



CHAMPIONS ONE AND ALL Special Olympians enjoy the dance at the close of the Nevada Special Olympics. *Yell Photo / Robert Anderson*

## Special Olympians excel at UNLV

By Tina Crinite  
YELLIN' REBEL

It's a world of winners where no one loses. It's the world of Special Olympics.

Nevada held its summer Special Olympics May 18-20 on the campus of University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

The games included 350 qualifying athletes from eight counties including Carson, Clark, Elko, Fallon, South Lake Tahoe, and Washoe.

The Special Olympics are a time when people from ages eight to eighty, who are faced with a mental handicap, participate in the spirit of competition to "celebrate the courage and skill of men and women whose lives are rich with promise - of independence, of work, of citizenship, of friendship, and love."

The Special Olympics movement began at the Maryland home of Eunice (Kennedy) and Sargent Shriver in the 1960's as a backyard summer daycamp. The First International Special Olympic Games were held in 1968 in Chicago, Illinois, funded then (and today) by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation.

There is no fee for entering the olympics. Much of the funding was provided by a grant from the E.I. Weigand Foundation of Nevada. The activities are supported and run by volunteers from all over the community.

Dr. Robert Ackerman, vice president of student services at UNLV, is also the chairman of the board for the Nevada Special Olympics.

Although all the athletes have some degree of mental retardation, there are also those who may, in addition to a mental handicap, possess a physical disability.

According to Ackerman, "Each athlete is appropriately matched with those athletes who have similar capabilities to create a fairer level of competition. Emphasis is not placed solely on winning a gold medal," Ackerman said.

Ackerman spoke of the tremendous support and service provided by certain UNLV staff members as well as members of the community during the games.

"You feel good about yourself after volunteering, and it's rewarding to know that one of the goals is to improve their (the athlete's) quality of life," Ackerman said.

"Another important point to remember is that the participants should be thought of as athletes," Ackerman said. He was concerned with the prior coverage of the Special Olympics. The publicity appeared on the society/feature section and not sports, but Ackerman emphasized these people are athletes and even scores would be more meaningful if maybe posted in the sports section of a newspaper or broadcast.

Liz Baldizon, in charge of the opening and closing ceremonies, said, "The Special Olympics was a time for feeling good about what

you did, volunteer or athlete. It was a time for feeling satisfied with what they had to accomplish, and giving justice to what Special Olympics was all about."

Baldizon said there were various events including weight lifting, track and field, aquatics and sports such as softball, tennis, and soccer. New introductions to the Special Olympics included an Equestrian demonstration, as well as demonstrations in gymnastics and volleyball.

The athletes sometimes become frustrated with the outcome of some events yet Baldizon felt that it may be considered a positive experience.

"They are very emotional and loving people, and learning to lose is part of the growth experience," Baldizon said. "The athletes learn that there are people who may be better but that their accomplishments are of the most important achievements of the whole experience."

Every athlete who participates receives something, whether it is a gold medal or a participation ribbon. All participants earn a hug and heartfelt thank you at the end of their events.

The athletes stayed in the dorms for the duration of the events and Betty Fisher, along with others, was in charge of keeping the athletes fed.

"It was an outstanding and fulfilling experience," Fisher said. "At the closing barbecue and dance, many relationships were formed and everyone became super-attached."

The athletes who participated gained a deep sense of achievement as well as the volunteers. Dianna Bell, mother of three children, has a son, Raymond who participated in the 25 yard freestyle swimming event. Bell said it was exciting for her as well as Raymond.

"When he was awarded the medal, all the excitement of winning was a shock; his face beamed after receiving his award."

"It's a joy for Raymond knowing that this accomplishment was something only he achieved by himself," Bell said.

Bell also commented on the fact that the events in the Special Olympics not only helped Raymond's coordination, but also improved everyone's sense of self esteem. She said she was also impressed with people's reaction in the community.

Although Bell said the media should have provided more coverage, she was impressed with the unexpected treatment Raymond received at Pistol Pete's Pizza. When they learned of his accomplishments they rewarded him with a free pizza and balloons.

"It shows a real sense of interest and caring within the Las Vegas community," said Bell.

Baldizon, as well as all volunteers and participants, expressed a feeling of satisfaction in the "super-positive growth experience."

"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

The Special Olympics Oath

## No plan for Health Plan

By Shawn Snider  
YELLIN' REBEL

A policy to help avoid a recurrence of this spring's outbreak of measles on campus, or any such related health epidemic, is nonexistent at University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

This is in contrast to a recommendation by the American College Health Association (ACHA) in 1983 suggesting that all colleges and universities require a physician documented history of immunization status, that would include sanctions to be imposed against students who don't comply.

Dr. MarJeanne Collins, chair of the immunization board of the ACHE said, "Some 22 states have already formed their own pre-matriculation policies which have been enacted and are in force. This amounts to about 44 percent of all universities nationwide."

These schools require all in-

coming freshman, transfer, and graduate students to supply immunization records upon admission to the institution.

The students have a semester in which to comply. If they fail to bring in the needed documentation, they are denied enrollment in the next session.

"I think it's critical to have such a policy implemented here at UNLV," said Lori Winchell, director of student health services.

Winchell said a mandatory student medical history assessment would not only help curb certain epidemics by supplying immunization records, but it would also give information on family medical histories, allergies, current medications, and emergency names to be contacted.

"This information would be of benefit to everyone and would aid the health center in providing the best care possible for the students," Winchell said.

The University of Pennsylvania has had such a policy in effect since 1986.

Dr. Collins, who is also the director of student services at that university said, "We have a student population here of 22,000 and have had very few problems with student compliance. It is working very well."

Collins explained that a coordinator is needed to set up the procedure and then follow up with reminder and warning notices. Forms, guidelines and even a software program is available for this from the ACHA.

"It is a plan," said Collins, "that is working and has been working around the nation for some years."

Robert Ackerman, vice president of student services, said UNLV is presently looking into the need for such a plan and its feasibility.

## Measles: Gone or just out of town?

By Shawn Snider  
YELLIN' REBEL

The measles epidemic that hit University of Nevada, Las Vegas this spring has had no new cases reported. The total rests with three confirmed cases and two unconfirmed.

"The problem with accurate reporting," said Lori Winchell, director of student health services, "is that right after the outbreak occurred, it was the end of the se-

mester and a lot of students left town. We will have to wait till September to see if there is still a problem."

Ed Bowes, director of the state board of immunization, said there has been a total of 149 cases reported so far in Clark County alone, with an average of seven to ten new cases reported each week.

"We are seeing slow down right now," Bowes said. "But with school out, we have a big source of reporting gone. It's not over

with yet."

Immunizations are available at the student health center and at the Clark County Health Department and are still strongly encouraged for all those who have not been inoculated and for anyone who has been exposed to a known carrier within three days.

Bowes agreed that we will have to wait till fall to know the extent of the epidemic. Until then he said it is a smoldering situation.



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