



Athlete Input Council Chaperone Hometown: Bloomington, IL

1. How long have you been with Special Olympics?

I have been involved with Special Olympics for nearly 25 years. I worked for 18 years as a member of the communications staff at Special Olympics Illinois, where I was involved with the Global Messenger program. During that time, I was a member of Team USA's communications team at the 2007, 2009, and 2011 World Games and did the same for Illinois at the 2006 and 2014 USA Games. I also was a bocce Unified partner for many years. Since leaving SOILL, I have been a coach with Special Opportunities Available in Recreation (S.O.A.R). I currently coach Unified bocce, basketball, swimming and volleyball, plus I serve as a Global Messenger mentor.

2. How has Special Olympics changed your life?

Through my involvement in Special Olympics, I have become a better person. I have had the opportunity to watch so many athletes grow into the best version of themselves that they can be and during that time, I have grown too. I have made some amazing friends during that time, with other coaches, staff, family members and volunteers, but most importantly, with the athletes. They continue to amaze and inspire me every day and deserve all of our respect as they show the world what they CAN do.

3. What has been your biggest obstacle to overcome?

I am by nature a reserved person, but can become very vocal when at a Special Olympics event - whether that be in coaching, cheering, or advocating for our athletes.

4. What makes you most proud?

I am so proud of our athletes and what they accomplish every day. They constantly inspire me to be a better person. I am also so proud of my daughter who grew up attending Special Olympics events with me when she was a child, became a volunteer and Unified partner, then a coach, and now teaches Special Education at an elementary school. She and I coach many sports together and I am constantly amazed at her patience and knowledge. We will both be attending these USA Games together, so it will be a special week.



5. What are some other accomplishments you are proud of?

While at Special Olympics Illinois, many of the photos I took won honors from the Law Enforcement Torch Run. I also designed the LETR for SOILL license plates for the State of Illinois.

6. What other interests or hobbies do you have?

I enjoy reading, writing, and photography, plus doing puzzles and crafts.

7. Who do you admire most and why?

I admire my daughter, Miranda, who grew up attending Special Olympics events with me when she was a child, became a volunteer, and Unified partner, then a coach and now teaches Special Education at an elementary school. We coach many sports together and I am constantly amazed at her patience and knowledge. She teaches me ways to better communicate and interact with our athletes all the time.

8. What does attending USA Games mean to you?

After attending the USA Games many times as a SOILL staff member, I have always wanted to return as a part of the team. I am attending in 2022 as an AIC chaperone and am looking forward to seeing the games from a completely different perspective.

9. How are you preparing/training for USA Games?

Trying to learn as much as I can about my partner and the AIC

10. Have you been to a World Games or USA Games before?

I was a member of Team USA's communications team at the 2007, 2009 and 2011 World Games and did the same for Illinois at the 2006 and 2014 USA Games.

11. Are you employed? If so, where at and what's your role?

I currently work at Illinois Prairie Community Foundation as Grants & Communications Director and am on staff at S.O.A.R. (Special Opportunities Available in Recreation).

12. Are you currently a student? If so, where and is it a Unified Champion School?

No

