

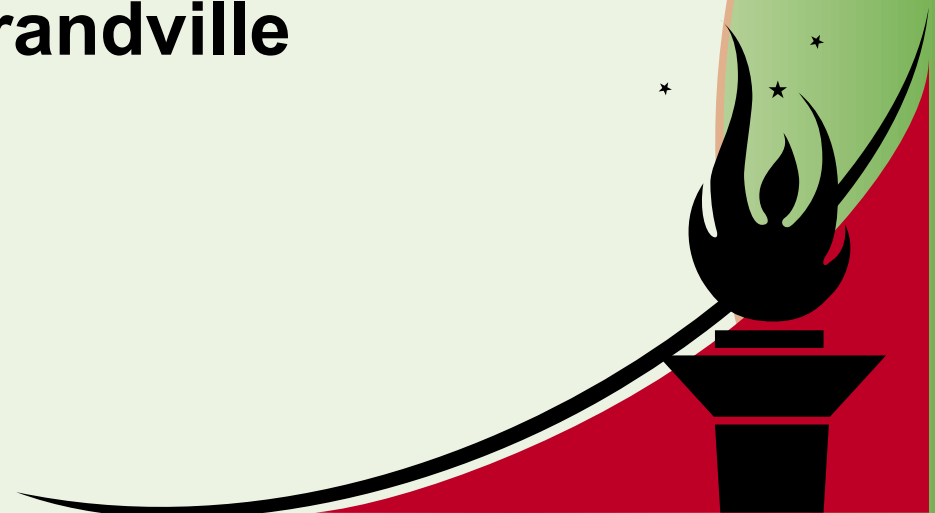


Special Olympics
Michigan

“I Love You Guys”

a campaign for

**The 2009 Basketball
Tournament Finals
in Grandville**



THE MISSION

Every year since 1981 Special Olympics Michigan, who works across the state with individuals who have intellectual disabilities, has come to Greater Grand Rapids to hold its State Basketball Tournament Finals. Our community feels like an adoptive family to the athletes. Local volunteers, such as the Grand Rapids Jaycees Chapter who brought the event here, have been stalwart. We have been so good to Special Olympics, I can assure you, our local athletes, and many more are more than grateful.

They have reciprocated by bringing joy and renewed love to us for over 27 years. All of this has come to us free of any fund raising obligation.

Like so many hard working families today, the budget of Special Olympics Michigan, has tightened. No one among us argues we need to make wise investments of our philanthropic dollars. 2008-2009 marks the first time Special Olympics has opened up to us with any financial request for this state event. They have requested help in two matters financial:

First, the annual event has been moved to Grandville, its new home, from 2009 and beyond. A new residence, which may not be immune to economic hardships, but one committed to the faith and caring necessary to make a great difference if called upon.

Also, from a purely economic perspective; the West Michigan Sports Commission reports that this three-day event brings in well over 2,000 athletes, coaches and fans who contribute \$500,000 total in spending at local hotels, restaurants and retail stores.

As Honorary Chair, another pragmatic matter is close to my heart. It is West Michigan's most valued resource – young people. This cooperative fund raising initiative comes with special leadership training linkages between our high school and college youth. Giving them an opportunity to have a stake in West Michigan's future by volunteerism. Role models can be found at any age or place so why not start here?



This campaign is planned to embed and sustain this event in Grandville. Please join me in learning more about this “win-win” cause.

Honorary Co-Chair
Peter F. Secchia



A GRAND RIVER

In Western Michigan, we are blessed with an abundance of water. Streams flow all around us, some a trickle, others powerful. When they join, a “grand” river is created. Those of us who live here tap into them for sustenance and pleasure.

There are also streams of another kind in West Michigan – streams of concern for others, streams of resources, life-giving streams. The families among us who are nurturing special needs children depend especially on these streams.

Our focus is on two of these types of streams: first the leadership financial gifts available from our generous Grand Rapids benefactors and secondly the special gifts and outreach from the Grandville community. Flowing together, these streams also create a “grand” river for the benefit of athletes with special needs and West Michigan.

The role I have taken on as honorary co-chair are streams those who know me, understand and appreciate.

I also desire to introduce Amanda Schelling, chair, steering committee and learn more about their efforts on behalf of the Big John Kahuna Fund. All of them will open new channels to our growing rapids.

With all of our streams meeting at the athletes – this promises to be a “grand” river of which we all can be proud.

Honorary Co-Chair

Steering Committee Member

David Korte



WHAT IS THE BIG JOHN KAHUNA FUND?

For many of us, our joys and passions in life cease upon our deaths. Because of the Big John Kahuna Fund, that is not true of John Schelling. John was a man who, during his life, practiced faith, trust and giving to inspire. He continues to be many of our inspirations even today.

John Schelling was born into a large family and raised in Byron Center. From his parents he learned lifelong lessons of the value of family, the importance of morality, and a support of causes, through his faith; that he believed in. John decided to become a police officer and worked in that capacity for the City of Wyoming. He retired here. It was home.

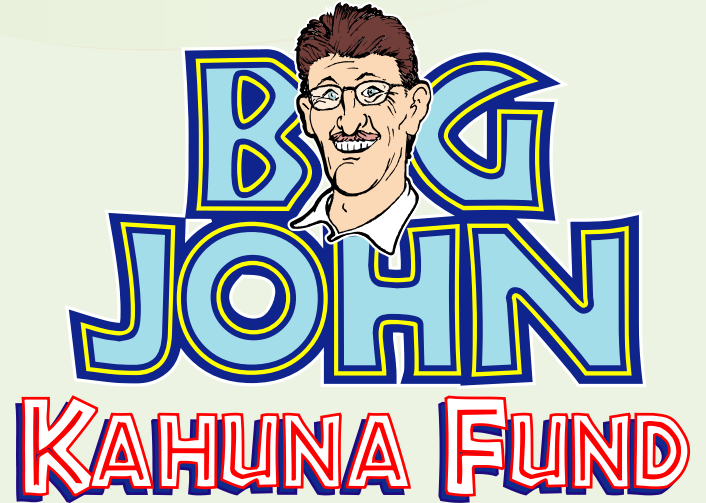
Once those decisions were made, John took on a cause even larger than his 6'10" frame. Having always had a soft spot in his heart for the underdog (as he was always moved to tears by his favorite basketball movie "Hoosiers" starring the actor Gene Hackman), he carried the torch of Special Olympics Michigan – State Basketball Finals. "Big Kahuna" and this event in West Michigan became synonymous.

His real life persona inspired so many athletes. His reel life lives on as emcee to tournament opening ceremonies past on tape.

After his death, no one might have called John Schelling a hero. He, himself, would have much preferred being known as a working class role model. John was a blue collar person, who had the gift of motivating us all to do a little more.

John's name may not turn heads across West Michigan. It has been enough to keep the Special Olympics basketball finals alive through an annual golf tournament. Now we need you to do more. Not one of you reading this is a hero outside of your family.

All of us reading this message can come together and make a difference: one for all the people whose names will never turn heads but those, as one, who could. That is the Big John Kahuna Fund and its spirit.

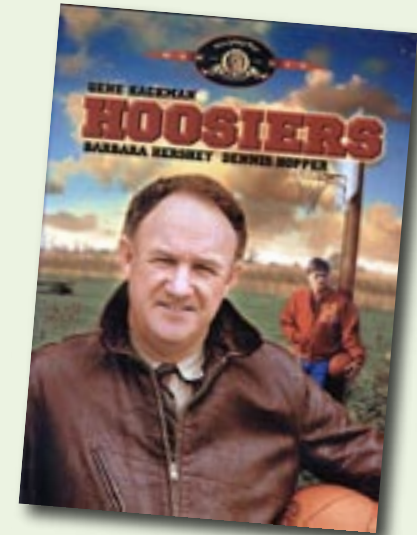


THE REEL BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS

Remember the movie *Hoosiers*? It chronicles a story loosely based on a small, rural Indiana high school basketball team, with just seven players who make it to the state basketball final in Indianapolis. On the way, they face powerhouse teams throughout the playoffs. In a climatic film scene before the final game, the coach looks each player in the eyes and says, "I love you guys." How did they realize their potential and get to that touching moment?

Two components were key:

1. When the coach inherited the team, way back in the fall, he was dealt a group of individuals. He taught them that basketball was a voluntary activity and by becoming a team more things were achievable when individual strengths were molded together.
2. From the beginning of the season, the support of the community grew and never wavered. People from the entire town celebrated defeats and victories, volunteered to help, and attended every game.



For our basketball Special Olympians, there is a history of individual participation and the games in Grand Rapids. But this is a new fall and it will be our year in Grandville. The athletes will assemble here for a three-day tournament in March 2009. And all of us, a community of caring, will be here to cheer them on and say, "I love you guys."



Let's make it happen.

Chair, Steering Committee & Big John Kahuna Fund
Amanda Schelling

THE REAL BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS



"I found out about the Special Olympics Michigan State Basketball Finals through my membership in the Grand Rapids Jaycees Chapter. Many of my Jaycee friends urged me to volunteer. They promised that it was about much more than the game of basketball.

I witnessed a plethora of emotions from sheer and utter joy at victory for winning the GOLD, to absolute bliss for winning a simple ribbon. I learned that it was not about the ultimate win. It was about the power of the human spirit to strive for the best, in spite of whatever challenges were given to you, physically or mentally. As I shared in the athletes' joy, I received hugs from hundreds of Special Olympians.

As I drove home that first year, I was unable to stop the tears that streamed from my eyes. What I witnessed shook me to the core."

Judy - Past co-chair and current volunteer for Special Olympics Michigan



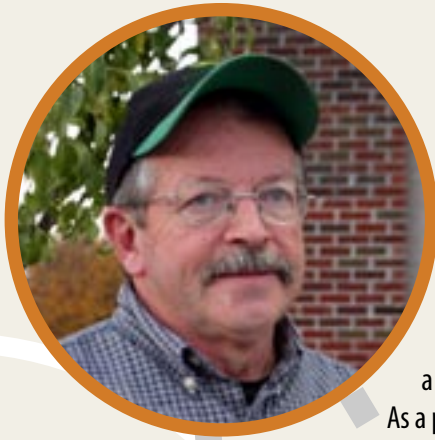
"My brother, Mick, has been a participant in Special Olympics Michigan most of his life. His favorite sport has always been basketball. Although, I have many great memories of watching my brother play basketball, my most memorable Special Olympics Michigan moment was provided by another athlete.

It was during the State basketball tournament some years ago. Mick's team was playing in Grand Rapids. One of the players on the opposing team was very challenged both physically and mentally. This individual had a difficult time following the flow of the game and may not have been able to tell you which basket he should be shooting at. Because of his ability, he didn't get to play many minutes.

When one of his teammates was fouled and injured while attempting a lay-up, the coach gave this challenged teammate the opportunity at the free throw line. The first attempt was a two-handed, between the legs, 30 feet high shot that didn't come within 10 feet of the basket. The second attempt was the same two-handed, between the legs, 30 feet high shot except this shot saw 'nothing but net.'

Everyone went absolutely nuts! The reaction was more pure joy than any Super Bowl, World Series, NBA Finals or Stanley Cup that I have ever seen. The crowd gave this young man a standing ovation and, for one day, this special athlete felt a sense of accomplishment, joy and elation that he had previously only been able to imagine."

David – Family Member



"The overnight events are so special to the athletes and their families. For many of the athletes who are in group homes it is often their only chance to have a night away from 'home.'

As a parent and coach, I know how much these special people

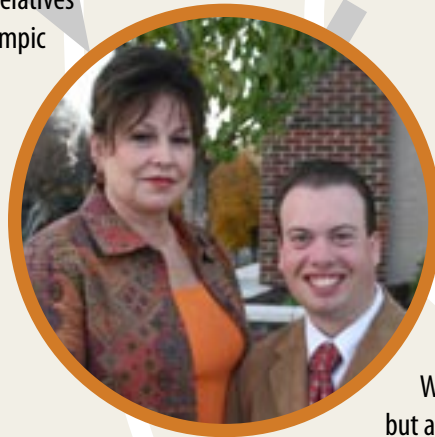
appreciate these events and talk about them for years. What makes the full weekend events so special is not just the athletic competition but the extra time it gives for opening and closing ceremonies, dances and meals which creates special social relationships between the athletes and their parents, friends, relatives and chaperones. It makes it truly an Olympic event!"

Dorane – Parent and Coach



"The irony of Special Olympics is that while participating in Special Olympic programs, the athletes – for one weekend – aren't "special". Anyone who has walked into a room full of people who faced the same challenges and experiences you yourself have faced in your life, can understand the comfort that comes from meeting, not just one person, but hundreds who share stories similar to your own. For this weekend, our athletes aren't just Special. They're Olympians."

John Schelling - The Big Kahuna



"I play basketball (unified), bocce, bowling, golf, snow shoeing and poly hockey. I really loved being away, making arts and crafts and hanging out with my friends for the weekend."

"Clint started Special Olympics somewhere between third and fifth grade. At first, I was the protective mom who didn't want her son out of her sight. When Clint began participating, I saw an incredible difference not only in Clint, but also in myself.

Seeing the kids together is amazing. They're like a family and they're an incredible group of people. Clint has become more confident, talks to everybody and is proud of himself. He's also willing to take more chances– even giving speeches, something he doesn't like to do. Without the weekend tournament, the athletes do not have as many opportunities to go places. Clint is losing touch with his friends because he doesn't get to see everyone as often."

Clint and Lorilee – Special Olympics Athlete and His Mother



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Why Grandville?

First and foremost, it is a community that cares. From the mayor to the Chamber of Commerce, this has been an embracing place that Special Olympics athletes can grow to call a new adoptive home. Also, the RiverTown Crossings mall, modest hotels and fabulous restaurants make it a true get away – even for athletes from West Michigan.

When will the State Basketball Tournament finals be held?

March 27 – 29, 2009

Can I volunteer to be a coach or contribute resources of my time and talent?

Yes! One of many outputs of this tournament is more resources: volunteer coaches and advocates, free practice places for all sports, as well as donors.

What role will the Grand Rapids Jaycees play in the State Basketball Tournament finals?

The Grand Rapids Jaycees will continue its 27-year tradition of service to Special Olympics.

What will be accomplished with bringing back the three-day tournament?

By bringing back the three-day tournament, we cannot only offer a great experience for

our athletes but it will bring our basketball program back together. We've had to separate all the female, junior and male teams in order to offer the event in one-day formats. This increases the travel and other costs and time of our volunteers. With one major weekend it will enhance the experience for the athletes and volunteers and allows us to utilize volunteer time and our resources more efficiently.

In addition to bringing back the three-day, we are able to offer the Healthy Athlete programs and special events that our athletes benefit from and enjoy. The Opening Ceremonies and Closing event and dance are a huge highlight of this weekend.

Special Olympics Michigan provides opportunities for athletes with intellectual disabilities to train and compete

in 23 Olympic-type sports. By far the most popular of these is our basketball program. Each year, more than 2,000 athletes are involved in Special Olympics basketball programs. Athletes begin participation at age 8 and continue across their lifespan.



THE VISION

Several years ago, we had to cut our basketball state finals back from its three-day format to separate single-day competitions for male, female and junior competitors. This year, a group of Special Olympics supporters has launched a fund-raising campaign to restore Special Olympics Michigan's basketball tournament to its three-day format.

When looking over our budget once again, the resources are not available. We know, however, that the need is very real. Providing a full tournament experience for our Special Olympians is vital. To do so, we must turn to outside sources in West Michigan for funding. Old friends and new will have an opportunity to get involved and invested.

The tournament weekend is a unique opportunity for our athletes. Among the reasons to "Be A Fan of ...":

- **Access** to opening and closing ceremonies that are like the Olympic Games;
- **Independence** to stay over two nights in a hotel away from home;
- **Fellowship** of friends staying in touch with one another;
- **Strength** through the Healthy Athlete program;
- **Excitement** for the dance which so many of the athletes adore;
- **Caring** from a community such as West Michigan; and
- **Empowerment** for individuals, on any level, who participate or are touched and moved by this investment in our own state.

Please join me in continuing to be a fan of serving West Michigan through Special Olympics or becoming a new supporter. I assure you the return on investment is more than you might ever expect. You might even find yourself saying, "I love you guys" ...

*President and CEO
Special Olympics Michigan
Lois Arnold*



DONOR LEVELS

Championship Club ~ \$10,000

Everyone's a champion in Special Olympics. *"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."* *Special Olympics Oath.* Your support will allow Special Olympics athletes the opportunity to experience being a Champion.

Ceremonies Club ~ \$5,000

Just like the Olympics, opening and closing ceremonies are very special for everyone involved. Since basketball is not part of the Special Olympics summer games, there are many athletes who may not get an opportunity to participate in such a meaningful experience.

Tournament Victory Club ~ \$2,500

The prom-like experience is one the athletes look forward to and possibly may never have experienced will return with the State Basketball Finals and Skills Tournament 2010. It's an enjoyable evening of good music, dancing and good friends!

Medals & Ribbons Club ~ \$1,250

Your support will provide medals and ribbons for all athletes at the State Basketball Finals and Skills Tournament. An outcome of the games is that everyone is a winner - "nothing but net".

Sportsmanship Level ~ \$500

Having good sportsmanship is crucial to the well-being of the athletes and all those affiliated with Special Olympics. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others.

For more information regarding donations, please contact:

Special Olympics Michigan
Central Michigan University
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859
(800) 644-6404
www.somi.org



WHERE WILL MY DONATION GO?

2009 Michigan State Basketball Tournament Final

Two Night Tournament (projected)

- 75 Teams
- 750 Athletes
- 300 Coaches
- 1,000 Volunteers

Postage, Telephone, Equipment repairs & maintenance	\$2,800
Printing	\$1,513
Facility Charges	\$7,500
Awards, Event Supplies & Special Events.	\$8,657
Meals.	\$30,206
Lodging	\$65,240
Travel & Insurance	\$4,458
Professional Services for Athletes.	<u>\$29,626</u>

Total Tournament Costs \$150,000

Since 2003, the overall cost has only increased 15%.

Leadership Level Gifts

Championship Club	\$10,000
Ceremonies Club	\$5,000

Special Gifts

Tournament Victory Club	\$2,500
Medals & Ribbons Club.	\$1,250
Sportsmanship Club.	\$500
Skills Tournament	\$250
Basketball Friend	\$100



That's only \$200 per athlete for the entire three-day experience!



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