

The Sun is Always Rising

Newsletter of the



September 2018



Dennis Alzheimer Carries Alaska Banner at Special Olympics National Games and Helps Bring Home Unified Gold

contributed by Dennis Alzheimer

In Seattle, I participated on a Unified basketball team during the National Games. I played as a point guard. We played six games and won the Gold Medal! The semi-final game went into over-time and even the championship was a close game. Very exciting!



It was a cool thing to be in a dorm with my team. We ate together, went sight-seeing together, and watched the other Alaska athletes compete.

I had relatives there to support me from four different states and that made the games special.

I am dedicating the Seattle games to my Grandparents who passed away.

I saw people from throughout the country and exchanged state pins before the games. We even got to see the Seattle Mariners beat the L. A. Angels!

It was special that I carried the Alaska banner. It was a really fun week.

For more info on the Special Olympic National Games in Seattle, see page 5-6.

Special O Alaska had not yet chosen an athlete to carry the "ALASKA" sign in the Parade of Athletes. At the getting-ready-to-go dinner, Dennis asked who was carrying the Alaska banner. Because he was the only one who thought about the issue, he got to carry the banner. Way to go Dennis! Alaska was the second delegation to walk in during opening ceremonies.



Alaska Unified Basketball lines up for gold. Dennis Alzheimer stands proud far right.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS
USA GAMES
SEATTLE 2018



YOUR BOARD AT WORK

Time goes by so fast! Every month seems like it should only have been a week...certainly it hasn't been enough time for all the wonderful things there are to do, to get done, to explore (and that doesn't include house cleaning or cooking!). I'm pretty certain most of us have similar feelings. After no response to my invitation to take on a small activity or project for the Chapter, no new activities have been planned. Several of our 2018 goals are being worked on:

OUTREACH: 1. An updated and new website is being created! It will be a while before everything is together for site to be up and running.

2. We have set up a partnership with Stone Soup Group and together will be continuing our 6x/yr lecture series for "parents and students in transition." The call-in webinar will be much easier to access for anyone in the state, and we will soon set up a system for video taping and storage!



3. We have received some encouraging response to the letter introducing our organization to Anchorage physicians! We plan a second mailing to other areas in the state.

SUPPORT: 1. We have a new area representative for Tanana Valley – Patrice Lee! We are so happy to have her take on the position to provide a connection point for Alaskans in the northern regions.

2. We had our first "Café Hour" on May 10 in Eagle River. Seven parents of older children met to chat, with no agenda. We had a great time laughing and wrestling with topics such as housing options and financial planning. We plan to keep this little group going, including a field trip in September down to Soldotna to see Elijah Stafford's new home!! Any one can set up a "Café Hour" to have a small group get-together – Juneau is planning one for all their families to meet. We'll help you!

SOCIAL: Because we do not have a Social Chair on the Board, we have decided to simplify things and just concentrate on our main annual events – picnic, Buddy Walk, Annual Meeting and Christmas Party, all dates of which are set. *Check our Calendar often.*

20th ANNUAL ALASKAN BUDDY WALK

Buddy Walk 2018, held August 4 on the Delaney Parkstrip, marked our 20th Alaskan Buddy Walk!!! We featured a bounce house, rock wall, face painting, and a DJ. With live music we walked, talked, met old friends, made new ones, snacked, and won door prizes. Thanks to all who attended and volunteered!





Congratulations Bobby Hill!

Bobby Hill received an Alaskan Legislative Citation at the Bartlett High School Homecoming Assembly, Friday August 31st.

Alaska State Representative Lance Pruitt presented Bobby Hill the citation for his 20 years of service as manager to the Bartlett High Football Program. Loved by both players and fans, Bobby is said to have never missed a game as Golden Bear Manager.

Bobby's Bartlett service was originally highlighted in a sports clip by KTVA's John Thompson in October of 2017. Bobby's legislative citation was



delivered along with one for the Bartlett football team for their 2017 Alaska State Championship. Surely there is something special about a high



Much thanks to KTVA Anchorage and John Thompson for airing the segments and providing photos and information for the article here.

THANK YOU for the Thank You!!



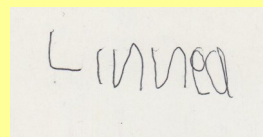
Cara received a \$250 scholarship, which she used for downhill skiing at Challenge Alaska. She had a great time and showed improvement after each lesson. The staff and volunteers at Challenge were supportive, knowledgeable, and fun.

from Kevin Montague

Dear Alaska Chapter,

Thank you for supporting our mission to raise our sweet Linnea. I appreciated the workshop on the ABLE account. It was extremely helpful.

We are also thankful for the Christmas gift card and the opportunity for a yearly gift scholarship.



Sincerely,
Amy Brendtro
Anchorage

I just wanted to say thank you for sending the Barnes and Nobles gift card to Brandon. We love these and always find things Brandon likes.

And thank you to Gary Timothy for his part in getting the card to us. Thank you also for the emails and newsletters. I love feeling 'connected.'

Tori Washington
Ketchikan



Chapter President, Donna Davidson Travels as Bocce Coach to National Special Olympics Games

submitted by Donna Davidson

WOW! The USA National Games were an amazing event including 4000 athletes and partners, another 2000 staff and coaches, and I-don't-know-how-many volunteers!!

Team Alaska was fortunate to have a delegation of 37 participants travel to Seattle for the games held July 1-7.

Our roster included 16 athletes (2 Aquatics, 2 Athletics, 5 basketball, 2 Bocce, 2 Bowling, 1 golfing, and 2 power lifting). We were joined by 8 unified partners, 6 coaches, 1 caddie (coach/unified partner), 3 staff mentors, and 3 youth experience attendees.

Seattle did an unbelievable job of supporting this huge event. There were volunteers EVERYWHERE to help with anything. It seemed as if the entire city was out to cheer folks on and wish the athletes well. We had a solid double-line tunnel of cheerers from the plane to the train (at least half a mile long), and also to the opening ceremonies (at least a mile long). *Ever done high fives every other step for a mile???*



The weather was cool the first two-three days, then got hot. Bocce teams needed to be at our venue all day for games. We walked a great deal to and from events, meals, and venue. It was a challenge to not be too tired for our games. I slept very well every night!!

We got to see the Mariners win a game! The stadium is HUGE! We could see airplanes flying overhead all evening and watch the sun go down.

Bocce was very fun. These matches were held indoors on 16 courts which were almost always busy. We played 17 games over 4 days, and most of the games were well matched. On several games we won or lost the match by the last ball! There was good sportsmanship and good play by everyone we saw.

Our bocce athletes played *Singles, Doubles and Teams (of 4)*. All the games had 6 competitors. For our 5 awards, 20 games were played. In singles, one athlete took gold and one took bronze. Doubles took bronze and 5th. Teams were well-matched, providing very exciting games. Team Alaska took silver—losing only by the very last ball!





Youth Leadership Experience *Contributed by Julie Broyles*

Finally home! What an amazing week we had at the 2018 Special Olympics USA Games. After 7 days and 109,000 steps (Ayesha STILL beat me!!!), I'm exhausted but so grateful for the experience.

The Youth Leadership Experience was awesome. As a special education teacher and parent of a Special Olympic athlete, I was so moved by the energy and passion of this group of leaders. It was thrilling to be among these students who really understand the true meaning of inclusion.

One of my favorite moments was when we were walking with a large group back to our dorms from downtown. It was HOT. We were all exhausted, thirsty and hungry. One student with balance issues had difficulty managing the stairs, escalators, and hills. Without any hesitation, the entire group of 20(?) decided to take the long way to avoid more stairs for this student, and they were happy to do it.

This week was filled with many of these moments in which I had the opportunity to observe real friendships between athletes and partners. I've always said that [Emma](#) and Ben are lucky for the special experience of having a sibling who has a disability. Their relationship with Brendan has taught them understanding and acceptance on a level that many kids their age don't get to have. Unified programs allow all students the chance to develop relationships that are also life-changing.

I'm so excited to see these students change the world!

From Donna Davidson

Youth Leadership Experience is an amazing program for typical high school students who have shown interest in Special Olympics through their school's Partners Club. One of our delegates was Sierra Helwig, Sierra is the granddaughter of Debbie Bowles, who is houseparent to Alex Davidson, Victor Valladeres and John Jakabowski; she has been involved with these 3 young men since she was very young. Now an enthusiastic, outgoing young lady herself who has outstanding talents and skills, Sierra will make an excellent leader for Special Olympics. The Youth Experience mentor privileged to go is our very own Julie Broyles, AkDSN board member. She was very enthusiastic about the entire week these youth had.



KARATE CHAMPIONS

John Jakabowski, , Alex Davidson, and Victor Valladeres proudly wear medals from a recent karate championship in Anchorage.

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The Lucky Few by Heather Davis

A autobiography of a woman's journey to motherhood and her struggle to trust in God's perfect plan. A book review by Lisa Thomas



I enjoyed reading Heather's down-to-earth and honest emotions of becoming a mother by adopting three children, two of whom have Trisomy 21. She shared real life fears and raw emotions of facing open heart surgeries, developmental delays, medical issues, and birth parents, just for starters.

Heather and her husband began with a pro/con list of adopting a baby with Down syndrome, but in the end decided the extra chromosome should be listed on the "pro" side as opposed to the "con" side.

Heather is open and honest about everyday struggles but really shares the love and light of raising a child with Down syndrome. If you (or someone you know) are thinking of adoption, this book will really help you understand the pain of watching a birth family give up their baby to a stranger and what it really is to become a parent.

I found myself crying in parts and laughing in others. I felt like a friend or a sister was just telling me her journey while we had a cup of coffee.

Since the writing of her book Heather has joined forces with two other moms of kids with Ds and started a podcast called "The Lucky Few!" The first episode lunched on World Down Syndrome Day (3-21) of 2018 and included nine episodes total. Topics ranged from friendship to adoption, siblings to therapies.

I liked most of the episodes but sometimes there was too much talking over each other and what comes across as nervous laughter. I did enjoy the guests they featured and the open and honestly of all the moms (and dads). I look forward to next season's podcasts to include current issues with relevance to me and other moms of younger kids.





SUMMER PICNIC

The annual Chapter picnic was held June 23rd at the Elks Lodge in Palmer. Many folks from Anchorage attended along with some folks from the Mat-Su. Families reported lots of fun, food, and many familiar faces along with some new picnickers. *Shown left Hal Docherty meets a new little member.*

ANNUAL MEETING

Alaska Down Syndrome Network

Saturday - November 10, 2018

Anchorage Christian School

6575 E. Northern Lights Blvd, Anchorage

9:30 am—Arrival

10:00 am—Toys for Children

11:30—Lunch

Noon—Business Meeting & Lunch continues

1-3 pm—“Nutrition in Down syndrome,”
by board member and nutritionist, Kim Wilcox.

Attend one or both sessions with lunch and meeting in-between.

We hope to have babysitting which will require an RSVP.

Watch Constant contact messages for further info
or call Donna Davidson w/ questions 907.694.2545.

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Annual Christmas Party

Saturday - December 1, 2018

Anchorage Christian School

6575 E. Northern Lights Blvd, Anchorage

See Constant Contact messages for developing info
or call Donna Davidson with questions
907.694.2545.



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2018 BUDDY WALK

MUCH THANKS TO OUR 2018 BUDDY WALK SPONSORS!!!

