



Leafs' Lanny McDonald, CSO floor hockey coach, discusses strategy with players

McMaster U

Texas Tech

Tests prove competition major help to retarded

In 1975, Dr. Frank Hayden of McMaster University and a group of researchers travelled to the 1975 International Special Olympics games at Mount Pleasant, Michigan to see how fit were Special Olympics competitors.

Dr. Hayden is Director of the School Physical Education Program at McMaster University and was the originator of the Special Olympics program for the Kennedy Foundation.

Sixty-five athletes, boys and girls, between the ages of 12-15 were put through rigorous fitness tests. Each participant was asked to ride a stationary bicycle for a period of 12 minutes with the workload increased in four minute intervals.

The study found that those tested were more physically fit than the trainable retarded who did not participate in some sort of athletic competition. According to Dr. Hayden, normal children were generally better fit than those who were mentally retarded only because these children were more active. Amongst the retarded, those who were brought up in more affluent areas showed better conditioning than those who were not, primarily because of access to various recreational outlets.

The children tested were not the best children in the Olympic Games according to Dr. Hayden. "We took the poorer kids, a random sample of those participants who stood in the bottom third of their particular class. The results were amazing."

The amazing results of the test were that the competitors were better than normal dayschool retarded children who do not compete.

"In fact they were even fitter than the average normal child that we tested," added Dr. Hayden.

Meanwhile tests conducted from 1975-1977 by a seven-member investigative research committee at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, revealed that Special Olympics has an important impact on its participants and the communities in which they live.

The purpose of the study was to determine the physical, social, emotional and psychological effects of Special Olympics upon its participants and to determine the impact of Special Olympics on communities. The

study also looked into the extent and quality of the Special Olympics program and its goals.

The seven member committee was made up of Dr. Bill Kozar, Dr. M.M. Ayoub, Dr. Nancy J. Bell, Dr. Andrews S. Martin, Belinda Morris, M.A., Pam Thompson M.A., and Brenda Rainey M.A.



Harry (Red) Foster puts gold medal around neck of happy winner at 1978 Special Olympics in Oakville

Research material for the study was gathered in two distinct, yet related areas. Communities in the states of Texas and New Mexico were used with the research committee calling 150 people in each community and personally interviewing another 125, bringing to 275 the total called in each area. The other area of research used was a nationwide questionnaire of organization and programs that was answered by chapter directors and area co-ordinators of Special Olympics programs in the United States.

According to the report, knowledge and attitudes about mental retardation have improved as a result of having a Special Olympics program in the community. The attitude of people in the community regarding the abilities of mentally returned increased as a result of having a Special Olympics program there.

In general, it was also found that Special Olympics participants showed higher gains in most physical fitness skills tests than did students who did not participate. In measures of physical fitness, Special Olympics participants showed statistically significant improvement as a result of their participation in the program than those who did not compete.

The study also showed that Special Olympics programs that have been in existence since 1968 accomplish more than just improving the physical well-being of its participants. The progress also contributed to the social, psychological and emotional growth of the participants.

The Special Olympics program involves a broad cross-section of educational and community leaders. The program provides physical education training for more mentally retarded people than any other program.

It was also found that high quality leadership at local area and chapter levels, is being provided by people trained in special education, physical education and recreation. The program also provides a wide range of sports competition for mentally retarded.

In conclusion, the committee found that the Special Olympics program is accomplishing the two principal goals to improve significantly the lives of mentally retarded and to create more positive and realistic community and individual attitudes towards them.