

# Special Olympics Alaska Anchorage Review

Information from the Special Olympics Alaska Anchorage Community Program



**Special Olympics**

**Alaska**

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Volume 2 , Issue 4  
Fall 2009

## Athlete Artist Debra Burt

**Debra Burt** is a multi-talented young lady who does many types of artwork. Working out of the ARC of Anchorage or her home, Debra enjoys painting, drawing, throwing clay for pottery, making stained glass artwork and most recently creating jewelry.. She has sold several of her paintings which are on display at the ARC, and plans to sell her jewelry at the Cook Inlet Housing Authority Bazaar Dec. 12, at Centennial Village on Peck Ave. off Muldoon.

Deb was born in Petersburg, Alaska but spent her early years in Arizona where she joined Special Olympics at age 11. Swimming has always been her favorite sport and she now swims every week with the Anchorage

Masters swim club as well as training with Special Olympics and doing water aerobics and strengthening 5x a week. She also bowls and snowshoes. A loyal employee, Debra has worked at Sourdough Mining Co. for 25 years. On her 20th anniversary with them, the restaurant gave her and a friend a trip to Hawaii for two weeks!!

Debra's dream today is to be healthy and active all her years, as she enjoys sports so much. Her favorite food? Meatball spaghetti & apple pie.

*Debra did the artwork for our coming winter thank you notes. Thank you, Debra!*

**WELCOME** new Community Management Team Member  
**EDIE KNAPP**

Edie has been with Special Olympics for many years, working with their "GMS" data system. She has been behind the scenes with data entry, competition scores, etc. until Bocce this year when she decided to be a partner with Ayesha Abdul-Jillil. That got her hooked and she has joined our CMT as a sports season coordinator along with Meg Stehn and Kim Ferko. *(Two more members will be revealed in our next newsletter.)*

*A pair of ladies eyeglasses were found at the Bocce tournament last month. They are at the office if yours. 222-6853*



## THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

*As Special Olympics Alaska, Anchorage Community is 100% volunteer, we rely completely on the generous donations - both monetary and in-kind - of our supporters. Donations received since June:*

Luda Anderson - garage sale netting \$873		
Credit Union 1 - area wide fundraiser for Special Olympics Anchorage = \$417		
Knights of Columbus Eagle River (100% participation by members) = \$495		
Gary Warkentin	Peter Hulman, M.D.	Amanda Reichman
Diana Kodiak	Rafaela Ramos	Rykir's Jewelry
Alaska Demolition	British Petroleum	Stephanie Keslar
Tallack & Elizabeth Maakestad	Mark & Jean Merrill	
Ron & Kathleen Broome	Thomas & Kelly Melton	
Mark & Theresa Johnson	William & Barbara Snell	
William & Cecilia Diedrich	Dennis & Linda Vilorio	Robin & Darlene Simono

### Your Community Management Team:

- Community Director  
Donna Davidson
- Finance Chairman  
Omer Carey
- Fundraosong Chairman  
Chad Haynes
- Bowling Training  
Kim Ferko
- Awards  
Karen Schudel
- Equipment / Uniforms  
Noreen Beckett
- Volunteer Coordinator  
Nedra Anderson
- Sports Training / Competition  
Meg Stehn  
Edie Knapp

### UPCOMING Events

- OCT. 30** FAMILY DANCE  
7-8:30 pm @ IBEW  
3300 Denali St.
- NOV. 13** Winter Registration  
Due in office
- NOV. 20-23** STATE Bowling Competition
- DEC. 4-11** First practices of winter sports season



*AN OPEN LETTER TO FAMILIES, FRIENDS AND CAREGIVERS OF ATHLETES IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS ALASKA, ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY*

I have been in the job of volunteer Community Director for Special Olympics Alaska, Inc, Anchorage for just over one year. It has been an exciting year and has taught me a great deal. I want to share with you my perspective on what is Special Olympics – as I see it from this vantage point.

Starting only 50 years ago as a local (Chicago) sports camp for persons with cognitive disabilities, Eunice Kennedy Shriver's vision has become a worldwide movement bringing people together and changing attitudes toward cognitive disabilities.

Special Olympics enriches the lives of both athletes and volunteers. For athletes it can give a sense of mastery and confidence, a sense of belonging, and opportunities for growth in fitness, speaking, community involvement. Above all it provides opportunities for socializing and having fun. What an amazing vision – a simple idea that gives so much.

How does this vision translate to the specifics of our local program? It is easy to see Special Olympics Alaska (SO-AK) Anchorage Community as an agency providing a service to anyone who meets the qualifications – as a “right” for anyone with cognitive disabilities. The reality is that our program is 100% volunteer, from Community Director and Community Management Team to coaches to competition volunteers. Volunteers are parents, caregivers, and good community folks with no family connection to Special Olympics. To manage approximately 300 athletes, and about that many more unified partners and volunteers, takes effort, time, many helpers; unfortunately, at times mistakes are made with the best of intentions.

My desire is that those with a stake in Special Olympics can see our program as a co-operative – a program where all participants share in creating the successes, and improving the things that do not go well. When something is not organized quite right, when things are inadvertently misplaced, when a coach does not meet expectations, when decisions of the CMT seem unfriendly, anyone can help change the situation. Each one of us - athletes, family members, caregivers, coaches, or CMT members - values Special Olympics and the experience it gives. Because all of us have an investment in the program, we can accept ownership. With ownership comes responsibility. We can all ask, “How can I make this work better?”

Here are just a few ways you as a family, agency and/or caregiver can help: \*pitch in at practices \*make suggestions and give positive feedback \*inform the CMT of problems or issues and give suggestions \*support financially \*write thank you notes to coaches and volunteers or help recruit new ones \*speak positively about the program to the general community \*do fundraising among your connections. Athletes can help the program also by being committed, showing up to practice on time ready to their best, listening to the coach, showing good sportsmanship, and saying “Thank You” to our volunteers.

Remember, a positive approach will help keep our volunteers! The Anchorage Community program will be its best when we all own the program – when we all work cooperatively and positively toward our major goals of sports training and competition for Anchorage area athletes. The Community Management Team needs your help to make this the best program possible.

*Donna Davidson, Volunteer Community Director*

*Special Olympics Alaska Inc., Anchorage Community*

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING COACHES FOR COMPLETING ALL REQUIRMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION:

Kim Ferko (Bowling) MaryAnn Burt (Bowling & Snowsh)  
Carolyn Carter (Bowling) Chris Block (Golf)  
Nancy Alzheimer (Bowling)

Don't forget to check our website when you need information Do. This is changed quarterly with the season change. You will find the season registration form & info there as well as latest newsletter, calendar & forms. [www.specialolympicsalaska.org](http://www.specialolympicsalaska.org)