



JUNE 2014

# BARNABAS HEALTH & SPECIAL OLYMPICS A HEALTHY VISION

**PLUS:**

**SUMMER FUN  
& RECREATION**

**AND:**

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SCHOOL YEAR  
SERVICES**

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
2014 USA GAMES  
NEW JERSEY**

**FOUNDING PARTNER**

**Barnabas Health**

Barry H. Ostrowsky, President and  
Chief Executive Officer, Barnabas Health  
and TJ Nelligan, Chairman and CEO,  
2014 Special Olympics USA Games







AN EP MAGAZINE SPECIAL OLYMPICS

# EXCLUSIVE



## SPECIAL OLYMPICS 2014 USA GAMES NEW JERSEY

This month, New Jersey will reveal America's Champions at a historic, life and perception-changing event. From June 14-21, New Jersey will host the 2014 Special Olympics USA Games where more than 3,500 athletes from around the country will compete in 16 sports before tens of thousands of fans and volunteers.

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SESAME WORKSHOP  
AND EXCEPTIONAL  
YOUNG PEOPLE  
EVERYWHERE

By Vanessa Ira



**SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND BARNABAS HEALTH ARE COMMITTED TO PROMOTING AND DEVELOPING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY WELL BEYOND THE 2014 SPECIAL OLYMPICS USA GAMES TAKING PLACE IN NEW JERSEY THIS JUNE.**

# A HEALTHY VISION

BY CHRISTINE REDMAN-WALDEYER AND LYNNE MCENIRY

Robert K. Greenleaf, founder of the modern Servant leadership movement, believed that servant leadership could expand to organizations changing the world by serving people's highest priority needs.

Barry H. Ostrowsky, President and Chief Executive Officer of Barnabas Health, New Jersey's largest integrated healthcare delivery system, is a leader championing Greenleaf's philosophy. Barnabas Health is a Founding Partner of the 2014 Special Olympics USA Games to be held at various sites across the state of New Jersey from June 14 to 21, and Ostrowsky speaks of how this partnership "galvanized our employees."

"Unfortunately, there tend to be more silent needs than we hear, and when there is an organization that addresses itself to some of that individual need that exists, I would like to explore how to support that." Ostrowsky, who first joined Saint Barnabas Medical Center in 1991 as Executive Vice President, felt that Barnabas Health needed to do more for individuals with intellectual disabilities. They are, in fact, one of the most underserved populations in America by a trillion dollar health care delivery system that, sadly, was not designed to meet their needs, and "somehow we must get there."

Initially just one hospital, in 1996 Barnabas Health expanded to a large system. Barnabas Health, recognized as a leader in burn treatment and cardiology (but incidentally still delivers more than 20,000 infants each year), wants to do more for those requiring daily support. Partnering with the 2014 Special Olympics USA Games was not about getting the Barnabas Health name out there; it is about raising visibility for the 2014 USA Games. With 1,200 volunteers for the 2014 USA Games from Barnabas Health alone and the Board of Trustees behind the partnership, there is much to look forward to.

Ostrowsky believes that there is an opportunity for quality hospitals to change the perception people have from a place you go when you are sick to an organization that helps keep you well and prevents illness. Accordingly, Barnabas Health will be transitioning to a social service model that also supports people before they get sick. The future of healthcare is about teaching people better nutrition, the importance of fitness and better lifestyle. President, CEO & Publisher of *EP* (*Exceptional Parent*) magazine, Joseph M. Valenzano, Jr., discussed with Ostrowsky the importance of financial planning for the families of people with intellectual dis-

## WELCOMING WORDS

Dear EP readers,

June 15th brings the Opening Ceremonies of the 2014 Special Olympics USA Games and a week that will shine a brilliant spotlight on the State of New Jersey. I am extremely proud of the more than 1,200 Barnabas Health employees who have embraced our Founding Partnership and our role as Presenting Sponsor of the Games' Family Programs to volunteer to be part of this exceptional display of athleticism, teamwork and sportsmanship. We are excited to be integrally involved with ensuring that 3,500 Special Olympics athletes from across the nation have the outstanding experience of their lifetime.

EP has a long history of serving as a trustworthy resource for individuals with special needs. It is our privilege to work with EP and Special Olympics so we may strengthen our outreach to these individuals and ensure greater opportunities in the future.

Cordially,  
Barry H. Ostrowsky  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Barnabas Health

 **Barnabas Health**

*Life is better healthy.*





**WINNING TEAM:** (Left to right) Veteran Special Olympics volunteer Luanne Ivanow, RN, CCRN; 2014 Special Olympics USA Games Sports Operations Director BJ Mealy; Special Olympic athlete parent Maureen Beecher and her son LeVerne Beecher; and Darrell K. Terry Sr., MHA, FACHE, Chief Operating Officer, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and Children's Hospital of New Jersey.

abilities, who today as compared to 20 years ago, are outliving their parents; Barnabas Health will look to be part of the solution.

Ostrowsky has a soft spot for children with disabilities and those families in the military caring for children with special needs and returning veterans with the obvious and hidden wounds of war. These caregivers are the hidden heroes in our society because of their "unique" sacrifice that has no equivalent. It can be said of Ostrowsky that he too is making a "unique" contribution by partnering with the 2014 USA Games this summer.

One amazing athlete gaining from this partnership between Barnabas Health and the 2014 USA Games is Keith Fisher, 21, of Piscataway, NJ, Keith primarily competes in track and field and says he first learned of Special Olympics New Jersey three years ago through his high school, S.A.I.L. Keith competes in the 100, 200, 400 meter races and shot put, winning gold medals in all events. He trains twice a week with his local team and practices resistance training with the help of his parents. Keith says he is not only proud to be part of Special Olympics Team New Jersey, but sees his participation as an opportunity to meet new people. Being in a wheelchair has not stopped Keith; he is simply "differently-abled" and his accomplishments are worthy of recognition.

Keith's mother, Paula Fisher says, "This has been incredible for Keith to participate." Once very shy, Keith has come out of his

shell; "he loves to compete." It's not about who crosses the finish line first or last. "Everyone is happy for each other." The Athlete Oath is recited by athletes at the beginning of all the Special Olympics competitions – "Let me win. But if I cannot, let me be brave in the attempt."

Gary Fisher, Keith's father, says the environment is about inclusion and that is very satisfying to see especially when 99 percent of the world is about exclusion.

### **THE ATHLETE OATH IS RECITED BY ATHLETES AT THE BEGINNING OF ALL THE GAMES – "LET ME WIN. BUT IF I CANNOT, LET ME BE BRAVE IN THE ATTEMPT."**

with Barnabas Health will work to diminish it considerably. Janet Froetscher, Chief Executive Officer of Special Olympics, has witnessed this painful exclusion. The partnership between the 2014 USA Games and Barnabas Health will work to diminish it considerably. Froetscher says this partnership will extend beyond the coming events, which is very impressive—1,200 employees will volunteer, and those who could not will come out as spectators. Froetscher, appointed CEO after an international search in 2013, said, "We have a program that really works."

In addition to sports training and competition, education, and community-building, athletes benefit from Special Olympic's Healthy Athletes™ program, which provides free health examina-



**GOING FOR THE GOLD:** Keith Fisher of Piscataway, NJ, primarily competes in the 100, 200, 400 meter races and shot put, winning gold medals in all events. His mother, Paula Fisher, says that although he was once very shy, Keith has come out of his shell: "This has been incredible for Keith to participate. He loves to compete."

tions and access to health care. One of the special events athletes will participate in at the 2014 USA Games is the Healthy Athletes Experience which helps to remove the anxiety associated with doctor's visits via fun, interactive experiences and healthy exams. According to Froetscher, it is not that athletes do not necessarily have health insurance or no access to health care; rather, it is that *most have not seen doctors trained to meet their needs*. Education

and Training is provided for doctors, dentists, and other health professionals through Healthy Athletes and through another strong relationship and partnership-the American Academy of

Developmental Medicine and Dentistry (AADMD), a professional society devoted to providing expert care to people with intellectual disabilities. The right questions need to be asked to provide treatment. While at the 2014 USA Games, if eyeglasses or hearing aides are needed, treatment or referrals are usually provided on the spot.

Those assessments are fun, bright, and happy, says Froetscher. From these assessments, data collected can be used to help educate policy makers and lead to systemic change.

Timothy Shriver, Chairman of the Board of Special Olympics, is

**KEITH'S FATHER SAYS THE ENVIRONMENT IS ABOUT INCLUSION AND THAT IS VERY SATISFYING TO SEE ESPECIALLY WHEN 99 PERCENT OF THE WORLD IS ABOUT EXCLUSION**

using this significant data to educate health care providers and policy-makers. He has testified before Congress and demands legislative attention and support for a multitude of concerns with which the Special Olympics community struggles.

Assuming the mantle of his mother and Founder of Special Olympics, the beloved Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Shriver created groundbreaking programs that educate and support athletes and their families. According to the Special Olympics website, these programs offer "leadership, cross-cultural research, health education, and family support."

While much has been accomplished during his 17 years as Chairman, Shriver says more progress is needed. "Regarding critical cultural or societal changes with respect to health, we have been able to use the data and other learnings from our Healthy Athletes program and even our very new Healthy Communities initiative to influence some changes at the systemic level, such as more training for medical professionals on caring for patients with intellectual disability and support from key US government agencies on our health and education initiatives."

The Barnabas Health partnership fits with Shriver's mission and direction for Special Olympics because it is committed to being a



For more information, please visit  
[www.2014specialolympics.org](http://www.2014specialolympics.org)





**IN THE SWIM:** Patricia Miller with son John: "The diagnoses fall to the wayside and their ability to take part in a sport that they truly enjoy emerges."

community focus. The Special Olympics Healthy Communities initiative, made possible by a grant from the philanthropist and US businessman who founded the company Paychex, Tom Golisano, aims to incorporate healthy living beyond the Healthy Athletes events and into athletes' daily lives. Health is about leading a productive life. Athletes who participate in sports feel success; it allows you to connect with others because sports unifies. Froetscher added that there are other opportunities when athletes with or without intellectual disabilities play together. It is about being part of the same community and sports is an easy way to do that. "The connection piece is the secret sauce," said Froetscher.

Patricia Miller, Operations Director, Cancer Center at Saint Barnabas Medical Center, and mother of a Special Olympics athlete, is grateful that these two excellent organizations have formed this partnership.

Miller's 13 year-old son, John, was diagnosed with autism before his third birthday. On the severe side of the spectrum, language and communication are extremely difficult for John. His participation in team sports was highly unlikely.

When John was four, his parents noticed he had a significant fear of the water. They found Jessica Blechar, a certified Special Ed. teacher who taught swim lessons. With time, commitment, and Blechar's guidance, John is now swimming four to five days a week.

John's twin brothers, now 16, have always been active in sports.

His family did not want John to have to sit on the sidelines. So when Blechar asked Miller for assistance three years ago to start a Special Olympics Swim team, Miller said yes, and the family began their journey with Special Olympics. Miller and her twins will volunteer at the upcoming 2014 USA Game. She said, "Special Olympics gives our children an opportunity to compete in a way like no other. The diagnoses fall to the wayside and their ability to take part in a sport that they truly enjoy emerges."

These opportunities are the antidote to that exclusion expressed by Keith and John's parents. Shriver said, "Virtually anyone who is different from our culture's norms can feel marginalized. A paradox that our movement has identified is that while most people believe that people with intellectual disabilities receive the same or better health care than the general population, this is not the case. People with intellectual disabilities receive less and lower quality health care. This is all the more disturbing when you consider that people with intellectual disabilities are more likely to struggle with obesity and other health problems. And yet, data show that Special Olympics athletes are also much more likely to be physically active than the population of people with all disabilities, intellectual or physical. These data indicate that our movement has lessons to share with other groups of people who for a whole range of reasons, from physical barriers to stigma and exclusion, are shut out from physical activity."

In her personal life and her career as a health administrator, Miller is committed to breaking down these barriers and stigma. She and her colleagues are providing sensitivity training for all SBMC staff, and eventually the entire Barnabas Health system staff. The Special Needs Ambassador Program (SNAP) is the in-house system for training employees to review the latest stats and characteristics of the most common disabilities and to teach strategies to ensure a more positive, supportive experience for patients and their families.

### **SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE THAN THE POPULATION OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL OR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES.**

SNAP will launch July 1, following the 2014 Special Olympics USA games. It will create a core group of employees and community volunteers committed to serving

as liaisons to special needs patients and their families. They will be called on by any area of the hospital to eliminate barriers to care and provide a high quality patient/family experience.

Barbara Mintz, Assistant Vice President, Wellness, for Barnabas Health is also dedicated to an integrated approach to wellness for this underserved community and is seeing success with several initiatives. Since November 2013, she has been leading a team in group education and individual counseling



**POWERFUL FEATURES:** Barbara Mintz, (*far left*) Assistant Vice President, Wellness for Barnabas Health, led a team of 10 registered dietitians and two RNs that conducted two unique weight management classes for those athletes who are overweight or obese. “I was immediately impressed by how involved they were in what foods and drinks should be served during practices and games.”

for 265 Special Olympics athletes and their families, and 76 coaches of Special Olympics Team New Jersey. Topics include on and off field hydration, pre and post event meals and snacks, and exercise basics.

A team of 10 registered dietitians and two RNs measure blood pressure and other vitals and conduct two very unique weight management classes for those athletes who are overweight or obese. The curriculum was modeled after the Kid’sFit program at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. Classes were held weekly for 10 weeks at both NBI and Jespy House in South Orange, a center for people with learning and developmental disabilities.

Mintz said of the athletes, “I was immediately impressed by how involved they were in what foods and drinks should be served during practices and games.” She said that 15 athletes and their caregivers graduated from the program and two lost more than 20 pounds each.

Lisa Seccamanie, mother of Jespy House client, Annemarie, said that she and her daughter, who is cognitively impaired, met with Karen Basedow, RD, and that, “Karen was able to not only get her

points across in a manner which Annie could understand, but she motivated both of us to begin a healthier lifestyle.”

Mintz and her team have learned as much from this experience as they have taught. She said, “Listening is just as important as delivering information and that educating is a give and take process. I can speak for my team by saying this [is] one of the most gratifying experiences in our career.” She is pleased that this team will be part of the 2014 Special Olympics USA Games by providing the follow up to the December assessments as a way to measure the success of their intervention. They will also participate in “Ask The Doc” at the first ever Healthy Young Athletes Festival during the week of the 2014 USA Games.

Thomas J. Varga, Senior Vice President of Sponsorship Sales for the 2014 Special Olympics USA Games, said there is a paradigm change from the past when sponsors were just asked for donations, to now when they make a seven-figure commitment. “Barnabas Health has really stepped up as a Founding Partner.” He noted that this is more than a visit to the doctor for families. Founding partners are invested. For example, Barnabas Health, as one of 10 Founding Partners, will be the presenting

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## CULTIVATING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES: KIDSFIT TREATMENT PROGRAM

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

**KidsFit** is a wellness program that addresses both the treatment and prevention of obesity. It began as a multidisciplinary, nutrition education modality to treat obesity within Children's Hospital of New Jersey and expanded to the community through two local elementary schools where children, their families and teachers benefit from the expertise and resources of Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. The program focuses on cultivating healthy lifestyles and behaviors within the classroom.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS AND STRENGTHS

- Focuses on the prevention of obesity and its co morbidities through nutrition and activity education in the classroom where there is accountability for learning and in after school programs, providing reinforcement for lessons learned. Both are taught by a nutrition and fitness professional who are employees of NBIMC.
- Lessons learned in the classroom provide hands on tools that help foster healthy lifestyles for parents and families.
- "Train the Trainer" component provides the education for teachers
- Reaches each child through the classroom and facilitates parent and teacher involvement through homework assignments and projects
- Fosters strong partnerships with community members by providing the expertise and resources of a major medical center and teaching institution in a community-based venue
- Provides a base for health screening as well as a link for children and families to a more intensified intervention from the Pediatric and Adult Health Centers and our KidsFit Treatment Program.
- Saves health care costs through screening and prevention-focused intervention.
- Infrastructure has been created, complete with learning materials, and lesson plans that have been approved by the Newark Public School system department of curriculum development.
- Augments current health, physical education, science and math curricula and provides needed help for teachers in current environment.
- Nutrition and activity centered activities that are specific to urban environment.
- Easily integrated into summer programs currently offered in schools for continuity and continued re-enforcement of lessons taught in the school year
- KidsFit and has received **The New Jersey Hospital Association's HRET Award for Community Outreach** in 2009 and the **American Hospital Association's Nova Award** as a part of the "integrated Approach to Community Wellness" program in 2012.
- KidsFit was recognized by First Lady Michelle Obama in November of 2010



### SUCCESS STORIES

- Culture of health and wellness now prevails at Maple Avenue School and George Washington Carver School
- NBIMC nutritionists are working with school's food service to improve school lunches and a salad bar is now offered twice weekly
- All learning objectives are measured and indicators are behavior based
- Positive lifestyle changes have been achieved at the end of first two marking periods (specific data available):
  - More children eating healthy breakfast.
  - Less Soda and sweet consumption
  - Less fast food consumption
  - Increased consumption fruits and vegetables
  - Increase in weekly activity levels.

### PERTINENT ACTIVITIES TAUGHT BY NBIMC REGISTERED DIETITIAN

- Zumba and other activities
- Classroom Challenges: Students compete for points by answering nutrition trivia questions and participating in activities
- Parent workshops
- Teacher education and "Train the Trainer" through the **Beth Challenge**
- Pre and post assessment of eating and activity behaviors
- Anthropometric data which includes heights, weight BMI in addition to lifestyle behavior analysis
- Referrals for obese children to KidsFit Treatment Program in Pediatric Health Center at CHoNJ
- Cooking classes and urban farming in our Beth Garden

### CURRENT PARTNERSHIP WITH NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- Currently implemented in Maple Avenue School and George Washington Carver School
- Registered dietitians who are also certified fitness instructors and employed by NBIMC are stationed in each school and are a part of the teaching staff
- Nutrition and activity education is now provided in the classroom and after school

*For more information, contact Barbara B. Mintz, MS, RD, Assistant Vice President, Wellness, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center at (973) 926-2663, or email [BMintz@barnabashealth.org](mailto:BMintz@barnabashealth.org)*





sponsor of the Families Program. They take ownership in critical areas of the 2014 USA Games, says Varga.

Another key role for Varga is acquiring media coverage for Special Olympics and the 2014 USA Games. Varga said they have accomplished their goal of acquiring extensive media coverage with 21st Century Fox and most especially through a one-hour television special being produced by WWE and broadcast on FOX Sports 1 nationally.

Varga joined Nelligan Sports Marketing in 2001 as General Manager for NSM on the Rutgers University Campus and in 2008 moved to SVP Sales. Nelligan sold the company in February 2014. Varga initially became involved when introduced to TJ Nelligan's son Sean. Sean, 23, who plays bocce for Team NJ, is a tremendous person to be around, says Varga.

Varga added that in 2003, TJ Nelligan and Marc Edenzon, President of Special Olympics New Jersey, went to Ireland to see Special Olympics World Games. "That experience led us to want to do something like this in NJ." Special Olympics will bring in families and athletes from all 50 states. This is no small task, says Varga.

**A**tiya Jaha-Rashidi, RN Volunteer, nurse of close to 13 years, and former Public Health Advocator and Educator, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, leads a Barnabas Health working committee of Facility Champions and their teams that meet weekly. Her group was charged to promote involvement and commitment as a Founding Partner for the 2014 USA Games and to engage employees and make them aware of our population with special needs. This began with monthly celebrations on the 14th of every month and continuing each month following until the Games. January was the kickoff, a flag-raising celebration where all facilities across the system raised the 2014 USA Games flag at the same time. Each month had a theme, such as February which was Heart Health Month and May the Half Marathon Walking Challenge.

Jaha-Rashidi has a personal investment in Special Olympics because of her contact with children with special needs through family and friends. Ibrahim, nine, is her cousin's child who cannot express himself verbally. "His parents have been great advocates in his schooling." For the first time, Ibrahim is beginning to receive and communicate his wants and needs through sign language. Her best friend's son, Khari, 15, recently won second place in a Special Olympics race about a month ago. Khari has Angelman syndrome. Jaha-Rashidi is excited about Barnabas Health's willingness to learn more and provide resources for this population. "Learning just what it takes for a mom to get prepared for an appointment – it's about how we need to receive these

patients. Facilities are focused for the child," said Jaha-Rashidi. "It's not whether the child is appropriate for the facility."

**L**auren Burke, Vice President of Cardiac Quality and a nurse at Barnabas Health for over 30 years, is a passionate volunteer in her role as an escort at the USA Games. An avid athlete during high school and college, she jumped on the opportunity to get involved when Barnabas Health sent out an e-mail. Escorts generally spend the day with athletes, getting them to where they need to be, eating lunch with them, and getting them to the starting lines on time. Burke says she gets to know both the athletes and parents very well. She is honored that parents entrust her with their children.

"There are so many opportunities to volunteer; you can do registration, sell souvenirs, hand out food, give out awards, cheer the athletes – the opportunities are limitless," says Burke. "I've had a good life and this is a way I can give back." Now that her own children have grown, she can get involved and provide support and guidance. "It's about changing attitudes," says Burke. "If you look at the pool of volunteers just from Barnabas Health alone and for every volunteer a family that they will influence, the domino effect is priceless."

For Greenleaf, it's a "reciprocal choice between leader and follower. If the leader is principle centered, he or she will develop moral authority. If the follower is principle centered, he or she will follow the leader... They follow natural law. They follow principles. They follow a common, agreed-upon vision." It seems to us the vision of Barnabas Health and Special Olympics is pretty clear... so clear in fact that an awful lot of their employees have bought into it and Special Olympics, the athletes and all of us are the direct beneficiaries.●

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Christine Redman-Waldeyer is a poet and Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Passaic County Community College in New Jersey. She has published three poetry collections, *Frame by Frame*, *Gravel*, and *Eve Asks* (all with Muse-Pie Press) and has appeared in *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, *The Texas Review*, *Verse Wisconsin*, and others. Christine earned her Doctorate of Letters from Drew University and is a doctoral candidate in Rowan University's Ed.D program in higher education.

Lynne McEniry, MFA: poet, presenter, mentor, editor, with poems and reviews in *5 AM*, *The Stillwater Review*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *The Lake Rises Anthology*, and others. She won Honorable Mention for the Allen Ginsberg Poetry Award and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. McEniry is a regular guest editor for *Adanna Literary Journal* for which she edited special issues, including "How Women Grieve" and "Hurricane Sandy: Students Speak Out." and works at the College of Saint Elizabeth in Morristown, NJ.

**"THERE ARE SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER" SAYS LAUREN BURKE. "I'VE HAD A GOOD LIFE AND THIS IS A WAY I CAN GIVE BACK."**



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