



## Coach - Powerlifting Hometown: Hanover Park, IL

### **1. How long have you been with Special Olympics?**

I have been a coach for about 15 years. I have coached just about every sport in some form and I enjoy the team sports the most. My favorite part of coaching is watching the team come together and support each other win or lose.

### **2. How has Special Olympics changed your life?**

Special Olympics has been such a huge part of my life for so long that it's hard to tell how it has changed my life. Coaching has become a part of who I am shows through patience, advocacy, setting high expectations, and differentiating how I interact with people throughout my daily life.

### **3. What has been your biggest obstacle to overcome?**

Four years ago, I was offered the chance to take over the Special Olympics program in our school district and leave my classroom I had been teaching in for just over 10 years. The problem I was faced with was completely internal - do I take on this amazing opportunity to reach in influence athletes and partners across our district, or stay teaching in my classroom forming deep relationships with my students and families like I always dreamed I would do forever. Ultimately, I chose to take on the program specialist role in the district and have been able to devote all of my work into our Special Olympics program and have never regretted it.

### **4. What makes you most proud?**

I was the head coach of Female Team USA in the International Unified Football Cup during the 50th anniversary celebration in 2018. That was one of the greatest experiences of my life.

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

I'm a United States Track & Field Level I Coach NASM Personal Trainer.

### **6. What other interests or hobbies do you have?**

I love photography and enjoy taking family pictures for my friends and family as a way to spend quality time and show them I care. I also work at a gym coaching adults and teens keeping them safe while working out.



**7. Who do you admire most and why?**

Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She was a mighty force who wasn't afraid to go up against adversity to make a difference in the lives of people across our nation.

**8. What does attending USA Games mean to you?**

Being a part of Team Illinois for USA Games is so exciting for me. I most look forward to meeting new athletes, learning new coaching techniques, and helping to facilitate a memorable experience for our athletes.

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

I will continue my own work training in powerlifting as well as reading up on research in training techniques and methods for athletes.

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

This is my first USA Games experience, but I was a part of Team USA for the Unified Football Cup during the 50th Anniversary celebration in Chicago in 2018.

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

Yes, I am the Special Olympics Program Specialist in Schaumburg School District 54 in Illinois. My entire role is dedicated to Unified Champion Schools, traditional and unified sports as well as Young Athletes for about 1,000 students across our district.

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

No

