

From Siloed to Celebrated:  
The Tragedy & Triumph Behind Special Olympics  
Transcript of Interview with Jennifer Kotler, Mother of Special  
Olympian

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Q: How did you first get involved with the Special Olympics?

A: We became aware of Special Olympics through Jessica's school for children with special needs. Her school, organizes practices for kids which are held on Sunday afternoons and then the kids have the opportunity to compete in a regional special Olympics competition in the Spring.

Q: Why did you chose to have Jess participate in this program?

A: We chose to have Jess participate because it would be a fun and active activity for her to do with many special needs peers as well as give her more inclusion opportunity with coaches and volunteers.

Q: What impacts has the Special Olympics had on Jess in particular? I know her involvement is limited, but do you have a sense of what the experience has been like for her?

A: Jess enjoys ANY activity where she can be around a lot of kids and where she gets a lot of special attention. Plus, she loves to be outside and active and it was a fun activity for her. I think it also helps her work on her listening skills and her attention skills.

Q: Has the Special Olympics impacted your family as a whole? How? If this question doesn't fit for you very well given your limited participation, what are your thoughts on the importance of the Special Olympics more generally for children and adults with special needs?

A: I don't know if I can say it impacted our family specifically, but I do know that for kids that are high functioning enough to really take it seriously and go far that it probably does exactly for them what sports and competition in general does for all children: Its fun, teaches discipline, hard work, dedication, teamwork and resilience.