

Joseph Maller

*Special
Olympics
Illinois*



Sport: Unified Soccer
Hometown: Mundelein, IL
Age: 21

1. How long have you been with Special Olympics?

I have been in Special Olympics since I was in ninth grade and have continued while I am in transition. I have participated in the following sports: soccer, bocce, snowshoeing, basketball, floor hockey, and bowling.

2. How has Special Olympics changed your life?

I have had so much fun and have made friends for life while doing Special Olympics and Andy Compton the coach has made me a better person as well as a better athlete. I cannot sing his praises enough. He holds us accountable while also being kind and patient. He is truly a great coach. I am trying to get one more year of transition, just so I can be part of Special Olympics and be coached by Andy Compton.

3. What has been your biggest obstacle to overcome?

My biggest problem in life has been reading. I have a tutor, Miss Robin Blaha, who has given me the tools to read. My reading level has gone up tremendously while under her tutelage.

4. What makes you most proud?

I am most proud of being part of such a great organization as Special Olympics.

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

Besides participating in Special Olympics, I am also a Life Scout in BSA. My goal is to be a photographer, and I have taken and passed one class at Oakton Community College in photography. I am hoping to take and pass enough classes to get Oakton's Certificate in Photography. I was the photographer student of the month while I was at Libertyville High School.

6. What other interests or hobbies do you have?

I am part of St. Mary of Vernon parish where I give food. I also regularly give blood because I am O-positive and my iron is good. They like to take double red blood cells from me to help out patients who have had severe trauma and bleeding.

7. Who do you admire most and why?

I admire both Andy Compton for his kindness and faith in all of us and Robin Blaha for helping me how to learn to read.



8. What does attending USA Games mean to you?

I am looking forward to everything involved in USA Games, from the competition to the location to meeting new people and making new friends. All of it intrigues me and I am very excited to be participating in this event.

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

We have been practicing as a team Mondays and Tuesdays after school and will start practicing on the weekends soon. I also want to start going to the gym on my own to get stronger and more flexible so I can have my best game possible for the event.

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

I have not participated in World Games before, only state games. One year we won the State Basketball championship.

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

I have an internship as part of my transition program and currently it consists of working in the kitchen of Sedgebrook, an assisted living facility for senior citizens.

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

I am currently going to SEDOL and Libertyville High School in the transition program. District 128 is where I participate in Special Olympics and we do participate in the Unified program.

