



Villa Grove News

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Special Olympics: Great Event for Great Group



Special Olympians (back row) with their coaches (front row). Photo courtesy of Brian Cordes.

By Tony Hooker
Staff Writer

Like almost all big things, the Special Olympics started out as a relatively small thing. In 1960, Eunice Kennedy Shriver learned that summer camps weren't equipped to welcome children with disabilities, and in her typical altruistic fashion, she set out to do something about it.

In no time, Camp Shriver was born. That first year, 34 campers were assisted by 26 counselors. The counselors were local high school and college students, a tradition that in Villa Grove, at least, continues to this day, thanks to the tireless efforts of Sondra Burwell and her team. From these humble beginnings, the modern Special Olympics arose. Today, 4.9 million athletes from around the globe are given the opportunity to compete. Here in Villa Grove, 9 of these special kids will take their marks on April 26, and these are their stories, as well as the stories of their coaches.

Mary Tumbleson

How long have you been competing?
It's my second year.
What is your favorite event?
Softball throw because I can throw it very far.
What is your favorite part of competing?
Making it to State!
What is your least favorite part of doing this?
Nothing. I just love it all!
What do you want to be when you grow up?
I want to be a veterinarian, so I can help animals like horses, dogs, and cats.

Jacob Miller

How long have you been competing?
Two years for Villa Grove.
What is your favorite event?
The softball because I like

to throw softballs.
What is your favorite part of competing?
Winning a medal.
What is your least favorite part of doing this?
I just like everything about it.

What do you want to be when you grow up?
I want to be a basketball manager for the Lakers.

Chance McClain

How long have you been competing?
3 years
What is your favorite event?
Softball
What is your favorite part of competing?
the coaches. I like Chase Burwell
What is your least favorite part of doing this?
run
What do you want to be when you grow up?
fireman Chance

Violet Eri-Soper

How long have you been competing?
This is my third year.
What is your favorite event?
I like long jump.
What is your favorite part of competing?
I like going to the meets.
What is your least favorite part of doing this?
I like everything.
What do you want to be when you grow up?
I want to be a teacher. I want to be a pre-school teacher.

Liam Richey

How long have you been competing?
This is my third year
What is your favorite event?
Shot put because it helps me get stronger.
What is your favorite part of competing?
Seeing my family cheering me on!

What is your least favorite part of doing this?
Nothing!
What do you want to be when you grow up?
I want to be a track coach and teacher. I like to work with kids.

Kaleb Drew

How long have you been competing?
About three years.
What is your favorite event?
Running because I like to go fast.
What is your favorite part of competing?
I like winning.
What is your least favorite part of doing this?
I don't like throwing the ball.
What do you want to be when you grow up?
I want to work at Leaf It 2 Us.

Alexander Cook

How long have you been competing?
This is my second year
What is your favorite event?
My favorite event is running because I can run really, really, fast. I can run as fast as the Flash!
What is your favorite part of competing?
When I get first place and get a Gold medal.
What is your least favorite part of doing this?
I'm going to say softball because I can't throw very far.
What do you want to be when you grow up?
I want to be a demolition derby driver. I am going to drive a derby truck. My truck's number will be 49 and the back of my truck will say "Don't mess with the big boy or I'll mess you up!"

Aleah Hatten

How long have you been competing?
This is going to be my first

year.
What is your favorite event?
My favorite event is running because I love to run fast and win gold medals.

What is your favorite part of competing?
I love being outside. This is the most fun I have ever had!
What is your least favorite part of doing this?
I like everything!
What do you want to be when you grow up?
I want to be a princess because I want to live in a castle. I will become a royal girl and use good manners.

Morgan Quigley

How long have you been competing?
It's my third year.
What is your favorite event?
100-meter dash because you can run fast.
What is your favorite part of competing?
Winning gold medals and hearing people cheering me on.
What is your least favorite part of doing this?
I like everything.
What do you want to be when you grow up?
I want to be a cop, so I can run after bad guys.

COACHES

Like the athletes themselves, it takes a special person to coach these teams, and here are the stories of those who have given of their time to make this event memorable for the athletes, and for themselves.
Kirsten Foreman
How long have you been involved with the Special Olympics?
This is my first year.
Why did you decide to be a part of it?
I have always liked helping others and playing sports. This seemed like a great opportunity to volunteer in my community and achieve both.
What's been

ment with all the kids. When I heard that the kids were doing Special Olympics, I asked to help with long jump since this is an event I participate in myself in track. I also want to be a special education teacher when I graduate. This is the fun part of the job!

What's been your greatest reward for helping coach?
Seeing all the kids accelerate and doing way better than what I saw in their first practice.

Chase Burwell

How long have you been involved with the Special Olympics?
This is my second year in Villa Grove. I have helped my mom with the program in the past when she taught in Arthur.
Why did you decide to be a part of it?
As a child I did not understand the importance of feeling special even, though my family and friends made me feel special. These kids want just that. The Special Olympics makes them feel like Kings and Queens. I'm honored to be able to be a part of it.

What's been your greatest reward for helping coach?
These kids think they need me, but in reality, I need them. They make me feel special and make my day.

Madison Burwell

How long have you been involved with the Special Olympics?
I have been involved with the Special Olympics for three years. Two years with Villa Grove and one year with my mom in Arthur.
Why did you decide to be a part of it?
I have always liked helping others and playing sports. This seemed like a great opportunity to volunteer in my community and achieve both.
What's been

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Villa Grove Varsity Scholastic Bowl Earn Title: Parkland Challenge Champions



The Villa Grove Varsity Scholastic Bowl team competed in Parklands challenge. They went on to the Final Four beating Rantoul and Champaign Centennial to become the Parkland Challenge Champions on April 17th.

VG News Presents: Easter Basket Winners



Nick Gire and Alice Mitsdarfer are the winners of the Villa Grove News 2019 Easter Basket Coloring Page giveaway. Thanks again to our page sponsors and to Monicals Pizza of Villa Grove.

Side Tracks

your express route to upcoming VG events

4/24 CPR/1st Aid from 9am-2pm @VG Senior Center

4/26 Special Olympics

4/29 Special School Board Meeting @6pm

4/30 Spring Band Concert Grades 5-12 @7pm

4/30 Poetry Short Story Reading from Noon-2pm at Villa Grove Senior Center

5/4 Villa Grove VFW Loyalty Day Parade 10am Main Street, VG. Line up begins at 9am

5/7 VGHS Honors Banquet

5/8 VG School Early Dismissal 1:30

5/8 VG Booster Club 6pm

5/9 Spring JH & HS Choir Concert @ 7pm

5/10 Blue Devil Classic

5/11 VGHS Prom

5/12 Mother's Day

5/13 PTO Meeting @ 630pm

5/15 Motorcycle Safety Awareness Seminar from 10am-1pm at Villa Grove Senior Center

5/17-18 Villa Grove Town Wide Garage Sales

5/18 Countryside United Methodist Church Flea Market 7am-2pm

5/18 Camargo Township District Library Kids Prom for Pre-K - 3rd Grade 6-7pm

5/20 Villa Grove School Board Meeting @6pm

5/22 VGHS Finals Periods 1, 2 and 3

5/22 Villa Grove School Early Dismissal at 1:50 and 2pm

5/23 Villa Grove School 8th Grade Promotion

5/27 Memorial Day

If you have an upcoming event that you would like to see featured in Sidetracks, email us at vgnews@mchsi.com or call us at 832-4201