), as Areas carried flags large and small, and chanted "U.S.A., U.S.A." as they paraded onto the field. Renditions of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "God Bless America" excited the athletes, coaches, spectators and invited guests.
- Planning for the Fall Leadership Conference and Awards Banquet continues. On Nov. 16, 17 and 18 we will honor our volunteers and athletes, celebrate the Special Olympics spirit and continue to examine how all of us can help preserve the mission of Special Olympics and make strides to improve the program we offer our existing and potential athletes.
- Cingular Wireless announced that it will offer great discounts to customers in exchange for a \$20 donation to Special Olympics (Page 1), all but guaranteeing that the success of last year's promotion will be surpassed by this year's. That's great news for our athletes.

Last, read about Jeanne Mesick on Page 5. Jeanne is our associate director of development who also serves on an elite urban rescue team in New York state. She watched the news begin to unfold from our Schenectady headquarters. On orders from the governor, she was at Ground Zero by nightfall, sifting through smoke and misery for signs of life.

While nonprofits like Special Olympics New York may suffer temporary setbacks as a result of our new war on terrorism, I choose to believe in one simple word: hope. The people and activities listed above should give all of us hope that Special Olympics, like the nation, is back in business. ■

2001 Calendar of Events

October

- 5-7 2001 Fall Games, Saugerties
- 20 Section 2 Bowling, Bowling Time Lanes, New Windsor
- 20 Section 3 Adult Bowling, (Age 22+) Pine Lanes, South Glens Falls
- 20 Section 4 Adult Bowling, (Age 22+) Oswego
- 28 Section 1 Bowling, Gil Hodges Lanes, Brooklyn

November

- 3-4 Bowling West, AMF Olympic Lanes, Rochester
- 9-11 Bowling Central, Utica
- 9-10 Bowling East (Age 22) Melville
- 16-18 Fall Leadership Conference, Queensbury Hotel, Glens Falls

For more details please contact your Director of Field Services or the Special Olympics New York office.

In the Next Issue

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- Special Olympics, Inc. Board Comes to NYC
- Bocce — How It Took Off This Year

Triumph

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Inspire Greatness

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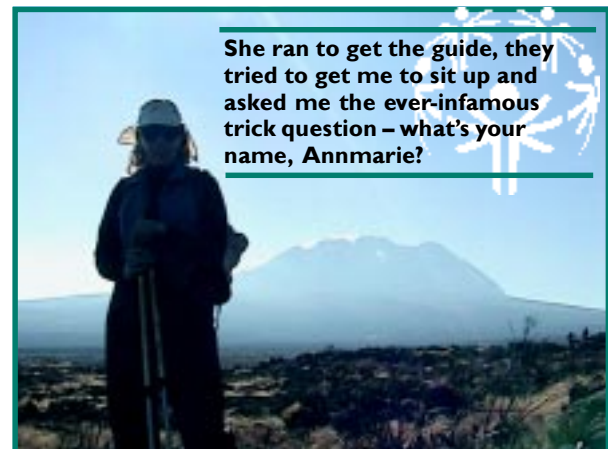
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Sgt. Annmarie Spiciarich Recounts Harrowing Story of Mt. Kilimanjaro

Officer attempts to reach top of peak in name of Special Olympics.

On Sept. 28, Sgt. Annmarie Spiciarich of the City of Poughkeepsie Police Department set out to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa at 19,340 feet, to benefit the athletes of Special Olympics New York. She was 800 feet from the summit – less than three football fields from the peak – when she fell ill from altitude sickness.



She ran to get the guide, they tried to get me to sit up and asked me the ever-infamous trick question – what's your name, Annmarie?

Annmarie Spiciarich

Annmarie stands in silhouette with the great mountain behind her.

In an e-mail from base camp, Spiciarich recounted her story for her family and friends, including those of us at Special Olympics New York.

After reaching the crater rim 800 feet from the summit, she crawled on her hands and knees and stumbled into camp.

“Luckily one of the guides was there as I rapidly became the “Scarecrow” in the

Wizard of Oz – I had plenty of forward movement, just none of it coordinated,” Spiciarich said. “By the time I made it to my tent 20 minutes later, I couldn’t untie my bootlaces.”

Thinking that she was just suffering from fatigue or altitude sickness, she went to her tent to take a nap. The lead guide came in to check on her and make sure she didn’t have a headache – a sign of a cerebral edema or swelling of the brain. She didn’t. But her tentmate continued to check on her periodically.

“Each time she came back I was more dopey than normal”, she said. “The last time she came in she said my eyes were half open and staring. She ran to get the guide. They tried to get me to sit up and asked me the ever-infamous trick question – what’s your name, Annmarie?”

She couldn’t answer them but before they could even give her oxygen, her heart rate dropped rapidly and she went catatonic. They knew they had to get her to a lower elevation level – the only thing that could cure the cerebral edema.

Spiciarich was placed in a portable hyperbaric chamber, given supplemental oxygen and six porters sprinted with her down the mountain.

“These men ran me down to a lower altitude on a mountain trail in freezing altitude, pitch black and apparently got me down about 2,000 feet in extremely short order.”

She says she doesn’t remember anything after entering her tent that night until daybreak the following day when she became semi-coherent at a lower camp. Spiciarich believes she is lucky to be alive.

“They think the reason I got the edema so severely is that I was not taking any altitude sickness medication, as I’m allergic to it”, she explains. “It was hitting me hard with no medication and I hadn’t eaten much in almost two days. All combined for a rather interesting end to an otherwise beautiful climb.”

Special Olympics New York is proud and amazed by Sgt. Spiciarich’s willingness to make such a journey in the name of Special Olympics, and would like to congratulate her for her brave attempt.

Read Annemarie’s complete account of her journey on line at www.specialolympicsnewyork.com.



Sgt. Spiciarich

Poughkeepsie PD

Athletes Invited to Gracie Mansion

Reception honors crusaders for the disabled in New York City.

New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani hosted A Celebration of Community, a reception given by The Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities on Sept. 5 at Gracie Mansion. The honorees were: Marlee Matlin, Oscar winning actress; Michael Jon Spencer, executive director of Hospital Audiences; and Sarah Reinertsen, paralympian and sportscaster.

Each honoree was given a crystal bowl in recognition of their commitment to making a difference in the lives of the disabled. Matlin gave an impassioned speech about the power of speaking out for change despite your disabilities.

“Make noise anyway you can,” she said. “You’re New Yorkers so I know you’re good at it.”

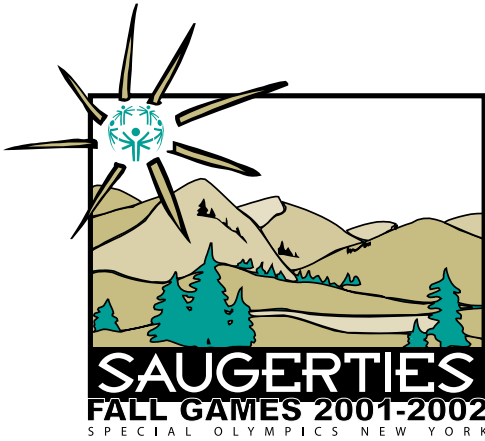
One hundred Special Olympics New York athletes and guests from New York City were in attendance and had the opportunity to meet with Matlin and Reinertsen who were signing autographs. ■



Oscar winner Marlee Matlin signs autographs for fans including athletes Mary Pansesse and Joe Pellechia of Staten Island.

SONY Staff

Patriotism was the Theme as Athletes Took the Field in Saugerties



Continued from p. 1

"The facilities at Cantine are some of the best in the state," said Peter Lawrence, director of competition for Special Olympics New York.

Equestrian was held at the brand new Beaverkill Farms. Mary Spinac, the owner of Beaverkill, was generous enough to offer not only her barn and paddocks but she and her family provided a barbecue lunch for the athletes, coaches, volunteers and their families.

Mountains and leaves in fall colors provided the backdrop for the golf events at Rip Van Winkle and Thunderhart golf courses.

"We couldn't have asked for a better weekend or for better community support," Lawrence said. "Saugerties really came out for us and we can't wait to come back next year."

The Fall Games are one of three statewide competitions held each year in New York and one of more than 400 competitions held across the state annually at either the local or sectional level.

For more information on how you can be part of the 2002 Fall Games in Saugerties, please call 800-836-6976.



Early rain may have caused the pairing games to be cancelled, but the sun shone on the rest of the softball competition at Cantine Veterans Memorial Complex.



Athletes from the Bronx were one of many programs that paraded into Opening Ceremonies waving the red, white and blue.

SONY Staff



SONY Staff

Long Island Hosts Fall Classic

Soccer stars come out to support SO athletes.

Athletes in Sections 1 and 2 competed at the annual Fall Classic sectional at Cantiague Park in Hicksville on Sept. 22. Nearly 500 athletes competed in Softball, Soccer, Cross-Country and Golf. Pictured left is President and CEO Neal J. Johnson with Nassau County athlete Michael Patton and special guests, from the New York Power, Anne Nielsen and Jessica Reifer.



Proud to be an American

A Special Olympics Employee's Thoughts From Ground Zero

There is no doubt that on the morning of Sept. 11, we were all in a state of shock over the events taking place in New York and Washington. As Special Olympics New York employees in the Schenectady office sat around a TV screen watching the news unfold, Jeanne Mesick's pager went off. Mesick is the associate director of development and Torch Run director. She is also a member of NYRRT-1, New York Regional Response Team, an urban search and rescue team. With that page she knew that her team had been activated and she was on her way to Ground Zero.

When Mesick arrived at NYRRT-1 headquarters, her team was in the midst of preparing to get on the road and they needed help. After calling home to her kids, she called back to her co-workers at Special Olympics.

"As Special Olympics New York

always is – they were inspirational, incredible and willing to help in any way," Mesick said. "Everyone at the Schenectady office played a role in allowing our rescue team to do what we do best. In just a few short hours we were heading to the World Trade Center."

Mesick, 60 other team members, and two tractor-trailers of rescue equipment arrived at Ground Zero that night to a

harrowing scene – what she called "the set of a horror movie." They were the first heavy rescue team to become operational – the first team after the FDNY.

The following day, as daylight broke she remembers how loud it was with machinery running and voices shouting orders. She could also see the destruction more clearly and was overwhelmed.

"We began to hear of our friends and teammates who got out", she said. "It's the names that we weren't hearing, that left us with heavy hearts."

Mesick was thinking that sleep would be good but there wasn't time. Forty hours later their relief crew was on its way. At about the same time the flags started to show up. She remembers them hanging from buildings, on the dump trucks carrying away debris, on rescuer helmets and stuck in uniform pockets. Flags were also draped

over the stretchers when emergency responders were removed from the rubble.

"The faces of the firefighters, police officers and rescue workers are everywhere and you could see the pain clearly", she recalled. "They will be permanently etched in my mind. So will the endurance, the will to go on and the respect."

Even through the pain, Mesick and her fellow rescuers continued to do their job – a job that went on for 16 days. Their responsibilities included searching voids with search cams and using accoustical listening devices to try and find survivors. They monitored the air for hazardous materials, provided a wood cutting station and cutting tools, and had their structural engineers monitoring the buildings for movement.

They started to rotate crews allowing team members to go home to be with their families and get some rest. Mesick's turn came on the Saturday after the attack.

"Part of me wasn't ready to go yet, the other part longed for nothing else," she said. "A few days later I was packing my gear bag because it was my turn to go back and relieve the crew that relieved us. Again, I felt very torn – I didn't want to leave the safety and security of my own home and more importantly I didn't want to leave my family and friends."

But she realized too that she still had friends that hadn't been found and that the work she would go back and do would make a difference to their family and friends. So she went back.

"I'd be home soon," she said. "So many firefighters, police officers, EMS workers and civilians wouldn't."

When people ask Mesick what they can do to help, she tells them that the best thing to do is to not fall victim to the fear of terrorism.

"Face the fear head on and move forward," she said. "Be proud, be strong and be supportive of your local emergency responders. And most importantly, be proud to be an American."

Read Jeanne Mesick's full story at www.specialolympicsnewyork.org.



Jeanne Mesick (right) examines the wreckage with another team member.



The wreckage was dangerously unstable but rescuers continued to search among the rubble with special search cams and accoustical listening devices.



Even as night fell firefighters and rescuers worked the debris piles.

Photos by

Around the State

Area 20, Monroe County



- Special Olympics athletes, parents and student volunteers from Greece Athena High School and Middle School held a car wash on Sept. 15 to raise money for Special Olympics. But when they arrived in the morning, they unanimously decided to donate all of the proceeds to the American Red Cross. HSBC Bank pledged to match the amount raised, which was more than \$1,500.
- Michael Petramalo has been hired as the new Area Coordinator of Monroe County, Petramalo is a long-time volunteer and served as a member of the Corporate Advisory Committee of Monroe's program. He is also a vice president at M&T Investment Group in Rochester.

Area 31, Suffolk County

Darragh Herlihy began as the new Area Coordinator of Suffolk County in September. Herlihy previously worked for Suffolk's program as their assistant executive director and program administrator from 1994 - 1999. She began her Special Olympics volunteer experience in 1979 in Queens.

Area 33, Manhattan

Fall Games marked the first time Manhattan competed in Equestrian at the state level. David Hill, 16, won two gold medals his first time out. The Manhattan program would like to thank Marie and Paul Riordan of Area 1- Bronx for helping them get this first year program off the ground and for providing them with a great Equestrian coach, Liz Dean.



Ray Hill, Area 33

Coach Liz Dean and David Hill.

Please call, fax or e-mail your Area information to Doreen Hand, 212-661-3963, Fax: 212-661-4658, dhand@nyso.org

Two Members of Special Olympics Family Inducted into Halls of Fame

One is an athlete, the other a volunteer, but both have received the honor of being inducted into Hall of Fames in their counties.

On Sept. 20, the Westchester Sports Hall of Fame inducted Special Olympics New York athlete Deborah Dempsey. She is the first Special Olympics athlete ever to be inducted into the Hall. She joined a class that also includes NFL great Art Monk, the late broadcasting legend Marty Glickman, Olympic swimmer Lea Maurer and Olympic sprinter Bill Collins.

Dempsey competes in Aquatics, Skiing and Track & Field. She attended the 1991 World Summer Games and brought home three gold medals for aquatics.

Kathi Nolan, the Dutchess County area coordinator and current Special Olympics New York Board Member, was



Arlene Ryan

Nolan stands with her fellow inductees at the Dutchess County Sports Museum Hall of Fame induction ceremony at the Italian Center in Poughkeepsie.

inducted in to the Sports Museum of Dutchess County Hall of Fame on Oct. 7.

Nolan was one of five inductees who were recognized for their contributions to sports on a volunteer basis. She has been involved with Special Olympics for 15 years and has served as area coordinator since 1992. ■

Are You Born to be Wild?

Here's your chance to win your very own Harley.

Close your eyes and imagine yourself cruising down the highway with a 665 pound Harley Davidson Fat Boy underneath you. The fantasy doesn't have to be all in your mind. You can own your very own 2001 Fat Boy by supporting Special Olympics New York in the Second Annual Law Enforcement Torch Run Harley Raffle.

Only 3,500 raffle tickets have been printed and they are being sold for \$20 each from now through November 21.

The winner will have a choice of the Fat Boy or \$15,000. There will also be 13 additional cash prize winners. "We are very excited to be able to hold this raffle again this year," said Jeanne Mesick, associate director of



The 2002 Harley Fat Boy®.

development. "The Harley Raffle is becoming one of our leading fund-raisers. Our special thanks to Moroney's of New Windsor NY for their help in securing the in-demand Fat Boy. We are also very grateful for the law enforcement community's support of this event. As always, our law enforcement friends come through for us in a grand way."

The drawing will take place at Moroney's Harley Davidson in New Windsor on Dec. 1.

Winners don't need to be present but everyone is welcomed to attend.

If you would like to order tickets or need more information, please call Jeanne Mesick, associate director of development, at 800-836-6976. ■



Letters

Editor's Note: *The following is a letter written to Director of Competition Peter Lawrence after the 2001 Fall Games.*

Dear Sir,

Both my wife and I have worked with challenged kids (as we like to call them) in our lifetime. My wife worked for Catholic Guardian in a home environment for about 8 "kids" in Staten Island, NY. I did some volunteer work while in high school at the "Guild for Exceptional Children" in Brooklyn, NY.

What God had planned for us was truly gracious. Thirteen months to the day yesterday, my wife (Kim) and I were blessed with our second daughter,

Kimberly Lauren. Kimberly was born with Down's syndrome. Although a majority of the world would see this as an affliction, we see it as a blessing. Many people feel Kimberly was lucky to be born to us, who have had both personal and professional experience with these special children.

I just wanted to take a moment of your time to thank you and your organization, for all you do for our children. I'm glad I had a chance to meet you (at Fall Games in Saugerties), and so many others who

worked the event. Again, thank you to the whole organization, for a terrific experience. I look forward to the day when Kimberly can partake in the events, and adding one more level of joy to our lives. We are truly fortunate to have so many people, care so much for our children. Please extend our gratitude. See you next year!!!

Sincerely,
Michael S. Tortorella
Washingtonville

For days after the Sept. 11 tragedy, messages from other Special Olympics programs throughout the country flooded my e-mail and filled my voice mailbox. Our colleagues were voicing their concern and sending their prayers and offers of help to us here in New York. While we were lucky that none of our employees were directly effected by the tragedy, those that work in our New York City office knew of loved ones, friends or business associates that worked in or near the World Trade Center.

The thoughtfulness of those notes and messages that I shared with my staff was comforting. It reminded us that we are part of a much larger family. A family that takes care of their own no matter what state they hail from. The Special Olympics family is one we are all proud to be a part of.

Thank you.
Neal J. Johnson

Editor's Note: *Lee Czajkowski competed in Special Olympics New York's Capital District for ___ years. She recently moved to Florida and is now competing locally there.*

Thank you so much for the Certificate. I was so happy to receive it and am displaying proudly in my room/den.

Special Olympics is in full swing here in the Tampa Area, but i miss the Capital Region, they are an exceptionally dedicated group. We're working on it here.

I am participating in basketball, bowling and soccer and next semester I will add swimming. Our Fall Games take place this Saturday and I am looking forward to that.

I miss you all - Stay Happy.

With love,
Lee Czajkowski



File Photo

Submit letters to Doreen Hand,
Special Olympics New York
211 East 43rd Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10017
e-mail: dhand@nyso.org.



Ed Doyle

That's Commitment!

Board Member Kathi Nolan dove into a pool full of 3,000 pounds of grits for a fund-raiser for the Dutchess County Special Olympics program. Participants were weighed in before jumping into the pool and after to see how much weight they had gained. A dollar was donated for each pound of gained grits. The fund-raiser was part of the grand opening of The Maize at Wigsten's Farm in Pleasant Valley.



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State Headquarters Staff Changes

- On Oct. 2 Diana Bennett joined the staff as director of volunteer management. In addition to organizing volunteers for state events, Bennett will also take the lead on the 2001 Fall Conference.
- Jeff Countois was hired as the new sectional sports director in the Schenectady office in September. Countois will coordinate sectional competitions throughout Sections 3, 4 and 5.
- Char Rickson has changed position from administrative assistant, development to administrative assistant, direct marketing. She remains in the Schenectady office.
- Janet Hallet, formerly the administrative assistant in Rochester, has resigned effective Sept. 11.
- Beth Costello, former director of development, has returned to Special Olympics on a part-time basis to supervise the telemarketing program. ■

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