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First-Year Keeneyville Special Olympics Team Advances to State, Inspires District at 2026 Summer Games

In their first season, student-athletes find confidence, belonging and success on the state stage



Student-athletes Giuseppe “Seppe” Astorino and Chris “Junior” Hounkanli pose with their medals after finishing second and fifth, respectively, in the 50-meter run June 13, 2026, at the Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games at Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal. (Photo provided by Keeneyville School District 20)

HANOVER PARK, Ill. (June 16, 2026) — Keeneyville School District 20 is celebrating a powerful and inspiring milestone as student-athletes from its brand-new Special Olympics program competed at the 2026 Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games, held June 12–14 at Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal.

In its inaugural season, the district’s Special Olympics team sent multiple athletes to the state-level competition — an extraordinary achievement that highlights both the strength of the program and the determination of the students involved.



*Keeneyville Cobras Special Olympics team members and coaches put their hands together for a pre-competition chant June 13, 2026, at the Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games at Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal.
(Photo provided by Keeneyville School District 20)*

Held annually, the Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games brings together more than 3,500 athletes and 15,000 participants from across the state for a three-day celebration of inclusion, competition and achievement. Keeneyville athletes competed in track and field events on Saturday, June 13, representing their school community on one of the largest stages available to student-athletes in Illinois.

For many Keeneyville students, this marked their first opportunity to be part of a team — and their first time competing at a state event.

“This has been an incredible journey for our athletes,” said Coach Alex Toay. “We’ve seen their confidence grow in such a big way this year. To reach the state level in our very first season is truly special, and it says a lot about the effort they’ve put in and how much they’ve grown.”



*Student-athletes Jason Ayodele and Adamary Saracco prepare for the tennis ball throw June 13, 2026, at the Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games at Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal.
(Photo provided by Keeneyville School District 20)*

The Summer Games weekend also featured hallmark events such as the Opening Ceremony with the Parade of Athletes and lighting of the Flame of Hope, along with family engagement opportunities and athlete celebrations that emphasize the spirit of inclusion central to Special Olympics Illinois.

Beyond competition, the impact of Keeneyville's Special Olympics program has been felt across the district. Students have gained confidence, built relationships and experienced a sense of belonging that extends far beyond the track.



*Student-athletes Giuseppe "Seppe" Astorino and Chris "Junior" Hounkanli catch their breath after finishing the 50-meter run June 13, 2026, at the Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games at Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal.
(Photo provided by Keeneyville School District 20)*

“This program is about so much more than sports,” said Colleen Flores, assistant superintendent of student services. “It’s about belonging, confidence and giving students the opportunity to be part of something bigger. What’s been especially meaningful is seeing how our entire district has rallied around these students and celebrated their success. This is just the beginning of something special for Keeneyville.”



*Giuseppe “Seppe” Astorino receives support from his family in the bleachers June 13, 2026, at the Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games at Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal.
(Photo provided by Keeneyville School District 20)*

The program has quickly become a source of pride across District 20, with staff, students and families rallying behind the athletes. From practices to regional competition and ultimately to the Summer Games, the journey reflects a shared commitment to inclusion and student success.

As the district looks ahead, the success of this inaugural season sets the stage for continued growth — ensuring even more students have the opportunity to experience the confidence, connection and pride of being part of a team.



*Adamary Saracco poses with her medal after placing first in the tennis ball throw June 13, 2026, at the Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games at Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal.
(Photo provided by Keeneyville School District 20)*

Keeneyville School District 20 proudly celebrates its athletes not only for their accomplishments at the Summer Games, but for the confidence, perseverance and pride they demonstrated every step of the way.

For more information about the Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games, visit soill.org/summer-games.

About Keeneyville School District 20

Keeneyville School District 20 (KSD20) is a public elementary school district located in Hanover Park, Ill., serving approximately 1,350 students from preschool through eighth grade across four schools: Greenbrook Elementary, Waterbury Elementary, Spring Wood Middle School and the Early Childhood Center. Founded in 1887 and renamed for local developer Albert F. Keeney, the district has a proud history rooted in community growth and educational innovation. With more than 230 dedicated staff members, KSD20 supports families in Hanover Park, Bloomingdale, Keeneyville and Roselle. As the largest feeder to Lake Park High School District 108, the district is dedicated to inclusive, high-quality education and its mission to ignite each student's power and potential.