



**Special
Olympics
Illinois**



Chicago Fire All Star Team Athlete/Partner/Coach Bio

Name: Ryan McDonough

Age: 20

Hometown: Aurora, IL

Role for Team (Athlete, Partner, Coach): Athlete

Local Agency: STEPS Alumni Eagles

Years Involved in Special Olympics: 10 years

Other Special Olympics Sports Involved In: Tennis, Basketball

Background (School, Job): D204 STEPS transition program/Technology Center of DuPage, College of Dupage, GameStop

Accomplishments: 2nd year on Chicago Fire team (2105, 2017), Virginia Xperience Tennis Invitational tournament - 2017, SO Global Messenger, Fox Valley Special Recreation Association Athlete of the Year – 2014, Waubonsie Valley High School Outstanding Senior Physical Education Department - 2016

Summary of Impact Special Olympics has had on you and/or your family:

From Ryan - Special Olympics helps me be active in sports and fitness. I have made a lot of good friends through Special Olympics. I have gained leadership skills through Special Olympics. My accomplishment with Special Olympics makes me feel good about myself and gives me confidence. They show me that I am moving in the right direction and I know that I have the ability to be successful in my life. And, I just love to play sports!

From family point of view – Special Olympics has allowed Ryan to find a place that he fits in. It allows him to compete and succeed in ways we never thought would be possible. He always wanted to play sports, but could never compete with typical kids. When Ryan was in 4th grade, he desperately wanted to be on our neighborhood swim team. He gave it a try, but just couldn't keep up. He struggled and was very disappointed. We heard about SO and Ryan joined the FVSRA swim team. The SO coach, Mike Younnie, was amazing! He connected with Ryan and made him feel good about himself. Ryan gained skills and won his first gold medal. He finally found a place that was right for him. He was happy and proud of his accomplishments. He has continued to gain skills, on and off the field and to grow as a person. He went from a kid that was sad, frustrated and disappointed. To a young adult that is proud, independent and confident

Why is being a member of the Chicago Fire All Star Team important to you? It's such a unique once (well twice) in a lifetime experience. I am really proud to represent Special Olympics Illinois and Chicago Fire. I love that I get to meet other athletes and peer partners that are just like me. I love being part of a team. I love to play soccer and this helps me improve my skills. Plus, it's just really cool!

