HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT



"A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE"

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HOLMDEL UNIFIED INTRAMURAL SPORTS LEAGUE GETS READY FOR SPRING

HOLMDEL (March 20, 2017) – With the support of a Play Unified grant from Special Olympics New Jersey, the Holmdel Unified Intramural Sports League (HUISL) is heading into its Spring season at the district's four schools.

HUISL joins students with and without disabilities on the same team. The league is dedicated to promoting social inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences. According to Special Olympics, programs like these are inspired by a simple principle: "training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding."

The program provides an opportunity for children of all abilities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other athletes, and the community.

During the winter months the league took on basketball, with players focusing on shooting, passing, and dribbling skills. Seventh grader Nick DiBlasi was very enthusiastic about his participation in the program. "We really like seeing how we can do the same things," he explained. But the students aren't the only ones who get involved. Patrick Gross, a seventh grader, described that one of things he enjoys is "practicing passing with Mr. Saler." Daren Saler, a special education teacher, is one of the adults involved with helping keep the HUISL moving. The Unified Sports Program Co-Coordinators are high school teachers James Gelpke & Elliot Cohen.

Indian Hill teacher Leslie McMahon is one of the district's Unified Sports Coaches. She has seen first-hand how these experiences are beneficial for all children. "The hope is that the acceptance and appreciation of people's similarities and differences are reflected in their everyday lives," she said after a recent meeting of the team. "When children of different abilities play together, all are learning valuable lessons of respect and understanding," she added.

The students in the program clearly love getting to work and play together, and everyone involved seems to be learning important lessons as well. This spring, the Holmdel Unified Intramural Sports League will head outdoors to take part in track and field events. On-line registration begins March 30th for the spring season.