

THURSDAY

July 5, 2007

▼ **Our views**

Event helps empower disabled

▼ **SUMMARY:** Idaho Special Olympics summer competition needs support

Empowerment is perhaps the most important theme associated with the Idaho Special Olympics, which will take place Friday through Sunday in Boise.

"Special Olympics is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition," according to the Idaho Special Olympics Web site, www.idso.org.

Don't underestimate the importance of such an endeavor.

Not everyone appreciates the benefits of sports, sometimes for good reasons. The dark underbelly of athletics includes overpaid, whining professional athletes; the hero worship of "superstars" simply because they excel, and regardless of their character; and irresponsible parents who angrily berate players, coaches, officials and everyone else within earshot.

But the Special Olympics embodies the positive aspects of physical activity and competition: Hard work. Teamwork. Sportsmanship. Fitness. An increased feeling of self-worth. ...

The list goes on. Something as positive as the Special Olympics deserves community involvement and recognition. People can donate money, volunteer their time or simply show up to cheer at the events. Such aid gives the disabled residents of our communities a chance to improve themselves and become as well-rounded as they wish.

The success of this annual endeavor requires an outpouring of support — besides devoted volunteerism, it takes \$1 million to run the Idaho Special Olympics events each year — as will The World Winter Special Olympics when it comes to Boise in 2009. The latter will rely on 6,000 volunteers, bring in 9,000 guests and cost \$12 million. Almost three-quarters of that has already been raised, but there's much more work to be done.

For more information on the organization, events or how to donate, visit the Web site or call 323-0482. Anything Idahoans can do to help is well worth the effort.

Idaho Special Olympics schedule

Friday

3-5 p.m. — Team Check in: Julia Davis Park Bandshell, 700 S. Capital Blvd.

7 p.m. — Parade Lineup

7:30 p.m. — Opening Ceremonies: Julia Davis Park Bandshell

Coaches' meeting immediately after ceremonies: Julia Davis Bandshell

Saturday

6-8 a.m. — Breakfast: Capital High School, 8055 Goddard Road

8 a.m. — Golf Competition: Shadow Valley Golf Course, 15711 Idaho 55

8 a.m. — Aquatics Competition: Boise Aquatics Center, 5959 N. Discovery Way

8 a.m. — Basketball Competition: YMCA Homecourt, 936 W. Taylor, Suite 104, Meridian

8 a.m. — Cycling Competition: Boise High School, 1010 Washington St.

8 a.m. — Athletics Competition: Timblerline High School, 701 E. Boise Ave.

8 a.m. — Equestrian: Expo Idaho, 5610 Glenwood

9 a.m. — Powerlifting

9 a.m. — Softball: Fort Boise Park, 600 W. Garrison

4-7 p.m. — Dinner Service: Capital High School

7 p.m. — Dance: Capital High Auxilliary Gym

7 p.m. — Healthy Athletes/Olympic Town: Capital High Main Gym

Sunday

7-8:30 a.m. — Breakfast Service: Capital High School

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