



## Coach - Swimming Hometown: Shiloh, IL

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

I first became involved with Special Olympics in 1996 when I began my career as a special education teacher. My experience with Special Olympics has been as a coach for swimming, volleyball, snowshoeing, and other sports as needed.

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

Special Olympics for me is my calling and such a wonderful organization! It has given me the opportunity to give more of myself to others, a deeper understanding of individual and personal challenges in life, a more clear and positive vision of the loving and inclusion of others for whom they are, and overall stronger connections with people in my life.

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

The biggest challenge that I have overcome was proving to myself that even though I grew up in a small town, did not have any competitive swimming experience as a youth, and only had Red Cross Water Safety certification, I could work hard and become a strong swim coach for Special Olympics and coach athletes of all ages and abilities.

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

I am most proud of being a father to my three kids, being a special education teacher to students in grade 4-6 with intellectual disabilities, and being a Special Olympics swim coach and snowshoeing coach for my local agency!

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

I have been a special education teacher for 26 years, a Special Olympics swim coach for 24 years, have coaching experience in swimming and volleyball at the World Games level, nominated and honored with character awards for "positive role model" to students and others as a special education teacher, have organized and directed a summer camp program for students with intellectual disabilities for 22 years, am trained as an IM Coach with the Michael Phelps Foundation and assisted in trainings.



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

Volunteering as a Special Olympics swim coach and snowshoeing coach are the ways I get involved with my community; I also volunteer and contribute time with after-school activities in my job, at my own kids' school, and with other Special Olympics sport as needed.

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

I admire proactive parents of individuals with special needs, Special Olympics coaches in all sports, individuals who display respect, compassion, love, and empathy towards others without recourse, and individuals who show perseverance, integrity, and honesty within themselves.

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

Attending and participating in the 2022 USA Games as a swim coach will be a new and exciting experience for me! I am truly looking forward to meeting the selected swimmers and coaches from Illinois, sharing in the USA Games experience with Team Illinois and with other USA teams, coaching swimmers watching them compete and having fun in the pool, and learning from and sharing ideas with coaches from other states in USA!

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

I am preparing for the 2022 USA Games by making myself available for all SOILL USA Games meetings (in-person/virtual), any phone calls and email responses, will attend the processing day and meet the other coaches and athletes, attend and participate in the SOILL USA Games training, and keep ongoing contact with swim coaches and athletes up to USA Games. As for my training, a regimen of physical fitness: stretching, running, walking, lifting weights, and all eating healthy.

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

This will be my first USA experience. My responsibility will be as a swim coach, coaching with two other coaches from Team Illinois and I am psyched for it! I have participated in the following World Games: 1999 North Carolina - swim coach, 2003 Ireland - volleyball coach, 2011 Greece - swim coach, 2015 Los Angeles - swim coach, 2019 Abu Dhabi - swim coach.

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

I am an elementary special education teacher in District #118 in Belleville, IL. This is my 26th year.

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

No

