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Awards Ceremony Helps Grow Inclusion Culture

Special Olympics Illinois Coach and Athlete to Be Honored at Awards Presentation

Springfield, Ill. – June 18, 2020 – Chase Metz and Jill Steiner were named the Special Olympics Region H Athlete of the Year and Coach of the Year, respectively, on Thursday during The State Journal Register’s 2020 Capital Region Preps Awards.

Incorporating athletes from the organization is an illustration of the Choose to Include motto touted by Special Olympics Illinois as it works to transform the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and the people who support them.

“We are excited for the opportunity to recognize both Chase and Jill,” said Lynde Pavich, Region H Director, Special Olympics Illinois. “Having a Special Olympics Illinois Region H athlete and coach honored in this way is a true representation of inclusion. For that, we are grateful and honored to be part of the Virtual Capital Region All Star Prep Awards event.”

Each year, the Preps event honors the best in high school athletics. This year, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, The State Journal-Register has decided to transform the event to a virtual one, in order to uphold the tradition. The event featured A-list athletes, including Patrick Mahomes, Venus Williams, and Michael Phelps.

Chase Metz has been a Special Olympic athlete for 18 years and was one of the first athletes on the Chatham Chargers. He participates in flag football, golf, soccer, track and field, and basketball. Chase is always encouraging and helpful to other athletes, even ones he is directly competing against. He embodies the true meaning of sportsmanship and the spirit of Special Olympics. When he is not participating in an event, you can usually find Chase volunteering to help with anything needed or at his job working in a local hotel.

Jill Steiner has been coaching for 12 years with the YMCA Special Olympics Bowling Team. In 2008, the program started with only three athletes. After teaming up with other local agencies to grow the program, they now serve more than 160 athletes. This is a year-round opportunity that is offered for free due to the fundraising efforts and sponsors from the YMCA.

To learn more about the 2020 Capital Region Preps Awards, please visit preps.springfield.gatehouselive.com.

Special Olympics Illinois is a not-for-profit sports organization offering year-round training and competition in 18 sports for more than 23,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities and over 17,000 Young Athletes ages 2-7 with and without intellectual disabilities. It strives to be a global leader in shaping a culture where people with and without intellectual disabilities are fully integrated into the community by providing year-round opportunities in competitive sports, health education, leadership, and personal development. If you are interested in being a part of Special Olympics Illinois and its vision, contact your local region, call 800-394-0562 or visit our website at www.soill.org. Follow Special Olympics Illinois on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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