

Competition is everything

At one time, the mentally retarded resided in large-scale institutions. Now the trend is toward community living, either with their own families, in residences or small institutions, and for some, independent living. The mentally retarded person can better become an accepted member of the community if that person is able to swim with other members of his/her family or go bowling with friends.

The trend toward community living includes the soliciting of established agencies to include the mentally retarded in their programs and services, whether it be education, medicine, social services or recreation. But, there must be some program in operation, as a stepping stone to graduate from, as a first stage toward inclusion into established programs and into the community.

A major concern of our organization is the limited number of activities being offered to the mentally handicapped and the limited opportunity for participation with other groups. A hockey team in Newfoundland, for example, is beneficial, but the opportunity to participate with a team from Ontario provides a greater incentive for both the retarded and their coaches to improve their skills and maintain a program for a set period of time each year.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Research conducted in Canada and in the United States offers strong evidence that physical training and athletic competition for the mentally retarded not only enhance their physical, emotional and intellectual development, but equally important, strengthen their motivation, confidence, and self-esteem and help prepare them for independent living in their communities. For the parents, teachers, coaches and volunteers, the Special Olympics is an organization, comprised of people with the same interests and concerns, where materials and guidance can be obtained, and ideas and problems expressed. Like any physical fitness program, activities must be continual to be of maximum benefit.

FOSTER FOUNDATION — PIONEERS

The Special Olympics started in the United States under the direction of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation in 1968. Canadians participated in their first event in 1968. In 1969, the Harry E. Foster Charitable Foundation initiated the program here.

Special Olympics pioneering in Canada was sponsored mainly by the Foster Foundation, backed by a small group of corporations, individuals and government departments. As interest and participation grew, it was seen that a separate organization was needed in Canada with the sole objective of further developing the program at the grass-roots level. Canadian Special Olympics Inc. was formed to meet that need.

The Royal Bank of Canada, Canada Dry Limited, Cara Operations Limited, McDonald's Restaurants of Canada, Maple Leaf Gardens and the National Hockey League are major names on the long list of contributors in the formative years of Special Olympics in Canada.

On the provincial level, programs receive sponsorship in various degrees from a variety of sources. Saskatchewan's program, for example, is sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, the Association for the Mentally Retarded, and a group of businesses. In other areas, more concentration is needed to obtain on-going sponsorship.

Canadian Special Olympics Inc. is now receiving the support of major corporations and foundations. This ever-growing list includes the following:

Allstate Insurance, Bank of Montreal, The Bank of Nova Scotia, Canadian General Tower Limited, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Manufacturers Life Insurance Co., The Royal Bank of Canada, Simpsons-Sears Limited, The Toronto-Dominion Bank, The Harry E. Foster Foundation, The Lawson Foundation Limited, The F. K. Morrow Foundation, Charles E. Ring Foundation, and the Zeller Family Foundation.

CLOSE U.S. TIES

Close communication with our American friends has been maintained throughout the years. Canadians have participated in major events held in the United States in past years, and in 1979, plan to join Special Olympians from 20 other countries at the International Games to be held at the State University of New York.

Two Canadians, namely the late Jack Dennett, CFRB's famed news broadcaster, and Jim Vipond, Sports Editor of Toronto's Globe and Mail, received the Kennedy Family Award for their outstanding contributions to the mentally retarded.

We are members of the International Special Olympics. However, our program is Canadian in content.

FLOOR HOCKEY POPULAR

The operation of a Special Olympics program includes two essential parts. One is the organization itself, which involves public information, local fund raising, handling of local funds, obtaining of facilities and in-kind sponsorship, volunteer recruitment, community involvement, liaison with local government and with local newspapers and media outlets.

The other part is the development of sports and activities, which involves rules and regulations, judging and officiating, clinics on skill development and teaching methods, and goals for the mentally retarded participant.

Floor hockey, track and field, swimming and bowling are the most popular activities offered to the mentally retarded. Future plans include the promotion of tennis, gymnastics, wrestling, soccer, basketball and badminton.

Floor hockey, as a body-contact sport, offers players the opportunity to learn self-control in a competitive setting. Body-contact sports, rather than other competitive sports, make special demands on each player's capacity to control both temper and reaction style. Floor hockey is uniquely suited for this learning of control; given a minimum of equipment and relatively uncomplicated rules each player can learn for himself the extent to which he should respond to body-contact situations.

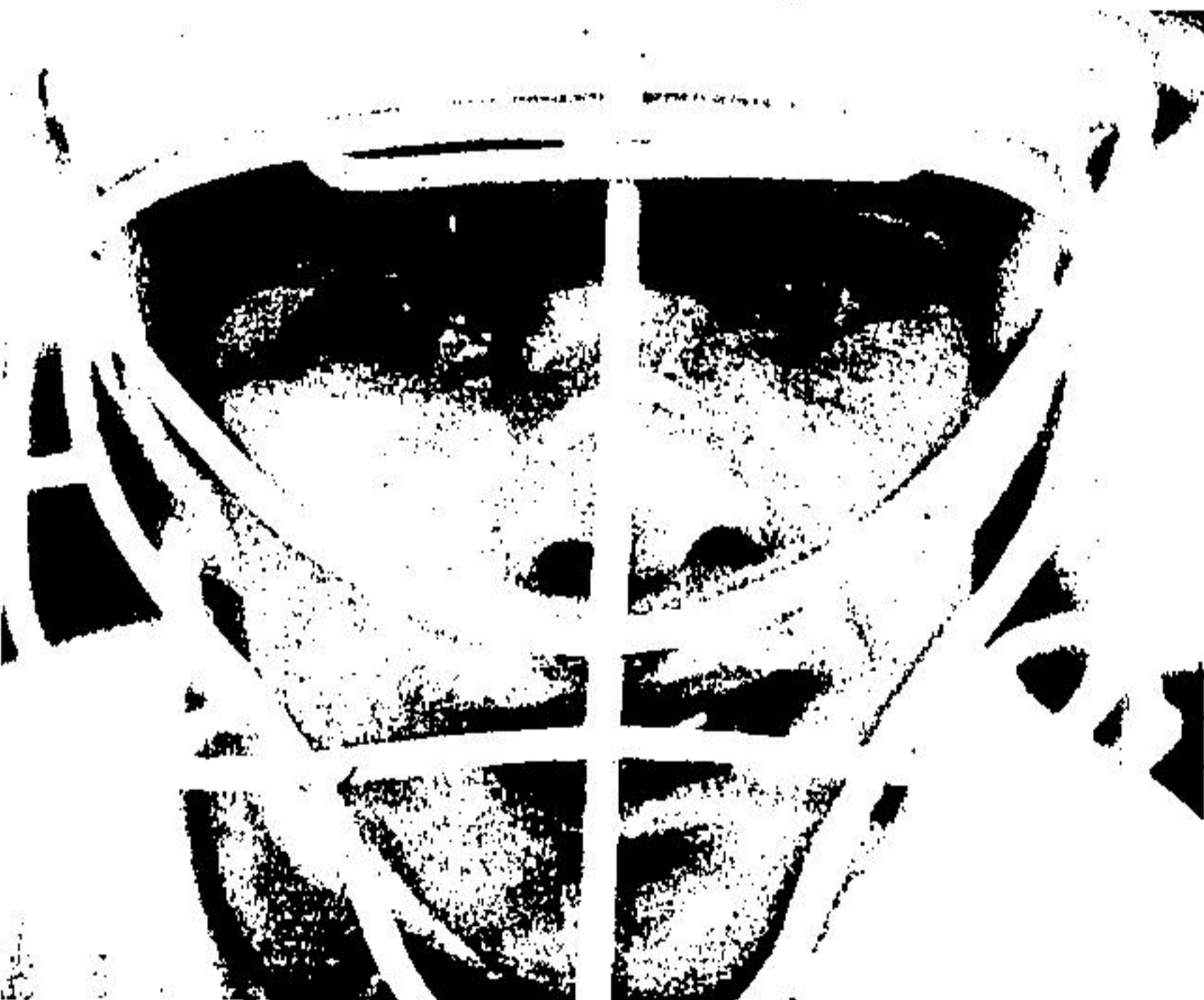
Floor hockey, because of its similarity to ice hockey, is a highly visible activity and is used as an example to stimulate interest in the development of other sports. In Ontario alone, there are some 2,500 participants playing floor hockey in 75 communities. The organizers of this provincial program are now branching further into track and field, swimming and soccer.

The National Hockey League sponsored teams from their member cities to participate in International Floor Hockey Tournaments held in 1969 and 1971 in Toronto, and again in 1974, in Winnipeg.

Faces of champions



Motivation



Dedication



Determination

Acceptance severely limited

Canadian Special Olympics is a developmental program of sport and physical fitness for the mentally retarded. There is no other nationally organized program of its kind in Canada that highlights potential abilities of the mentally retarded, thereby providing a means for public enlightenment. Mental retardation is Canada's largest social problem, and yet, public awareness and acceptance of these fellow citizens is severely limited.

Specifically, we are striving to:

a) Provide motivation for the initiation of physical education and athletic programs where none exist.

b) provide supplementary materials which will aid those currently conducting such programs;

c) provide opportunities for athletic competition through local, provincial, regional, national and international Special Olympics;

d) give each mentally handicapped person a "feeling of belonging" by offering him/her membership in a national athletic club and membership certificates, periodic newsletters, team uniforms, awards, etc.

e) provide a training model through which the mentally handicapped can learn the necessary skills ultimately to participate in sports and recreation programs available to all;

f) provide activities through which public enlightenment can be enhanced via newspaper, television and radio coverage.

Physical fitness, the joy of participating, club membership and the winning and losing in games with our peers are accepted as positive things for the physical and emotional well-being of man and his relationships within society. To further extend to the mentally retarded citizens of Canada the opportunity to experience and benefit from these same activities with their peers is the aim of Canadian Special Olympics Inc.

Like any physical fitness program, activities must be continual to be of maximum benefit. Research conducted in the United States since the program's inception offers strong evidence that physical training and athletic competition for the retarded not only enhance their physical, emotional and intellectual development, but equally important, strengthen their motivation, confidence, and self-esteem and prepare them for independent living in their communities.

CLINICS POPULAR

Clinics to improve skills are part of the Special Olympics program and are well attended. As part of the Oakville Invitational Special Olympics in 1977, teaching demonstrations were conducted by volunteer professionals for activities not generally offered to the mentally retarded. Tennis, gymnastics, wrestling, soccer, basketball and badminton were highlighted, as well as more common activities like floor hockey, swimming and track and field.

Activities offered are limited, and limited too are the number of established organizations offering adequate programs for the mentally retarded. The current trend of associations for the mentally retarded and Canadian Special Olympics Inc. is to solicit generic agencies to include the retarded in their program, whether it be education, medicine, social services or recreation. But, there must be some program in operation, as a stepping stone to graduate from, as a first stage toward inclusion into normal programs and into the community.

To help the mentally retarded become accepted members of the community is part of the overall objectives of the Canadian Special Olympics program. Public information is a vital part of our work to help gain acceptance, and also, to help local groups obtain on-going sponsorship and community involvement in their program.