



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens

Disability History and Awareness Month



3 CHEERS FOR THE SPARKLE EFFECT

18-year-old Sarah Cronk and her organization The Sparkle Effect, recently received one hundred thousand dollars after winning the Do Something Award from VH1. The program encourages teens to include students with disabilities in their school based cheer squads and dance teams. Sarah got the idea at fifteen, after seeing the boost in confidence her brother with autism received when he was befriended by the schools swim team captain. She started and captained the squad at her Iowa high school that went on to win three Special Olympics gold medals. Sarah has received numerous awards for her work creating socially inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities. The program is student run and support is offered by the organization by way of on-line start up kits and links to information about grants for uniforms and free on site training. The organization currently boasts 41 squads from coast to coast. Sarah is now a student at Whitman College in Walla Walla Washington.



The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) recognized the winners of their second annual statewide Disability History and Awareness Month Poster Contest on December 1, 2011. The students were honored at an awards luncheon held at the George V. Massey Station in Dover, where the attendees were also treated to a puppet show from the GACEC's Kids on the Block Program.

In addition to the winning students, their parents and teachers, Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn, Secretary of Education Lillian Lowery, Senator Bethany Hall-Long, and Mary Ann Mieczkowski, Director of Exceptional Children Resources at the Department of Education (DOE) also attended the luncheon.

Congratulations to the winners and to everyone who took part. Look for the contest again next fall!



CYBER BULLYING CLOSE TO HOME

2010 Beauties of America 30s National Winner SIOUXZAN MOORE, was once the victim of cyber bullying. She gave an informative talk back in August to the Delaware Department of Technology and Information and below is a link that we think you should check out. Siouxzan shares important information about keeping your children safe while online.

<http://dti.delaware.gov/information/cybersecurityvideos.shtml>



GET INTO IT!!

[Get Into It](#) is a lesson and resource kit for students with and without intellectual disabilities. This service-learning program is age-appropriate and is designed to advance student's civic knowledge and skill development, promote acceptance and understanding of people's differences and to motivate them to become advocates for and together with all people.

Through [Get Into It](#), students will engage in fun, interactive, creative activities that promote respect and acceptance and teach about this important social movement. Most important, they will be invited to make a difference themselves. Not only is this a fun and engaging way to motivate young people into action and leadership, but we are creating connections between schools and communities, people with and without intellectual disabilities and advancing overall achievement. **Get Into It website:**

www.specialolympics.org/getintoit **Get Into It Resources page (for Educators):**

<https://getintoit.specialolympics.org/educators/resource>

And The Winners Are

1st place: Kemari Fountain - Bancroft Elementary Maia Bonar – Alfred G Waters Middle School Antonio Neal – Sussex Central High School **2nd Place:** Jazzmin Wilson – Bancroft Elem Jared Reed – Alfred G Waters Middle School Abigail Grange – Middletown High School **3rd Place:** Sammy Brittingham – North Smyrna Elementary John McArtor – Central Middle School Kalyn Clark – Middletown High School



Kent and Sussex County Winners: (Left to Right) **Mary Ann Mieczkowski**, Director of Exceptional Children Resources, DOE; **Sammy Brittingham** of North Smyrna Elementary School, 3rd Place; **Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn**; **Wendy Strauss**, Executive Director of the GACEC, and **John McArtor** of Central Middle School, 3rd Place. *Not Pictured:* **Antonio Neal** of Sussex Central High School, 1st Place.



New Castle County Winners:(Back Row, Left to Right) **Jared Reed** of Alfred G. Waters Middle School, 2nd Place; **Kalyn Clark** of Middletown High School, 3rd Place; **Abigail Grange** of Middletown High School, 2nd Place; **Maia Bonar** of Alfred G. Waters Middle School, 1st Place; **Wendy Strauss**, Executive Director of the GACEC; (Front Row, Left to Right) **Jazzmin Wilson** of Bancroft Elementary School, 2nd Place and **Kemari Fountain** of Bancroft Elementary School, 1st Place.

SPREAD THE WORD TO END THE WORD

Wednesday March 7, 2012 is National *Spread the Word to End the Word Day*. This international day of awareness was created by youth with and without intellectual disabilities in order to change the conversation from one of negativity and pain to a positive message, highlighting inclusion and respect for all. In 2011, over 40 Delaware High Schools participated in this wonderful event.

FAQ:

How do I get a Spread the Word kit?

Every school will receive a kit through faculty contacts before March!

What can you do to plan a Spread the Word to End the Word event?

- Have a meeting with your faculty advisor and administrator to discuss setting up a pledge campaign.
- Invite Special Olympics athletes or Best Buddies from your school to be a part of the event.
- Set up your banner (included in the kit) in a prominent place and encourage everyone to sign as a pledge.
- Go to <http://www.r-word.org/r-word-resources.aspx> and find many other ideas and additional resources.
- MOST importantly stay positive and respectful, show everyone that youth focus on positives and not negatives.

ACCEPTANCE
Be a fan of
RESPECT
HUMANITY
PASSION
UNITY

POLAR BEAR PLUNGE!!!!!!



The 2012 Special Olympics POLAR BEAR PLUNGE takes place Sunday February 5, 2012. The Plunge benefits Special Olympics Delaware as it serves our citizens with disabilities. The entire weekend will be filled with many fun events as the Polar Bear Plunge Festival takes over Rehoboth Beach. You may register for the Plunge online by visiting SODE Plunge website at www.plungeDE.org. Better yet, invite your friends and family and have a team plunge! Join Special Olympics Delaware and over 2500 others as they “freeze their fur off” for a great cause.

The Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens is a state organization that provides advocacy and advice to ensure that the human service needs of people with disabilities of all ages are met.

Please look for future editions of our newsletter. –
Thank You!-Wendy Strauss Executive Director

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