



Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

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Contact: Kevin Lyons

815.337.3071

D200 athletes excel at the Illinois Special Olympics Summer Games

Despite a scorching weekend in Bloomington-Normal, Woodstock Community Unit School District 200 athletes had tremendous success and amazing experiences at the Illinois Special Olympics Summer Games.

Woodstock athletes joined more than 3,500 athletes, hundreds of coaches and volunteers, and more than 10,000 family members and fans for the June 20-22 celebration of inclusion and achievement.

Overall, D200 athletes won 19 gold medals and 8 silver medals in several athletic competitions. They were able to display their medals for their friends during a brief parade on June 23 at Olson Elementary School, where summer school and a playground program are held.

“Our athletes were excited to win their awards, but were also excited to see how their friends and other athletes did as well,” said Jennifer Moskowitz, athletic director for D200 Special Olympics.

“The joy on the athletes' faces when the medals or ribbons are put around their necks is magical. To them, the medals and awards prove that they can do it! That all their hard work has paid off,” she added

Some of the competitions and events were canceled due to extreme heat, but D200 athletes were all able to complete their scheduled competitions. Many athletes beat their personal records in swimming and other events.

“It was hot, but our athletes didn't let the heat get to them. They were disappointed when the victory dance was canceled due to the heat, but we ordered pizzas and had our own little dance party in our dorm. They had a lot of fun,” Moskowitz said.

The team participated in the opening ceremonies on June 20, which included a parade of athletes, a Chicago Drone light show, and the lighting of the Flame of Hope.

The following Saturday and Sunday, D200 athletes competed in swimming, gymnastics, weightlifting, and track & field.

The D200 Special Olympics coaching staff includes Moskowitz, Cory Knopik, Aimee Marquardt, Michael Vorderer, Jeannine Vetter, and Jaclyn Baker. This year's student coaches and volunteers were Elizabeth Moskowitz, Zofia Gorgosz, and Abigail Lara.

Knopik said she and her fellow coaches were so proud of how the athletes performed and conducted themselves throughout the weekend.

“Participating in Special Olympics and making it to the State Games was a first for several of our athletes and their families this year. Our athletes were able to showcase their sport, develop lifelong skills, and foster new friendships,” she said.

D200 Special Olympics athletes and their awards are listed as follows:

Track and Field

Cason Redden

Softball Throw - Silver Medal

Lucas Slabinski

Softball Throw - Silver Medal

Powerlifting

David Gruett

Deadlift - Gold Medal - 65lbs

Bench press - Gold Medal - 165 lbs (PR)

Combination - Gold Medal - 230 lbs

Alex Colin Estrada

Deadlift - Gold Medal - 185 lbs (PR)

Bench Press - Gold Medal - 145 lbs

Squat - Silver Medal 165 lbs (PR)

Combination - Gold Medal

Swimming

Angelo Smilgis

100 M Freestyle - Gold Medal

50 M Freestyle - Gold Medal

Henry Carney

25 M Freestyle - Gold Medal

50 M Freestyle - Gold Medal

Rhythmic Gymnastics

Level C

Brooklyn Sorenson

Ball - Gold Medal

Kailyn Hedtke

Clubs - Gold Medal

Ball - Silver Medal

Ribbon - Silver Medal

Level 1

Aubrey Zientek

Club - Gold Medal

Ball - Gold Medal

All Around - Gold Medal

Ribbon - Silver Medal

Rope - Silver Medal

Level 2

Kathryn Thomas

Ball - Gold Medal

Hoop -Gold Medal

Clubs - Gold Medal

All Around - Gold Medal

Ribbon - Silver Medal