INDIANA SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND ITS PORTRAYALS OF

PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES,

1969-1989

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAMD	American Association on Mental Deficiencies
ARC	Association for Retarded Citizens of the United States
IARC	Indiana Association for Retarded Children
ISO	Indiana Special Olympics (1969-1998)
ISU	Indiana State University
NARC	National Association for Retarded Children (1952-1973) National Association for Retarded Citizens (1973-1981)
SOI	Special Olympics Indiana (1998-present)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

"The Chicago Special Olympics prove a very fundamental fact, the fact that . . . retarded children can be exceptional athletes." In 1968, Eunice Kennedy Shriver spoke these words when she announced the founding of Special Olympics, Inc., an organization that runs athletic programs and competitions for children and adults with mental disabilities.[1] One year later, two Indiana State University (ISU) professors established Indiana Special Olympics (ISO) and took on the task of planning not only an annual competition, but training programs and smaller events throughout the state. This thesis explores ISO's growth from 1969 to 1989 and the images of people with mental retardation the organization conveyed during this time period.[2] A case study of a state Special Olympics organization reveals how such groups attempted to fulfill Shriver's vision of a society that treated and perceived people with intellectual disabilities in positive ways.

Indiana played a significant role in Special Olympics history. Both ISO co-founders went on to work with Special Olympics, Inc. in Washington, D.C., and in 1987, the International Summer Special Olympics Games (held every four years) took place at

[1] Eunice Kennedy Shriver, "Remarks: 1968 World Games," Special Olympics, Inc., http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org/articles/article/72 (accessed November 1, 2012). People often confuse Special Olympics with Paralympics, but these organizations are separate entities. Special Olympics athletes must have intellectual disabilities, but may also have physical disabilities. Paralympics serves athletes with intellectual disabilities, but also five categories of people with physical disabilities. Special Olympics accepts athletes of any skill level, while Paralympics promotes elite athletic performance and sets qualifications that its athletes must meet.

[2] ISO became Special Olympics Indiana (SOI) in 1998 (ISO, Inc., *Articles of Amendment*, [April 30, 1998], Office of the Indiana Secretary of State, https://secure.in.gov/sos/online_corps/name_search.aspx [accessed April 7, 2013]).

I use "SOI" only when referring to the current organization. Also, I use the terms "mental retardation," "intellectual disabilities," and "mental disabilities" interchangeably and employ People First Language, using phrases like "people with intellectual disabilities" instead of "intellectually disabled people." This phrasing emphasizes individuals rather than their disabilities.

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the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. More importantly, the story of ISO's first two decades illustrates the early challenges that several Special Olympics state organizations faced while raising money, organizing events, and creating positive publicity for people with intellectual disabilities. Ending the study in 1989, when ISO moved its headquarters from Terre Haute to Indianapolis, provides enough temporal distance for historical perspective and enables thorough coverage of ISO's early development. Also, highlighting the 1970s and 1980s allows close examination of how ISO's programs for and depictions of its participants related to new ideas about societal roles for people with disabilities. As the following summary and historiography suggest, opportunities for and dominant perceptions of American people with intellectual disabilities in the late twentieth century differed from those of earlier periods.

In 1961, the American Association on Mental Deficiency (AAMD) defined mental retardation as "subaverage general intellectual functioning which originates in the developmental period [before age 18] and is associated with impairment in adaptive behavior."[3] Perceptions and treatment of mental disabilities have changed throughout American history. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Americans with mental disabilities lived at home or in almshouses if they had no family.[4] In the 1850s, founders of schools for people with mental disabilities attempted to make their pupils self-sufficient and return them to their communities. By the turn of the century,

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[3] R.C. Scheerenberger, *A History of Mental Retardation: A Quarter Century of Promise* (Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1987), 11. The AAMD is now the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and it still defines intellectual disability as a condition that originates before age 18 and features significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviors, such as interpersonal skills and self-direction. Intellectual disabilities are types of developmental disabilities, severe and chronic disabilities that appear before age 22 and can be cognitive, physical, or both (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, "FAQ on Intellectual Disability," http://www.aaidd.org/content_104.cfm [accessed January 15, 2013]).

[4] Trent, 7.

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however, these schools had not succeeded with many of their students, and Americans had linked “idiocy” and other perceived defects, such as poverty, with moral depravity. As a result, large custodial facilities that emphasized segregation rather than education emerged and remained dominant for decades. During World War II, rampant neglect and overcrowding developed in these institutions as resident populations increased and staff and budgets decreased.[5]

After the war, exposés by journalists and memoirs by parents of children with mental retardation made the public aware of the lack of quality treatment for people with mental disabilities. Journalists obtained information from “conscientious objectors,” young men (usually Mennonites, Quakers, Catholic Workers, and Brethren) who had worked at institutions during World War II and kept diaries of abuses they witnessed. Albert Deutsch’s 1948 *Shame of the States*, a series of articles and photographs detailing what he described as “euthanasia through neglect” in state mental hospitals, became one of the most popular accounts.[6] Parent memoirs highlighted challenges facing the families of people with mental retardation. Novelist Pearl Buck described the difficulties of deciding to institutionalize her daughter in her 1950 memoir, *The Child Who Never Grew*. In 1953, actress and singer Dale Evans Rogers published *Angel Unaware*, a book told through the eyes of her daughter, who had Down syndrome and lived for only two years. The confessional literature by Buck, Rogers, and others inspired parents to take

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[5] Leland V. Bell and Peter L. Tyor, *Caring for the Retarded in America: A History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), x-xiii, 36-37, 137.

[6] James W. Trent, *Inventing the Feeble Mind: A History of Mental Retardation in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 226-230.

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pride in their children with mental disabilities and seek to change the negative stereotypes associated with mental retardation.[7]

Newly emboldened, parents of children with intellectual disabilities formed advocacy groups throughout the 1950s and 1960s to demand better services for their families.[8] One group became especially influential. In 1952, several parent groups, seeking to go beyond state and local levels, formed the National Association for Retarded Children (NARC). Between 1955 and 1960, NARC's membership grew from 29,000 to 62,000. Members distributed pamphlets, established preschool classes for children with intellectual disabilities, provided counseling services for families, and formed local lobbying groups.[9] NARC's efforts resulted in legislation such as the extension of Social Security survivor benefits to people with mental disabilities in 1956 and the Act to Encourage Expansion of Teaching in the Education of Mentally Retarded Children in 1958.[10] Parent advocacy, exposés, and parent memoirs created the awareness of mental disabilities that would encourage deinstitutionalization, which began in the mid-1960s. This process moved people with intellectual disabilities from custodial institutions into community residential facilities.[11]

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[7] Allison C. Carey, *On the Margins of Citizenship: Intellectual Disability and Civil Rights in Twentieth-Century America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 109-113. Down syndrome is a genetic condition that slows both physical and mental development.

[8] In 1953, 794,000 children with mental disabilities lived in the United States (Shorter, 30). In 1962, the President's Panel on Mental Retardation, a research group created by President John F. Kennedy, estimated that three percent of Americans (5.4 million) had intellectual disabilities (Scheerenberger, 18).

[9] Harold Pollack, "Learning to Walk Slow: America's Partial Policy Success in the Arena of Intellectual Disability," *Journal of Policy History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 102. In 1973, NARC became the National Association for Retarded Citizens. It dropped the "National" to become the Association for Retarded Citizens of the United States (ARC) in 1981 and then eliminated the acronym in 1992 to become the Arc (The Arc, "History of The Arc," http://www.thearc.org/page.aspx?pid=2344, [accessed April 11, 2013]).

[10] Carey, 125.

[11] Journalism and parents' advocacy and writings indirectly led to deinstitutionalization, but I discuss the direct causes of the process in the following historiography.

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My study of ISO draws from and contributes to secondary sources largely about deinstitutionalization, but also special education, Special Olympics, and popular images of disability. Although the authors who discuss these topics represent different disciplines, most conceive of disability as a social, rather than solely medical, characteristic. The medical model of disability defines it as an impairment that exists in an individual and must be treated by specialists. In the 1960s, scholars began challenging the medical model, creating the social model that conceptualizes disability as a function of interaction between society and individuals. Proponents of the social model acknowledge medical causes of disabilities, but argue that social conditions (such as prejudices, discrimination, and buildings without handicap-accessible features) also contribute to people's disabilities.[12] As deinstitutionalization took place, the social model revealed the need for greater societal support for people with mental disabilities.

Deinstitutionalization initially focused on people with mental illnesses rather than mental disabilities.[13] In 1991, historian Gerald Grob analyzed changes in mental health services for people with severe mental illnesses from 1940 to 1970 in *From Asylum to Community: Mental Health Policy in Modern America*. Grob described how, as

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[12] Patrick Devlieger, David Pfeiffer, and Frank Rusch, eds., *Rethinking Disability: The Emergence of New Definitions, Concepts, and Communities* (Philadelphia: Garant, 2003), 112-114; Duane Stroman, *The Disability Rights Movement: From Deinstitutionalization to Self-Determination* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003), 16.

In her seminal work *Labeling the Mentally Retarded* (1973), sociologist Jane Mercer defined the social systems perspective of mental retardation, which views mental retardation as a socially-determined status. She stated that a person could be labeled as a 'mental retardate' in some social systems and not in others. In 2004, psychologist Mark Rapley demonstrated that societal changes could make mental disabilities less disabling, stating, "inasmuch as the way that 'employment opportunities' are just as much a socially structured 'barrier' to people with an intellectual disability as a flight of steps is to a wheelchair user, so too may they be socially re-made" (Mark Rapley, *The Social Construction of Intellectual Disability* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004]: 67).

[13] Doctors can treat and sometimes cure mental illnesses, such as mood, personality, and psychiatric disorders. Mental disabilities are permanent, although training can help those with mental disabilities develop abilities that compensate for their condition (Progress, Inc., "Mental Retardation is Different from Mental Illness," http://www.progress-inc.org/mrvsmi.html [accessed January 12, 2013]).

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psychiatry and psychology gained legitimacy, custodial mental hospitals gave way to community treatment facilities. He stated that "a marked difference between intentions and outcome" accompanied the shift.[14] Institutions had provided long-term care for people with severe mental illnesses, but emerging outpatient services in the 1960s focused on treating a broader population. As a result, "the growing availability, variety, and popularity of mental health services sometimes worked to the detriment of those most in need of assistance."[15] Grob based his criticism of deinstitutionalization on sources such as federal government hearings, National Institute of Mental Health reports, and evaluations of community health centers conducted by the American Psychiatry Association and other professional groups.

During the decades before Grob's 1991 work, scholars who studied the history of mental disabilities had expressed tentative optimism about deinstitutionalization. In *Educational Handicap, Public Policy, and Social History: A Broadened Perspective on Mental Retardation* (1979), psychologists John Doris and Seymour Sarason evaluated deinstitutionalization in their discussion of mental retardation public policy. In 1971, Title XIX of the Social Security Act had authorized federal funding for intermediate care facilities that provided habilitative, rather than custodial, treatment for people with mental disabilities. State officials were expected to convert existing institutions into intermediate care facilities that would enable residents to eventually move to private or group homes within their communities. However, through analysis of a manual written for officials charged with creating these facilities, Doris and Sarason determined that,

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[14] Gerald Grob, *From Asylum to Community: Mental Health Policy in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 4. Although Grob focused on people with mental illnesses, he analyzed deinstitutionalization's origins and echoed criticisms that others have made about the deinstitutionalization of people with intellectual disabilities.

[15] Grob, 303.

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"Nothing is said about how this [the intermediate care facility] should be related to the community."[16] They concluded that the intermediate care facilities represented an attempt to reform large institutions rather than to eliminate them through deinstitutionalization.

Alternatives to intermediate care facilities did exist. Historian Leland V. Bell and welfare scholar Peter L. Tyor ended their analysis of treatment of people with intellectual disabilities in the United States in *Caring for the Retarded in America: A History* (1984) with a discussion of community residential care that emerged in the 1960s. Within communities, some people with intellectual disabilities began receiving vocational training at sheltered workshops and residing in private homes or supervised group homes. Citing statements from presidents of the AAMD and President John F. Kennedy (whose interest in mental retardation is discussed in the next chapter), the authors illustrated a growing disdain for custodial institutions. They argued that 1960s society's "powerful sense of rising expectations," seen in war protests and civil rights demonstrations, led to deinstitutionalization.[17] Bell and Tyor also credited early 1970s' court rulings and legislation related to the education and treatment of people with mental disabilities with establishing a legal framework for deinstitutionalization. Expressing optimism, they claimed deinstitutionalization reflected medical professionals' new "positive and dynamic view of their clientele."[18]

While the previous authors conducted broad studies of mental retardation history, historian David Rothman and public health scholar Sheila Rothman presented a case

[16] John Doris and Seymour B. Sarason, *Educational Handicap, Public Policy, and Social History: A Broadened Perspective on Mental Retardation* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 89-92.
[17] Bell and Tyor, xii, 155.
[18] Bell and Tyor, 159.

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study of New York's Willowbrook State School for people with mental disabilities in *The Willowbrook Wars* (1984).[19] In 1975, three years after a documentary by reporter Geraldo Rivera exposed the primitive and unsanitary conditions of Willowbrook, a class-action lawsuit resulted in a consent judgment ordering New York to reduce Willowbrook's population of 5,400 people to 250 by 1981.[20] Since officials had only removed half of the residents by that time, the trial reopened. The Rothmans, who began documenting the case in 1975, sent sociologist Robert Zussman to observe group homes for people with mental retardation. His reports concluded that people with mental disabilities could succeed in community settings adapted to their individual needs.

However, the Rothmans recognized that challenges to deinstitutionalization would complicate the process. As an example, they cited the 1983 decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit that modified the original Willowbrook consent judgment by allowing residents to be placed in facilities of up to 50 beds rather than only those of 15 or fewer.[21] The Rothmans concluded that "analysis of a decade in Willowbrook's history confirms old maxims about institutions and teaches new ones about alternatives."[22] For example, the case showed that custodial institutions suffered

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[19] David Rothman's support for deinstitutionalization originated partly from his critical views of institutions. In *The Discovery of the Asylum*: *Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1971), he asserted that reformers reacted to the social turmoil of the first half of the nineteenth century by developing institutionalization to manage people whose crimes, poverty, or insanity threatened society's stability. He felt that such reformers self-interestedly maintained asylums, such as prisons and mental institutions, even as the conditions of such places deteriorated. Other scholars rejected this argument, known as the social control thesis. Gerald Grob argued that social control theorists misinterpreted institutionalization by erroneously asserting a causal link between reformers' motives and asylum abuses (Andrew Scull, *Social Order/Mental Disorder: Anglo-American Psychiatry in Historical Perspective* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989], 39).

[20] New York State Association for Retarded Children, Inc. v. Carey, 393 F. Supp. 715 (E.D.N.Y. 1975).

[21] New York State Association for Retarded Children, Inc. v. Carey, 711 F.2d 1136 (2d Cir. 1983).

[22] David J. Rothman and Sheila M. Rothman, *The Willowbrook Wars* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 365.

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understaffing and overcrowding and that people with intellectual disabilities could thrive in foster care and group homes.

Finding middle ground between a comprehensive history and a case study, R.C. Scheerenberger, a psychologist and former AAMD president, presented the history of mental retardation in America from 1960 to 1985 in *A History of Mental Retardation: A Quarter Century of Promise* (1987). He characterized these years as "a time of promise, progress, and uncertainty."[23] By quoting recommendations for community services from the Association for Retarded Citizens of the United States (ARC) and legislation like the Community and Family Living Amendments (introduced to the Senate in 1983), Scheerenberger stressed the promises deinstitutionalization held.[24] He illustrated acceptance of deinstitutionalization through polls and surveys taken by the President's Committee on Mental Retardation and other researchers in which a majority of respondents did not object to people with mental retardation being allowed to live in communities. However, Scheerenberger also cited the 1985 U.S. Supreme Court case *City of Cleburne v. Cleburne Living Center* in which Cleburne, Texas community members protested the construction of a group home for people with intellectual disabilities by Cleburne Living Center, Inc. Fears of people with mental retardation and concerns about property values motivated objections to such group homes.[25] The case demonstrated the uncertainty some people felt about deinstitutionalization.

Near the turn of the twenty-first century, three sociologists offered perspectives on deinstitutionalization. In *Mental Retardation in Social Context* (1989), Duane Stroman argued for exploring the historical evolution of mental disability treatment in

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[23] Scheerenberger, 259.
[24] Scheerenberger, 247-248.
[25] Scheerenberger, 252-254.

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order to understand current policies. He summarized three studies conducted in 1978, 1983, and 1986 on the outcomes of deinstitutionalization. The first analyzed 414 people who left 9 institutions; only 58 decided to return. The second, based on investigation of 7 small residential facilities, argued that a majority of these centers continued institutional practices that isolated their residents from the community. The third discovered mostly positive living conditions for 339 people with mental retardation residing in 34 semi-independent living programs (such as apartments in integrated facilities). From this research, Stroman concluded that deinstitutionalization succeeded when professionals matched a client's characteristics with the specific offerings of a residential facility and monitored facilities for quality.[26]

Almost 15 years later, Stroman addressed deinstitutionalization again in *The Disability Rights Movement: From Deinstitutionalization to Self-Determination* (2003). With more temporal distance from the process, Stroman identified deinstitutionalization of people with mental disabilities as "Wave II" of deinstitutionalization, coming after the deinstitutionalization of people with mental illnesses and before an emerging wave of self-determination (a movement with the goal of people with disabilities gaining more control over their lives). Using similar studies to those he analyzed in his 1989 work, Stroman listed seven findings that indicated deinstitutionalization was succeeding, such as residents of community facilities being able to develop new relationships, take part in educational and vocational programs, and make more decisions on their own. Stroman contended that, "While the wave of deinstitutionalization that began in the late 1960s is

[26] Duane Stroman, *Mental Retardation in Social Context* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), 238-251, 258.

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not over yet, much of its work has been done."[27] He viewed deinstitutionalization as one phase in a progressive history of mental retardation treatment.

In contrast to Stroman, other sociologists presented less positive views of deinstitutionalization. Widely cited by scholars, historical sociologist James W. Trent's *Inventing the Feeble Mind: A History of Mental Retardation in the United States* (1994) examined the treatment of people with intellectual disabilities from the eighteenth century to the late twentieth century. In his final chapter, Trent asserted that deinstitutionalization only succeeded under certain conditions, stating, "mentally retarded people who have money, supportive relatives, and understanding neighbors and employers do well in American communities . . . mentally retarded people who do not have those things, do not."[28] He also observed that 1988 data about mental retardation facilities invalidated the common belief that deinstitutionalization had eliminated large institutions. In that year, over half of people with mental disabilities living in residential facilities resided in public or private institutions of 16 beds or more rather than in smaller group homes.[29]

In *On the Margins of Citizenship: Intellectual Disability and Civil Rights in Twentieth-Century America* (2009), sociologist Allison Carey asserted that deinstitutionalization did not establish clear rights to community-based residences and services for people with mental retardation. She pointed out that although the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of a group home for people with mental disabilities in the aforementioned case *City of Cleburne v. Cleburne Living Center*, it also upheld the city's

[27] Stroman, *The Disability Rights Movement*, 176.
[28] Trent, 268.
[29] Trent, 264-265.

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zoning statute that required special use permits for establishing such group homes.[30] The ruling did not strengthen the housing rights of people with mental disabilities. Carey also highlighted other tensions surrounding deinstitutionalization. Using statements from some parents' groups and the National Association of Superintendents of Public Residential Facilities for the Mentally Retarded, she explained that such groups believed institutions remained the best living environment for particular individuals with intellectual disabilities. She argued that despite such resistance, deinstitutionalization proceeded because political momentum remained in its favor. Deinstitutionalization represented "the more practical and ethical choice for politicians," who saw it as cost-effective *and* liberating.[31]

Scholars other than historians, psychologists, and sociologists have written about deinstitutionalization. Geographer Deborah Metzel contributed "Historical Social Geography" to James Trent and historian Steven Noll's *Mental Retardation in America: A Historical Reader*, a collection of essays that examined the cultural and economic influences on individuals with intellectual disabilities in North America from the 1850s to the early 2000s. Metzel explored the meaning of "community" in the contexts of mental retardation policies from the colonial period to the 1990s. From writings of mental retardation advocates like Gunnar Dybwad, she found that when deinstitutionalization began, community meant a location with goods and services. But during the 1970s and 1980s, scholars rejected this limited conception of community, stating that integration of

[30] People often used fire-clear ordinances, building permits, and zoning regulations to block the establishment of group homes in their communities. Cleburne city officials required special permits for "hospitals for the insane or feebleminded, or alcoholic or drug addicts, or penal or correctional institutions." After categorizing the 13-resident Cleburne Living Center as a hospital for the "feebleminded," city officials denied the center a special use permit (Carey, 10, 167-168).

[31] Carey, 168.

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people with intellectual disabilities required more than physical placement in a community. By the 1990s, community had evolved to mean a locale, a space that offered not only goods and services, but also personal interactions. Metzel's geographic perspective offered new insight into a term closely linked to deinstitutionalization.

Education scholars James Patton, Edward Polloway, J. David Smith, and Tom E.C. Smith positioned deinstitutionalization within mental retardation policy paradigm shifts in "Historic Changes in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities" (1996). Employing physicist, historian, and philosopher Thomas Kuhn's conception of "paradigm" as a shared worldview held by scientists, the authors asserted that in the 1960s, mental disability treatment shifted from a facility-based paradigm (of large institutions) to a services-based one.[32] The specialized services, such as special education classes and employment workshops, had the goal of transitioning people with mental retardation into integrated settings, but such placement rarely occurred. Citing special education efficacy studies, the authors stated that professionals began doubting segregated services. By the 1990s, a supports-based paradigm of inclusion dominated intellectual disability policy. Under this model, people with mental disabilities lived in inclusive settings with support from regular education programs, job coaches, and housing staff. The authors concluded that intellectual disability paradigm shifts had "profound implications for the education, care, and treatment of potentially millions of human beings."[33] Deinstitutionalization represented the first of these significant shifts.

[32] The authors note that rather than scientific discoveries, "philosophy, personal perspectives, and the strong conviction of key individuals" influenced mental retardation paradigm shifts (James R. Patton et al., "Historic Changes in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities," *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities* 31, no. 1 [1996]: 3).

[33] Patton et al., 11.

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Patton, Polloway, Smith, and Smith shared an interest in special education, a topic closely related to deinstitutionalization. As education professor Margret A. Winzer stated in *From Isolation to Integration: A History of Special Education in the 20th Century* (2009), "deinstitutionalization in the human service delivery system and . . . mainstreaming in the educational system . . . were different movements in different systems, but with a common mission and addressing the same fundamental problems."[34] Winzer demonstrated that optimism about segregated special education classes waned in the late 1960s and early 1970s, citing special educator Lloyd Dunn's 1968 seminal article, "Special Education for the Mildly Retarded: Is Much of it Justifiable?" Drawing from the United States' 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act and secondary scholarship about court cases, she identified the 1970s as a decade of important litigation and legislation concerning the inadequacy and stigmatization of special education. Winzer noted that during the 1980s, "special educators willingly and readily co-opted the voice of general education reform" that emerged after the 1983 U.S. Department of Education report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* revealed shortcomings in the American public school system as a whole.[35]

Special education reform involved the rejection of "mainstreaming," which implied that children with disabilities had to break into normal settings. In the late 1980s, special educators began developing, as well as debating, the philosophy of inclusion. While mainstreaming represented the services-based paradigm of mental retardation treatment, inclusion formed part of the supports-based paradigm. Education scholar Robert L. Osgood traced the development of inclusion in *The History of Inclusion in the*

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[34] Margret A. Winzer, *From Isolation to Integration: A History of Special Education in the 20th Century* (Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 2009), 106.

[35] Winzer, 222.

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United States (2005). He asserted that inclusion "embodies the right of every child to be educated in a common setting where her or his individual needs and those of all other children are addressed completely and effectively."[36] Osgood, like Winzer, quoted professional literature about special education, but also presented the perspectives of the parents of children with disabilities. Using parents' statements from sources like the Massachusetts Advocacy Center's 1987 report *Out of the Mainstream* and books about raising children with disabilities, Osgood demonstrated the mixed feelings parents expressed about the potential value of integrated school settings for their children with mental disabilities throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Against the backdrop of deinstitutionalization and special education reform, Special Olympics emerged and grew. Although the organization offered previously unavailable opportunities to its participants, it did not escape critical analysis by scholars. Special education professors Edward A. Polloway and J. David Smith and psychologist Michael Brickey, in separate articles, contended that people with intellectual disabilities benefit more from integrated sports programs than from Special Olympics. Ten years after Special Olympics' founding, Polloway and Smith argued this point in "Special Olympics: A Second Look" (1978). The authors cited studies that showed "the area of motor skills is the domain of greatest congruence between . . . 'normal' and mildly retarded children."[37] Brickey, in "Normalizing the Special Olympics" (1984), used newspaper accounts of Special Olympics events and Special Olympics chaperone manuals to assert that the organization perpetuated the stereotype of people with mental

[36] Robert L. Osgood, *The History of Inclusion in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 2002), 198.

[37] Edward A. Polloway and J. David Smith, "Special Olympics: A Second Look," *Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded* 13 (1978): 432.

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retardation as children. He stated that, "Normalizing Special Olympics means guiding public perceptions . . . toward full respect for mentally retarded individuals," which could be better achieved through integrated programs.[38]

Exercise scientist Peter Harmer and education scholar Keith Storey argued that Special Olympics programs had paternalistic tendencies.[39] In his 1989 dissertation "Paternalism and Special Olympics," Harmer asserted that both Special Olympics' recruitment of participants (which targeted caregivers and teachers rather than the prospective athletes themselves) and the lack of individuals with intellectual disabilities on its decision-making bodies promoted paternalism. He used secondary sources on paternalism, mental retardation, and philosophy to support his argument. Storey, drawing from newspaper articles about Special Olympics events, studies of its programs, and disability journals, presented arguments similar to those Polloway, Smith, and Brickey had expressed. But in his "The Case Against Special Olympics" (2004), he identified paternalism as an additional flaw of Special Olympics, pointing out that only 2 of the 48 members on the organization's 2002 board of directors had mental disabilities.[40]

Unlike Polloway, Smith, and others, historian Edward Shorter presented a positive assessment of Special Olympics in *The Kennedy Family and the Story of Mental Retardation* (2000). Historians have not analyzed Special Olympics as much as other scholars have.[41] Shorter has written the most descriptive historical account of Special Olympics. Founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver and her husband, Sargent, granted Shorter

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[38] Michael Brickey, "Normalizing the Special Olympics," *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance* 55, no. 8 (1984): 75.

[39] I expound further on paternalism's definition and relation to Special Olympics in Chapter Three.

[40] Keith Storey, "The Case Against Special Olympics," *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* 15, no. 1 (2004): 38-39.

[41] For example, Special Olympics does not appear in the most recent book about disability history, Kim E. Nielsen's *A Disability History of the United States of America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012).

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access to Kennedy papers from Boston's John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and to Kennedy family records held at the Kennedy Foundation in Washington, D.C. Shorter traced the Kennedy family's influence on intellectual disability awareness, prevention, and treatment from the 1946 creation of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation to the family's 1984 decision to keep mental retardation as the foundation's cause. In regard to Special Olympics, Shorter concluded, "People became accepting of these young athletes – of these mentally retarded citizens in general – whose often distinctive appearances had once consigned them to the dustbin."[42] In Shorter's view, Special Olympics had helped people with mental retardation by improving their public image.

Shorter highlighted Shriver's use of television and movies to transmit positive images of people with mental retardation, but still images also convey messages about people with disabilities. English professor Rosemarie Garland Thomson explored photography's role in constructing disability meanings in "Seeing the Disabled: Visual Rhetorics of Disability in Popular Photography," published in *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, a 2001 collection of essays edited by historians Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky. Thomson identified four "visual rhetorics" (wondrous, sentimental, exotic, and realistic) in photographs of people with disabilities from historical and modern times. She included several photographs in the article, such as a nineteenth-century photo of a freak show performer without arms, a 1940s poster for the March of Dimes featuring a child with polio, and a 1990s fashion advertisement using a model with a prosthetic hand. Thomson felt that her analysis revealed the importance of "understanding how images create and recreate disability as a system of exclusions and

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[42] Edward Shorter, *The Kennedy Family and the Story of Mental Retardation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 185.

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prejudices."[43] She emphasized that photographers manipulated viewers to have a specific reaction to images.

In 1987, disability scholar and historian Paul K. Longmore explored visual representations of people with disabilities in "Screening Stereotypes: Images of Disabled People in Television and Motion Pictures" a chapter of Alan Gartner and Tom Joe's *Images of the Disabled, Disabling Images* (discussed below). Longmore identified a coexistence of conflicting images of people with disabilities in 1970s and 1980s television shows. Television programs created "contradictions of characterization and theme" by simultaneously presenting disability stereotypes and exploring the legal and civil rights of people with disabilities. For example, an episode of the police drama *T.J. Hooker* featured a blind woman who expressed a stereotypical fear of "living in darkness," but also advocated for disability rights. Longmore asserted that such episodes revealed that "even while previous stereotypes have persisted, a few productions have struggled to . . . respond to a developing sociopolitical consciousness about disabled people."[44] Disability activists and advocates had made people aware of disability rights issues, but this awareness did not eradicate stereotypes. As Chapter Three reveals, ISO's inconsistent portrayals of people with mental retardation also reflected the conflict between old and new conceptions of disability.

Other authors who contributed to *Images of the Disabled* demonstrated that images of people with disabilities do not only occur visually. The book's editors, Alan

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[43] Rosemarie Garland Thomson, "Seeing the Disabled: Visual Rhetorics of Disability in Popular Photography," in *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, ed. Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 372.

[44] Paul K. Longmore, "Screening Stereotypes: Images of Disabled People in Television and Motion Pictures," in *Images of the Disabled, Disabling Images*, ed. Alan Gartner and Tom Joe (New York: Praeger, 1987), 75-76.

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Gartner (director of the Office of Sponsored Research for City University of New York) and Tom Joe (founder of the Center for the Study of Social Policy in Washington, D.C.) adopted a broader definition of "image" to include written portrayals. The first part of the book includes articles that examine portrayals of people with disabilities not only on television, but also in print media, textbooks for those who work with people with disabilities, and popular literature. The remaining articles explore the education, employment, and daily living challenges faced by people with disabilities. Gartner and Joe connected widely-held images to public policies, stating that "old views [of disability] continue to make possible the exclusion of persons with disabilities from full participation in society."[45] Society's "disabling images" of disability limited opportunities for people with disabilities, and their subsequent low achievements confirmed the harmful images. Gartner and Joe felt that alternative images of disability could end this negative cycle.

Taken together, analyses of deinstitutionalization, special education, Special Olympics, and disability images by scholars of different disciplines create a rich context for the story of Indiana Special Olympics. The two parts of my examination of ISO contribute a new perspective to the themes of the works discussed above. First, my organizational history of ISO adds a state-level story to Special Olympics history, a topic usually presented in a national or global context. ISO's history also reveals how Special Olympics programs, like deinstitutionalization and special education reform, sought to end the marginalization of children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Second, my analysis of the images conveyed by ISO applies concepts from the authors featured in

[45] Alan Gartner and Tom Joe, eds., *Images of the Disabled, Disabling Images* (New York: Praeger, 1987), 5.

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Gartner and Joe's collection to people with mental retardation rather than to people with all types of disabilities. I employ the term "images" to refer to impressions or notions, rather than visual pictures, and explore divergent portrayals of people with intellectual disabilities that coexisted during ISO's first two decades.

While secondary research provided national context for my study, primary materials revealed the local story of ISO. The organization possesses an archive of historical documents. Some of the materials, such as annual reports and board of directors meeting minutes, illuminated the financial matters and internal operations of ISO. Others, including event programs and newsletters, detailed the growing variety of ISO competitions. Fundraising and informational pamphlets revealed how ISO promoted its programs, and newspaper clippings offered journalists' interpretations of ISO events, as well as comments from supporters and participants. I found additional newspaper articles about ISO's annual Summer Games at the Indiana State Library, and the Indiana State Archives holds a folder of Special Olympics, Inc. materials (such as fact sheets and a calendar that allowed athletes to track their training progress) in its Fort Wayne State Developmental Center (FWSDC) collection. The center, which closed in 2007, initially opened in 1887 as the Indiana School for Feeble Minded Youth.

Besides historical documents, I used oral history interviews I conducted in recognition of SOI's fortieth anniversary in 2009. The interviewees included ISO co-founders Drs. Thomas Songster and Judy Campbell; former executive director Dennis Schmidt; former director of programs Dan TeGrotenhuis; and Carl Erskine, the father of an ISO athlete. Campbell and Songster offered insights on the first few years of SOI before Schmidt became executive director in 1974. Schmidt and TeGrotenhuis covered a

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longer period of ISO's history, discussing the administrative and programmatic aspects of the organization. Erskine revealed the perspective of an avid ISO supporter and volunteer. In some cases, the interviewees discussed shortcomings and challenges of ISO that did not appear in written accounts.

Supplemented by secondary materials, the primary sources of the SOI collection answer the research questions set forth in the next two chapters. Chapter Two explores, "How did ISO evolve from 1969 to 1989?" and "What goals did ISO staff have?" Beginning with a brief overview of the establishment of Special Olympics, Inc. and relying mostly on primary materials, the chapter details the founding and growth of ISO. The oral history interviews feature prominently, as well as annual reports, newspaper articles, and board of directors meeting minutes. Examination of ISO's programming, fundraising, and volunteerism illustrate that the staff wanted to not only create high-quality sports programs, but also increase societal inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. ISO events provided a channel through which the general public could learn about the capabilities of people with mental disabilities.

Chapter Three addresses, "What images (or notions) of people with mental disabilities did ISO convey?" and "What social and historical factors contributed to these images?" Since successful integration of people with mental retardation into society required a positive public image of them, ISO's treatment and portrayals of its athletes significantly affected its goals. I analyzed how the writers of ISO annual reports and newsletters described people with intellectual disabilities, as well as how reporters portrayed such individuals in newspaper coverage of ISO events. My discussion of the disability rights movement and Eunice Kennedy Shriver's concern about the public

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portrayal of Special Olympics demonstrates that people were seeking to change conceptions of disability during the 1970s and 1980s. ISO materials reflect both old and new notions of people with mental disabilities, revealing that, in most cases, these images did not transition from one to another, but coexisted and sometimes conflicted with each other. Despite their differences, all of the depictions served ISO's goal of improving the public image of people with mental retardation.

The story of Indiana Special Olympics from 1969 to 1989 presents an intimate portrait of the development of Special Olympics, a topic that has not received wide attention from scholars, especially historians. Yet it also provides insight into the conflicts between long-held and emergent concepts of people with intellectual disabilities that appeared as these individuals became more visible and active in their communities. By revealing the motivations and methods of a state Special Olympics organization, my thesis enriches the existing literature on mental retardation in the late twentieth century in the United States and images of disability.

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CHAPTER TWO

ATHLETICS, ACCEPTANCE, AND AWARENESS: ISO'S FIRST TWENTY YEARS

The inaugural Special Olympics Games took place in Chicago in July 1968. During the following year and early 1970s, states across the country founded their own non-profit Special Olympics organizations. Indiana Special Olympics (ISO), founded in 1969, had the sixth highest participation rate in the nation by 1982.[46] The organization maintained its headquarters on the campus of Indiana State University (ISU) until its 1989 relocation to Indianapolis. Over ISO's first two decades, its founders and administration expanded its sports programming in the face of financial and logistical challenges. Despite being an athletics program, ISO staff focused on more than improving the physical fitness of its participants. The organization intended to change society's negative views of people with mental retardation by increasing public awareness and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.

ISO would not have existed without the work of Special Olympics, Inc. founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver.[47] Shriver urged her older brother, President John F. Kennedy, to promote mental retardation issues as soon as he took office in 1961. At Shriver's insistence, President Kennedy established the President's Panel on Mental Retardation to

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[46] ISO, Inc., "Participation," *Area Guide Indiana Special Olympics* [ca. 1983]: 6, SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Organizational Materials II," SOI History Collection, Wabash Valley Visions and Voices Digital Memory Project, Cunningham Memorial Library, Terre Haute, IN. Hereafter, the collection will be cited as "SOI."

The participation rate was not based solely on the numbers of Special Olympians a state had, but on how many Special Olympics opportunities a state offered relative to its population. According to the "Participation" page in the *Area Guide*, "No state with a smaller population [than Indiana] has more opportunities, and we [ISO] offer more opportunities than a majority of larger states."

[47] Special Olympics, Inc. refers to the international Special Olympics headquarters in Washington, D.C.

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conduct research on and develop strategies to prevent intellectual disabilities.[48] He and Shriver had personal reasons for an interest in mental retardation; their eldest sister, Rosemary, had an intellectual disability. Their parents, Joseph Kennedy, Sr. and Rose Kennedy, had kept Rosemary's condition a secret. In 1962, Americans finally learned about Rosemary in a *Saturday Evening Post* article written by Shriver as part of her effort to dispel the stigma surrounding mental disabilities.[49]

That same year, Shriver started Camp Shriver, a free summer day camp for children with mental disabilities. Scientific research on the benefits of physical activity for people with intellectual disabilities, as well as Shriver's childhood memories of playing sports with Rosemary, inspired this endeavor. Children came to Timberlawn, the Kennedys' 30-acre Maryland estate, to learn rope climbing, horseback riding, and team sports. Volunteer counselors (usually local high school students), Shriver's children, and Shriver herself led and supervised activities.[50]

Mental retardation day camps had existed since 1950, when Kay Gould, a NARC activist in New Jersey, started the first camp for children with mental disabilities.[51] During the 1950s, many parents of children with mental retardation became determined to prove that their children could develop skills when given educational opportunities.[52] Gould and other camp organizers felt that recreational activities in camp settings, in

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[48] Carey, 127-128. After one year, the panel released a report, recommending research on the causes of mental retardation; development of mental disability services within communities, such as vocational education programs; and revisions to the legal rights and protections of those with mental disabilities. As a result, in 1963, Congress passed the Maternal and Child Health and Mental Retardation Planning Amendments to the Social Security Act, and the Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Health Centers Construction Act (Carey, 130).

[49] Eunice Kennedy Shriver, "Hope for Retarded Children," *Saturday Evening Post*, September 22, 1962, http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org/articles/saturday_evening_post/page/1 (accessed January 30, 2012).

[50] Shorter, 113-115.

[51] Shorter, 115.

[52] Carey, 113.

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addition to teaching physical skills, provided children with intellectual disabilities the sensory stimulation many lacked in their daily lives. In 1959, NARC members reported that 150 day camps for children with mental disabilities existed.[53]

Throughout the 1960s, parents embraced psychologist Edward Zigler's "developmental approach," a theory that stated people with mental disabilities developed more slowly, but not differently than people without disabilities.[54] Therefore, children with mental retardation deserved the same opportunities and services as their peers. Camping, a normal leisure activity, represented one such opportunity. Shriver turned day camp programs into a national movement. In 1962, she appointed an advisory group of recreation experts to train mental retardation camp directors and start a nationwide program of camps. That same summer, the Washington, D.C. Recreation Department launched a pilot program, Sunny Grove Day Camp. By 1969, the Kennedy Foundation was supporting 32 camps, and 750 additional day camps for children with intellectual disabilities were functioning throughout the United States.[55]

As the camp programs grew, Shriver expanded her vision of physical fitness for people with mental retardation beyond recreation to competitive sports. In 1965, she met with Frank Hayden, a Canadian exercise physiologist, who had proposed a "National Mental Retardation Games" for Canada's 1967 centennial celebration (planners rejected

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[53] Shorter, 115-116.

[54] Carey, 140-141. Zigler defined his theory in "Developmental versus Difference Theories of Mental Retardation and the Problem of Motivation," *American Journal of Mental Deficiency* 73 (1969): 536-556. Even today, medical professionals endorse the theory. Organizations like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities assert that although people with intellectual disabilities learn at a slower pace, they can master basic skills when given proper support and instruction.

[55] Shorter, 117-118. Shriver's parents established the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation in 1946 in memory of their oldest son, who died in World War II. By the 1970s, the Kennedy Foundation's goals were "to seek the prevention of mental retardation by identifying its causes and to improve the means by which society deals with its citizens who are already retarded" (Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, "Fact Sheet" [ca. 1972], Fort Wayne State Developmental Center [FWSDC] Collection, Box 8, Folder 1, Indiana State Archives, Indianapolis, IN).

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the proposal). Although the idea of a national sports program for people with mental retardation interested Shriver, it was delayed when Hayden began working on other projects with the President's Council on Physical Fitness, a group that launched a national physical fitness campaign and created physical education curricula for schools. Over the next few years, Shriver and Hayden independently developed plans for athletic competitions for people with mental disabilities, but neither held an event.[56]

Finally, in early 1968, a funding request made to the Kennedy Foundation by Anne Burke, a Chicago Park District physical education teacher, for a "National Olympics for the Retarded" led to plans for the first Special Olympics. The Kennedy Foundation gave $20,000 to the project. On July 20, 900 people with intellectual disabilities from 28 states and Canada arrived at Chicago's Soldier Field.[57] Sixty-five of the athletes came from Indiana.[58] The participants marched in an opening parade, competed in events divided by age groups and ability levels, learned new sports in training clinics led by famous athletes, and enjoyed a celebratory dinner held at the La Salle Hotel. At a press conference, Shriver announced that the Kennedy Foundation would make Special Olympics a year-round, national program.[59] In August, she and her

[56] Shorter, 124-128; John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, "The Federal Government Takes on Physical Fitness," http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/Physical-Fitness.aspx?p=2 (accessed August 31, 2012). President Dwight Eisenhower formed the President's Council on Youth Fitness in 1956 in response to studies that indicated higher levels of physical fitness among European children than American children and complaints from military officers about the poor fitness of draftees. President Kennedy renamed it the President's Council on Physical Fitness.

[57] Shorter, 129-130, 133. Many Chicago Park District employees regarded Anne Burke as the founder of Special Olympics and felt that the Kennedy Foundation stole her idea. For more on this controversy, see Lucinda Hahn, "Making History: How Anne Burke Met Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Special Olympics Began," *Chicago Magazine*, November 2009, http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/November-2009/Making-History-How-Anne-Burke-met-Eunice-Kennedy-Shriver-and-the-Special-Olympics began/index.php?cparticle=1&siarticle=0#artanc (accessed September 9, 2012).

[58] ISO, *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970* (June 1970): 1, SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Reports," SOI.

[59] Shorter, 133-135. Hayden, Shriver, and the Chicago Park District all claim to have coined the title "Special Olympics." Shorter explains, "Unraveling the origins of the Special Olympics is a bit like

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husband Sargent incorporated Special Olympics, created a board of directors, and made Frank Hayden its first executive director. By January 1969, 17 cities had requested support to hold Special Olympics meets.[60]

Indianapolis, Indiana, was one of the cities interested in hosting a sports event for people with mental retardation, but the driving force for the undertaking originated at ISU in the west central Indiana city of Terre Haute. Two ISU professors, Thomas Songster and Judy Campbell, had attended the 1968 Chicago Special Olympics games as chaperones. The experience inspired Songster, a professor of sports for people with disabilities, and Campbell, an education instructor who had developed an afterschool physical education program for Vigo County's Association for Retarded Children, to bring Special Olympics to Indiana. Campbell believed all children and adults needed access to physical education.[61] Dismayed at the jail-like conditions he had seen in state mental institutions, Songster saw Special Olympics as a way "to do something pretty simple to change the lives of all these individuals in institutions and homes across the state."[62] Special Olympics would provide people with intellectual disabilities not only the benefits of physical exercise, but also public recognition of their accomplishments.

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unraveling the causes of World War I, what with the participants . . . all claiming the lion's share of credit for themselves individually" (132).

[60] Shorter, 141-142. Like his wife, Sargent Shriver supported mental retardation research and Special Olympics. He became president of Special Olympics, Inc. in 1984. According to their son Mark, "While Mom focused on increasing the quality of each and every Special Olympics games, Dad wanted to expand Special Olympics all over the world" (Mark Shriver, *A Good Man: Rediscovering My Father, Sargent Shriver* [New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2012], 95, 152).

[61] Dr. Judy Campbell, interview by Kaelynn Hayes, Terre Haute, IN, June 5, 2009 (hereafter cited as Campbell, interview by Hayes). All interviews cited in this paper were conducted in conjunction with the celebration of the 40th anniversary of Special Olympic Indiana. The video recordings of those which I conducted are available at the Wabash Valley Visions and Voices URLs listed in the bibliography.

[62] Dr. Thomas Songster, interview by Amanda Shelley, February 10, 2009. Summary available in SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Histories," SOI (hereafter cited as Songster, interview by Shelley). Shelley served as SOI's public relations and marketing coordinator.

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On June 6 and 7, 1969, Indiana hosted its first Special Olympics Games at Bush Stadium, an Indianapolis baseball park.[63] The Kennedy Foundation, Metropolitan Parks Department of Indianapolis, and Indiana Association for Retarded Children (IARC) sponsored the games; ISU staff helped to plan them.[64] Finding participants represented a challenge since the state had never held such an event. To mail invitations, Songster obtained contact information for all of Indiana's mental institutions and smaller schools for people with mental disabilities from the Indiana Department of Mental Health.[65] With help from the Indiana Department of Education, Songster also sent invitations to nearly 4,000 school superintendents, principals, and special education teachers.[66]

The event organizers expected 500 competitors, but 1,000 participants from 35 of Indiana's 92 counties attended the event. According to one account, 38 percent came from private classes and institutions, and 62 percent came from public schools.[67] Since, according to former AAMD president R.C. Scheerenberger, "the field of education was most closely involved with the largest number of young people who were mentally retarded and was often most sensitive to both their progress and needs," the overwhelming response to the event may have resulted from special educators'

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[63] Although ISO's incorporation did not take place until 1971, the date of June 6, 1969 is considered its birthday.

[64] ISO, Inc., "Special Olympics Celebrates 25th Anniversary," *Sports Report* 19, no. 3 (January 1993), SOI Box 1, Folder "Newsletters I," SOI.

[65] Dr. Thomas Songster, interview by Kaelynn Hayes, Terre Haute, IN, June 6, 2009 (hereafter cited as Songster, interview by Hayes).

[66] Songster, interview by Shelley.

[67] IARC, "Olympics for Retarded Great Success: Contestants Doubled Expectations," *IARC News* 12, no. 2 (Summer 1969), SOI Box 1, Folder "Newsletters I," SOI. It is not clear what eligibility criteria ISO originally established for its athletes, but the following explanation appeared in a 1985 newsletter: "Eligible participants are those persons who, according to local classification based upon assessment, evaluation or diagnosis by the appropriate education agency, health agency, qualified physician or psychologist have been determined to be mentally retarded" (ISO, Inc., "Definition of Eligibility for Participation in Special Olympics," *Sports Report* 12, no. 2 [September 1985], *Your Special Olympics Handbook* [binder], SOI).

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recognition of the potential benefits Special Olympics offered their students.[68] Songster offered another theory, attributing Special Olympics' popularity to the wide appeal of sports. Speaking about Eunice Kennedy Shriver's choice of athletics as a medium through which to interact with people with intellectual disabilities, Songster stated, "Could you [Shriver] have chosen art? Could you have chosen music? Yes, you could have . . . but maybe you couldn't have reached as many people as sports [could]."[69] Whatever the reason, the large turnout for the 1969 Indiana Special Olympics Games must have surprised and encouraged Songster and Campbell.

The event began with a Parade of Athletes led by that year's Indy 500 pace car, a 1969 Chevrolet Camaro. Athletes and supporters held banners listing their schools and institutions as they marched to Bush Stadium. The opening ceremonies featured speeches and the lighting of an Olympic torch. The participants (divided by age, sex, and skill level) competed in 50-yard dashes, 300-yard runs, softball throws, high jumps, and standing broad jumps. Races took place on the baseball field in heats of up to 70 runners; for the 50-yard dash, athletes ran from first base to center field. Some participants also competed in 25, 50, 100, and 200-yard swimming races at nearby North Eastway Park, escorted there by the Indianapolis Police Department Motorcycle Drill Team.[70]

In all competitions, first, second, and third-place winners received gold medals, red ribbons, and yellow ribbons, respectively. Two hundred participants earned gold

[68] Scheerenberger, 149. During the twentieth century, "Special education was 'a cottage industry' where teachers generally cobbled together programs for those who were mentally retarded." In 1966, 89.5 percent of school districts had special education programs for children with IQ's of 85 or lower. Professionals labeled these children as educably mentally retarded (EMR). In 1973, the AAMD redefined EMR as having an IQ of 70 or less. As a result, during the 1970s and 1980s, a majority of EMR students placed in special education classes had more severe disabilities than special education students in previous decades (Winzer, 164-165, 168, 180).

[69] Songster, interview by Hayes.

[70] "Special Olympics Celebrates 25th Anniversary."

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medals.[71] These awards gave the event a competitive element, which distinguished Special Olympics from the physical recreation programs and camps that had emerged in the 1950s. Only top finishers received awards during the 1969 competitions. But in subsequent years, ISO limited competitions to eight participants and awarded medals to the top three finishers and place ribbons to the other five.[72]

The Kennedy Foundation encouraged government and business leaders to support Special Olympics programs.[73] Campbell and Songster, therefore, used Indiana's first Special Olympics to bring intellectual disabilities to the attention of local public figures. Songster recalled that, prior to the founding of Special Olympics, high-profile people like mayors and members of Congress would not visit state institutions because they feared seeing institutionalized people would make them "feel bad."[74] When negativity, shame, and fear surrounded mental retardation, prominent figures did not publicly discuss it. But Special Olympics, with uplifting messages and a link to one of America's most influential political families, provided a positive and safe way for local leaders to associate themselves with mental retardation. In 1969, Indianapolis Deputy Mayor John Walls and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Richard Wells made welcoming remarks to the athletes, and Terre Haute Mayor Leland Larrison and Indiana Senator Birch Bayh attended.[75] While these men may have been genuinely interested in improving the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, they may have also realized that going to Special Olympics events could generate positive publicity for themselves.

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[71] "Olympics for Retarded Great Success: Contestants Doubled Expectations."

[72] ISO had eight-person competitions by 1975, if not earlier ("Olympics Start Today," *Terre Haute Tribune*, June 26, 1975). I further discuss the Special Olympics tradition of awarding all participants medals or ribbons in Chapter Three.

[73] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 9.

[74] Songster, interview by Hayes.

[75] "Olympics for Retarded Great Success: Contestants Doubled Expectations."

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They likely wanted to be seen supporting a program that served previously marginalized members of society.

Training clinics and festivities held during the Indiana Special Olympics Games provided socialization that some people with intellectual disabilities lacked in their daily lives. Local football and basketball players led training activities throughout the day.[76] These sessions not only occupied athletes between and after their competitive events, but also allowed them to interact with people other than their families, caretakers, and teachers. In the evening, participants and supporters enjoyed a buffet dinner, magic show, music, and a presentation by comedy writer Allan Sherman at the Marott Hotel.[77] This party gave athletes the chance to meet others with intellectual disabilities besides their classmates or fellow institution residents. The training clinics and social events, which became traditions for ISO's Summer Games, illustrate that Songster and Campbell were concerned about more than just the participants' physical development; they also wanted to help people with intellectual disabilities emerge from their homes and institutions and meet new people.

The organizers of the 1969 Special Olympics Games in Indianapolis had crafted an event similar to the inaugural Special Olympics the year before, but they experienced problems caused by the large number of participants and the location. Songster and Campbell offered different memories of the problems with Bush Stadium. According to Campbell, the races took longer than expected, and stadium operators closed the facility when it became dark. As a result, some athletes could not compete.[78] Songster recalled

[76] "Olympics for Retarded Great Success: Contestants Doubled Expectations."

[77] IARC, "Shelby County REMC Sponsors Olympic Students," *IARC News*, clipping (Summer 1969), SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Newsletters I," SOI.

[78] Campbell, interview by Hayes.

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that a scheduled baseball game forced organizers to end the competitions by three or four o'clock in the afternoon, before all participants had taken a turn.[79] No matter which version of events occurred, Bush Stadium had not proven to be an ideal facility for Special Olympics Games because Campbell and Songster wanted to ensure that all athletes who came could participate.

In September 1969, officials from the State Board of Health, Indiana Department of Mental Health, Indiana State Department of Public Instruction, IARC, ISU, state hospitals, and Terre Haute groups met to discuss Special Olympics' future in Indiana. This group divided Indiana into 14 multi-county regions and selected a regional director for each. Regional directors would develop local Special Olympics programs and conduct regional meets.[80] (The regions, directors, and meets later became known as Areas, Area Coordinators, and Area Games.) Also at this meeting, Songster and Campbell became the volunteer co-directors of ISO. Their duties included conducting Indiana's statewide Special Olympics meet; coordinating Special Olympics activities for the whole state; establishing a team for the biennial Special Olympics international competition; and coordinating the financial arrangements for Indiana athletes' participation in local, state, and international Special Olympics events.[81]

Songster and Campbell also had to designate a location for the annual state meet, which became known as the Summer Games. At the September 1969 meeting, the co-directors proposed that the 1970 ISO Summer Games take place on the ISU campus in Terre Haute. The committee agreed, determining that the university had "the facilities,

[79] Songster, interview by Hayes.

[80] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 2-4. As ISO grew, the counties within Areas developed their own Special Olympics groups and held county meets.

[81] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 1.

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interest in physical education and recreation programs for the handicapped, and the leadership" to host the event.[82] Songster and Campbell received support from Dr. Walter Marks, Dean of ISU's School of Health and Physical Education, who recognized the need for athletic opportunities for people other than gifted athletes. He and Songster presented the idea of hosting Special Olympics games to ISU President Alan C. Rankin. According to Songster, President Rankin "immediately said, 'Well, we're gonna do this' because . . . he saw something that was going to do good for people."[83] Rankin's generous support set a precedent for future ISU presidents and created a permanent bond between ISO and the university.

Many ISU departments contributed to the first ISO Summer Games, which took place on June 19 and 20, 1970. Residential Life staff prepared rooms so that the athletes and their supporters could stay in ISU dormitories, and dining services employees provided five meals in the dining halls. These room and board arrangements cost $12 per athlete.[84] The ISU maintenance staff worked extra hours during the events; Songster and Campbell collected donations to pay an equipment manager and his assistant, but the employees refused to take the money.[85] The ISU School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation provided free use of its personnel, track, and swimming pool. Student groups, such as sports teams and the Physical Education Majors Club, held training clinics. The university's athletic training staff and health service workers were on call to support the Vigo County Red Cross nurses working during the meet. ISO estimated the

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[82] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 4.
[83] Songster, interview by Hayes.
[84] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 9.
[85] Songster, interview by Hayes; Songster, interview by Shelley.

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cash value of ISU's contribution of facilities and volunteer staff as $18,000, over half of the Summer Games' entire budget of $33,900.[86]

The 1970 meet featured many of the components of the 1969 games at Bush Stadium, as well as new additions. On Friday, June 19, 751 Special Olympians, ages 10 to 51, and their supporters arrived at ISU.[87] That afternoon, registration, sports clinics, and swimming competitions took place. After dinner, participants attended an outdoor dance on the campus tennis courts. Saturday began with a parade and opening ceremonies before the track and field competitions, which included relays. All of the athletes received at least a ribbon, and organizers calculated composites of overall performances to award medals to the top three athletes in each age division.[88] The introduction of relay races and a more sophisticated award system indicated Songster and Campbell's intentions to expand and regulate ISO. Relays represented one of ISO's first team sport offerings, and the award system fulfilled ISO's goals of recognizing all athletes' accomplishments and maintaining a competitive spirit.

As they had in 1969, Songster and Campbell made efforts to publicize intellectual disabilities by inviting public figures to speak at the opening and closing ceremonies and to make award presentations. Attendees included Mayor Leland Larrison of Terre Haute, ISU President Alan Rankin, IARC President Ed Otting, and deans and chairmen of various ISU departments. Even Eunice Kennedy Shriver came as the "Special Guest of Honor."[89] After making an appearance at the dance on Friday night, Shriver spent

[86] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 6, 11.

[87] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 4. No available sources directly address the age requirements for ISO at that time. Based on the wide age range for the event, I assume that the requirements in 1970 were likely similar to those of SOI today. Currently, SOI and Special Olympics, Inc. enforce a minimum age of 8 years and have no maximum age limit.

[88] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 5-6.

[89] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 6.

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Saturday watching competitions, presenting awards, and visiting with athletes. One newspaper reported, "Even as reporters waited for her to conduct a morning news conference on the infield, Mrs. Shriver . . . moved to the edge of the track to see how the present race was being run."[90] Shriver watched events for pleasure, as well as to ensure that organizers ran them efficiently. She especially cared about proper ability groupings, never wanting a participant to be unfairly matched or humiliated. In a 1980 memo, she wrote, "When they [Special Olympians] run last. . . they have lost hope, and that is the worst."[91] But she expressed approval of ISO's event management in 1970, stating, "What a fun-filled day of wonderful surprises for those children on Special Olympics Day in Terre Haute!"[92]

The news conference demonstrated why Songster felt fortunate that Shriver accepted ISO's invitation to the Summer Games. He explained, "As a result of her visit, it drew a lot of public attention to what we were doing here in Indiana with the Special Olympics program." He had observed, on other occasions, local newspaper reporters refusing to write stories about people with intellectual disabilities or placing black bars over the eyes of these individuals in pictures if they did run a story.[93] By inviting Shriver, Songster and Campbell gave media outlets a compelling reason to cover the Summer Games and become more familiar with ISO programs, athletes, and goals.

At the end of June, ISO identified its goals in its first annual report. The organization viewed Special Olympics programs as "the beginning of a happy and

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[90] Carl Bender, "700 Children in Olympics," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 21, 1970.

[91] Shorter, 181. Shriver also attended the 1980 ISO Summer Games (ISO, Inc., "Eunice Kennedy Shriver Opens Games," *Newsletter* 4, no. 3 [Summer 1980], *The Special Olympics Public Relations Handbook: Public Relations, A to Z* [binder], SOI).

[92] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 7.

[93] Songster, interview by Hayes.

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constructive life within society, not separated from it" for its athletes.[94] This statement reveals ISO's objective that people with mental disabilities would become part of public life rather than remain segregated in institutions or private homes. Songster, Campbell, and other ISO supporters believed that sports, by fostering confidence and positive self-images, enabled Special Olympians to perform better in school and at work. Driven by the perception that many people with mental disabilities had "felt the continual frustration of failure," the organization stated its intention to "give each retarded child a 'feeling of belonging' by offering him membership in a national athletic club" and to "instill in the retarded child a 'sense of pride' by giving him a chance to win an award . . . ."[95]

ISO recognized that while its programs could help people with intellectual disabilities feel better about themselves, their lives would not significantly change until the general public developed positive attitudes toward them. The 1970 report shows that ISO desired more public awareness of its programs and its athletes' accomplishments. Organizers cited a need for "improved public relations education and acceptance on the part of the general public" and recommended future consultation with public relations professionals to secure more radio, television, and press coverage of its events. Such coverage would help ISO spread the message that "the mentally retarded can succeed when given the opportunity."[96] By the end of its first year, ISO had established its emphasis on the importance of improving both societal inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities and public awareness of mental disabilities.

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[94] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 9.
[95] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 2, 10.
[96] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 8, 1.

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In October 1971, Songster, Campbell, and Mike Gallagher, an IARC employee, filed articles of incorporation for ISO.[97] Songster (president), Gallagher (vice president), and Campbell (secretary and treasurer) became the permanent members of the new not-for-profit's board of directors. They selected ten other members who would serve two-year terms. The members included special education teachers and employees of institutions and sheltered workshops for people with mental disabilities. The board would elect these non-permanent members every other year. In the articles of incorporation, ISO's purpose appeared as "to promote and conduct athletic competition and instruction for the mentally retarded."[98] With a corporate structure, Indiana's Special Olympics involvement could continue for years to come.

Over the next two years, ISO programs grew quickly in numbers of participants, and the small organization began to feel financial pressures. By 1973, participation in the Summer Games had nearly doubled from 1970's 750 athletes to 1,400.[99] That same year, Songster submitted a funding proposal to Lilly Endowment, Inc., and in July 1974, ISO received a $125,000, two-and-a-half-year grant. The grant funded the 1974 hiring of Dennis Schmidt, one of Songster's former students, as the first paid executive director of ISO. After graduating from ISU, Schmidt had moved back to his home state of Ohio and

[97] Incorporation makes a business a separate legal entity from its owners and allows it to exist beyond the lifetime of its founders. By incorporating, non-profit organizations can obtain tax-exempt status and become eligible to apply for grants from foundations and other agencies (Foundation Center, "Establishing a Nonprofit Organization: File the Certificate of Incorporation," http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/establish/inc.html [accessed April 7, 2013]).

[98] ISO, Inc., *Articles of Incorporation of Indiana Special Olympics, Inc.* (October 26, 1971), Office of the Indiana Secretary of State, https://secure.in.gov/sos/online_corps/name_search.aspx (accessed April 7, 2013).

[99] "Boone Special Olympics Team Brings Home 26 State Medals," *Lebanon Reporter*, clipping [ca. 1973], SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles I," SOI.

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become the volunteer director of Special Olympics Ohio as well as the director of physical development programs for the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation.[100]

Songster, having secured funding and a director for ISO, went to Washington, D.C. to work with Special Olympics, Inc. His fellow ISO founder, Campbell, had joined the National Advisory Council of Special Olympics, Inc. in 1972.[101] Although Campbell remained in Terre Haute to teach at ISU, her direct involvement with ISO, like Songster's, became limited. But they had accomplished three tasks that formed a strong base from which ISO could grow. First, by establishing relationships with mental institution administrators and special education professionals throughout the state, they provided the organization with sources of athletes and volunteers. Second, they created a partnership with ISU that gave ISO a headquarters location and a site for its largest annual event. Third, they made political figures aware of the need for more societal inclusion of people with mental disabilities. Campbell and Songster's efforts gave ISO stability and tools for future development.

The departures of Songster and Campbell left Schmidt at the helm of ISO. Under his guidance, the organization progressed, but continued to face financial challenges. He established an ISO State Office in ISU's College of Education and hired a secretary and three graduate student assistants. He also ensured that each of ISO's Areas had a competent director.[102] Fundraising became one of Schmidt's top priorities as the end of the Lilly grant neared and ISO's growing participation demanded more resources. By

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[100] Dennis Schmidt, interview by Amanda Shelley, February 12, 2009. Summary available in SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Histories," SOI (hereafter cited as Schmidt, interview by Shelley).

[101] Songster, interview by Shelley; Sue Loughlin, "Indiana Special Olympics Co-Founder Recalled Fondly," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, November 30, 2010, http://tribstar.com/local/x862973275/Indiana-Special-Olympics-co-founder-recalled-fondly (accessed March 5, 2012). Loughlin's article paid tribute to Judy Campbell, who passed away on November 15, 2010.

[102] Schmidt, interview by Shelley.

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1976, 2,500 athletes were competing in the Summer Games. In February 1977, Robert Thompson, ISU's Director of University and Community Relations and president of the ISO Board of Directors, remarked, "Present financial resources will be depleted by August 1977."[103] Following Thompson's advice, Schmidt appeared before the Indiana General Assembly, which granted ISO a one-time gift of $60,000.[104] The outreach that Songster and Campbell accomplished by inviting public figures to ISO's Summer Games may have played a role in securing these funds, having made some Indiana politicians aware of Special Olympics.[105]

Once again, a large source of funding allowed for a new ISO position. In August 1977, Dan TeGrotenhuis became its first director of programs. Like Schmidt, TeGrotenhuis had studied under Songster at ISU.[106] He became involved with ISO in 1973 when he earned a Summer Scholarship in Physical Education and Recreation from the Kennedy Foundation that required him to spend two hours a week training children for Special Olympics programs.[107] After graduating, TeGrotenhuis volunteered as Area 8 Coordinator while teaching at a school for children with disabilities.

TeGrotenhuis recalled that some people doubted the physical capabilities of people with mental disabilities. For example, they wondered if Special Olympians could react fast enough to play softball or develop the endurance to run a mile.[108] The belief

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[103] "Special Olympics in Financial Trouble," *Monon News*, February 10, 1977.

[104] Schmidt, interview by Shelley.

[105] In his interview with Shelley, Songster recalled that Terre Haute juvenile judge Mike Kerns introduced him to state legislator Jerry Kerns, who became an ISO supporter. The program of the 1973 ISO Summer Games lists two state representatives, William L. Long and James Drews, as dignitaries (ISO, Inc., *1973 Summer Games*, event program [1973], SOI Box 2, Folder "SOI Events Pamphlets I," SOI).

[106] Dan TeGrotenhuis, interview by Kaelynn Hayes, Terre Haute, IN, June 5, 2009 (hereafter cited as TeGrotenhuis, interview by Hayes).

[107] Eunice Kennedy Shriver, letter to Dan TeGrotenhuis, May 18, 1973, SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Letters I," SOI.

[108] TeGrotenhuis, interview by Hayes.

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that people with mental retardation could not appreciate the pleasure of physical exercise led to few institutions offering recreational and sport activities for people with intellectual disabilities. Even children with intellectual disabilities who attended public schools were sometimes excluded from physical education classes and often had few friends, limiting their opportunities to play. Without regular physical exercise, people with mental disabilities suffered high rates of delayed physical development and obesity. The poor physical conditions of people with mental retardation fueled the misconception that they lacked average physical capabilities.[109] Special Olympics organizers strove to show that individuals with intellectual disabilities could develop athletic skills and play sports.

TeGrotenhuis challenged the misconceptions of the physical abilities of people with mental disabilities by increasing the number of ISO official sports. He recalled, "As people started to see more and more . . . people participating [in Special Olympics], . . . they started to realize, 'Well, wait a minute . . . everybody can participate and enjoy sports.'" At the time of his hiring, ISO's programming mostly consisted of track and field events, swimming, basketball and bowling tournaments, and gymnastics.[110] Limits on time and resources had prevented incorporation of more complex individual and team sports. By 1980, however, ISO had 14 official sports, including Frisbee toss, softball, soccer, volleyball, and multi-disability activities, such as wheelchair races, for athletes who had physical disabilities.[111] TeGrotenhuis not only initiated new competitions, but

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[109] Shorter, 109-111.

[110] TeGrotenhuis, interview by Hayes.

[111] ISO, Inc. *Indiana Special Olympics Final Report: 1979-80* (June 1980), SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Reports," SOI. In 1976, 25 Special Olympians in wheelchairs participated in the Summer Games. Just two years later, over 200 Special Olympians with physical disabilities came to the Summer Games. ISO responded by creating more events for athletes with physical disabilities and making these available at the Area level as well as the state level (ISO, Inc., "Program Expanded for Physically Bound," *Newsletter* 3, no. 1 [Winter 1979], *The Special Olympics Public Relations Handbook: Public Relations, A to Z* [binder], SOI).

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also developed "skills events" that trained Special Olympians for team sports.[112] As ISO's programming evolved, the organization expanded from 89 to all 92 Indiana counties, which had been consolidated from the original 14 regions into 12 Areas.[113]

The first Indiana Special Olympics Winter Games represented a substantial evolution of ISO programming. Schmidt and TeGrotenhuis decided to develop a winter sports competition after Indiana athletes could not afford to travel to the first International Special Olympics Winter Games in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, in February 1977. TeGrotenhuis organized the event with Lorrie Woycik, a special education teacher and Area 1 Coordinator who had taught skiing to children with mental disabilities.[114] The inaugural ISO Winter Games took place on January 5 and 6, 1978 at the Pines Ski Lodge and Rogers Lakewood Park in Valparaiso, a northwestern Indiana city. One hundred and fifty athletes, from ages 8 to 60, participated in figure and speed skating, tobogganing, tubing, and Nordic, alpine, and wheelchair skiing. Pines Ski Lodge instructors provided equipment and trained Special Olympians who had little experience with winter sports. In 1979, ISO divided the Winter Games into the Northern and Southern Winter Games; the former remained at Valparaiso, and the latter took place at

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[112] TeGrotenhuis, interview by Hayes; ISO, Inc., *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1978* (June 1978), SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Reports," SOI.

[113] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1978.* ISO had reorganized its Areas again by 1988, when it had 14 Areas (ISO, Inc., "Indiana Area Coordinators," *Sports Report* 14, no. 6 [March 1988], *Sports Report 1987-1992* [binder], SOI). Today, SOI has 10 Areas.

[114] Patricia Fisher, "Special Olympics to Offer a Chance at Skiing, Skating," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, January 3, 1978; Paje Etling, "Woycik Wouldn't Trade Her Work for $100,000 a Year," *1987 Special Olympics Winter Games Preview*, insert in *Paoli News*, January 1987, SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles II," SOI.

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Paoli Peaks in Paoli, Indiana.[115] Five years later, organizers consolidated the Winter Games into a three-day event at Paoli Peaks, and 450 athletes attended.[116]

The growth of ISO's sports programs required much fundraising. Songster and Campbell had raised funds in the early 1970s by soliciting individual and local business donations; they had also received in-kind donations, such as the free use of ISU's facilities. But ISO's fundraising evolved as the organization incorporated more sports and training events. Fundraising practices expanded to include cause-related and annual events. Examination of ISO's fundraising categories, two cause-related fundraisers, and two unique fundraising projects reveals how diverse these endeavors became and how they served the organization's goals of increasing awareness and public presence of people with intellectual disabilities.[117]

With TeGrotenhuis overseeing programs, Schmidt devoted his full energy to fundraising. State Special Olympics organizations received no money from the Kennedy Foundation, so they relied on donations from the private and corporate sectors.[118] In 1977, Schmidt established three levels of fundraising for ISO. The first level consisted of local fundraisers that provided money for Areas, counties, and individuals to pay the entrance fees for local and state events. Individual and family donations constituted the second level; after one year, this level had 300 donors. The third level, corporate donations, represented the newest method for ISO. The organization solicited donations

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[115] Patricia Fisher, "Special Olympics to Offer a Chance at Skiing, Skating," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, January 3, 1978; "Special Olympics: 17 Years Old," *1985 Special Olympics Winter Games Preview*, insert in *Paoli News*, January 1985, SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles II," SOI.

[116] "This Season's Games Different from Past," *1985 Special Olympics Winter Games Preview*, insert in *Paoli News*, January 1985, SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles II," SOI.

[117] I have selected significant ISO fundraisers to discuss, but they do not represent the only fundraisers ISO undertook during this time period.

[118] Bernice O'Connor, "She Brings Special Understanding to Job," *Indianapolis News*, July 8, 1983; Bill Benner, "Something 'Special' for 'Olympians,'" *Indianapolis Star*, October 26, 1989.

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from 24 civic and corporate groups and received funds from 22 of them. By 1980, this type of fundraising had more than doubled to 53 participating groups divided into Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medalist Clubs according to their donation amounts ($5,000 or more, $1,000 or more, and $500 or less, respectively).[119]

In 1979, Schmidt added the category of "special projects" to ISO fundraising.[120] The year before, he had learned about cause-related marketing.[121] In this type of fundraising, a corporation implements marketing activities that involve an offer to "contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges." Cause-related fundraising emerged in the late 1970s as businesspeople began viewing social responsibility as an investment in their corporations' long-term success. The main objectives of cause-related marketing included increasing sales, averting negative publicity, and enhancing a business firm's stature. Companies often chose to link their products or services with high-profile causes such as the Muscular Dystrophy Association and March of Dimes.[122] As Special Olympics, Inc. publicist Herb Kramer told an interviewer, Special Olympics' "association with the most glamorous, controversial . . . [and] famous family of our century" contributed much to the organization's rapid rise in "standing and status."[123]

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[119] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1978*; *Indiana Special Olympics Final Report: 1979-80*.

[120] *Indiana Special Olympics Final Report: 1979-80*.

[121] Dennis Schmidt, interview by Kaelynn Hayes, Terre Haute, IN, June 6, 2009 (hereafter cited as Schmidt, interview by Hayes).

[122] Anil Menon and P. Rajan Varadarajan, "Cause-Related Marketing: A Coalignment of Marketing Strategy and Corporate Philanthropy," *Journal of Marketing* 52, no. 3 (July 1988): 59-60, 62, 65. American Express popularized cause-related marketing in 1983, when it raised $1.7 million for the Statue of Liberty's restoration. During the three-month campaign, use of the company's credit cards increased by 28 percent. Since then, cause-related marketing has expanded significantly (David Vogel, *The Market for Virtue: The Potential and Limits of Corporate Social Responsibility* [Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2005], 21).

[123] Shorter, 183.

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Thanks to publicity efforts by the Kennedy family, Special Olympics, Inc. had a high profile that attracted corporations.

In 1978, Songster informed Schmidt that the bread company Roman Meal was interested in coordinating fundraising with Special Olympics programs in Indiana and Ohio. Olympic decathlon champion Bruce Jenner and a Special Olympian starred in a Roman Meal television commercial to publicize the promotion.[124] During March 1978, four bakeries in Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Kokomo, and Muncie, Indiana, gave $0.10 to ISO for every loaf of Roman Meal bread sold, raising $60,310. The writer of the 1978 ISO annual report stated, "Roman Meal's donation was significant, but their commercial TV spots were dramatic." For six weeks, the commercials reached audiences from Indianapolis to Fort Wayne, a city over 100 miles to the northeast, during six o'clock news broadcasts.[125] Even if the advertisements did not inspire viewers to buy Roman Meal bread or become involved with their local Special Olympics programs, the commercials brought the issue of intellectual disability directly into people's homes.

Starting in 1981, ISO took part in an annual Special Olympics, Inc. cause-related fundraiser with Procter and Gamble (P&G), a manufacturer of food, beverages, household cleaners, personal care items, and more. P&G leaders felt that Special Olympics' family-oriented messages complemented the company's marketing image.[126] Schmidt explained that P&G mailed packets of product coupons along with "literature on Special Olympics." When customers used the coupons, a percentage of their money went

[124] Schmidt, interview by Hayes; *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1978*. By the late 1970s, Special Olympics, Inc. directors had started using celebrities as "the bait that got corporations to bite," i.e., the enticement that led businesses to support and promote Special Olympics programs (Shorter, 170). ISO's report does not list the name of the athlete who starred in the commercial.

[125] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1978*.

[126] Menon and Varadarajan, 65.

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to local Special Olympics organizations. Citing that ISO earned $10,000 from the P&G fundraiser, Schmidt stated, "Cause-related [fundraising] became a very significant part of Special Olympics Indiana."[127] Corporations seeking a philanthropic cause to support gave ISO another way to educate the public about people with intellectual disabilities and Special Olympics programs.

As successful as cause-related marketing became, ISO could not rely on it alone to raise money. In 1981, Schmidt pursued another fundraising project that would become, as he called it, ISO's "trademark," the annual Save Arnold Barbecue at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Mari Hulman George, a member of the influential Terre Haute family that had purchased the speedway in 1945, met with Schmidt and expressed interest in raising money for ISO.[128] They planned an event to be held during qualifications for the 1981 Indianapolis 500 race. In the track's pit facilities, Special Olympics athletes took part in Frisbee tosses, 50-yard dashes, and standing long jumps. Race car drivers, such as Tom Sneva, A.J. Foyt, Mario Andretti, and Johnny Rutherford, attended as Honorary Coaches and also competed in the athletic events.[129]

After the sports exhibition, the athletes, their supporters, the drivers, and other guests went to the track's newly renovated barbecue area to eat. The meal, donated by sponsors like Kroger, Jug's Catering, and Coca-Cola, became known as the Save Arnold Barbecue after George implied that her pet pig Arnold would be served as the main course unless the event raised sufficient funds. Businesses that made donations of $250, $500, or $1,000 earned tickets to the event. ISO made $68,000, and the barbecue became

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[127] Schmidt, interview by Hayes.

[128] Schmidt, interview by Hayes; Tammy Ayer, "The Hulman Dynasty, 1850-1997: Coming to America," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, May 26, 1997, http://specials.tribstar.com/hulman/index.html (accessed February 28, 2012).

[129] Schmidt, interview by Hayes.

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an annual tradition.[130] Linking Special Olympics to a world-famous racing event provided more media coverage of ISO, which in turn meant another way for the public to learn about people with mental disabilities.

Schmidt also involved ISO in what would become one of the most popular nationwide Special Olympics fundraisers. In 1981, Richard LaMunyon, the Chief of Police in Wichita, Kansas, proposed that local law enforcement officers raise money to run a torch called the "Flame of Hope" to the opening ceremonies of the Special Olympics Kansas state meet. To participate, officers had to raise a specified amount of money. The Law Enforcement Torch Run became the largest grassroots fundraiser for Special Olympics. In the summer of 1985, Indiana police officers coordinated the state's first Torch Run, carrying a torch from Indianapolis to the ISO Summer Games in Terre Haute. The following year, Senator Richard Lugar acted as the honorary chairman of the Indiana Law Enforcement Torch Run.[131] Through Torch Runs, police departments statewide began helping ISO spread awareness of intellectual disabilities.

After event costs, ISO's funds only provided salaries for TeGrotenhuis, Schmidt, and a secretary, making volunteerism a vital part of ISO operations. Schmidt claimed that volunteers motivated TeGrotenhuis and himself because "they were working harder than we were!"[132] Evidence indicates that many ISO volunteers, such as employees of mental disability institutions, special education teachers, and parents, were already involved with the organization's athletes. Reliance on these volunteers may have limited ISO's recruitment of individuals not well-acquainted with people with intellectual

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[130] Schmidt, interview by Hayes; ISO, Inc., *1983 Save Arnold Barbecue*, brochure (1983), SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Fundraiser Materials," SOI.

[131] ISO, Inc., *Indiana Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics*, pamphlet (1986), SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Fundraiser Materials," SOI.

[132] TeGrotenhuis, interview by Hayes; Schmidt, interview by Hayes.

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disabilities. However, volunteerism still provided a way for ISO to inform more people about mental disabilities. Eunice Kennedy Shriver believed that people benefited from helping individuals with mental disabilities.[133] Having positive experiences at ISO events helped volunteers who had not previously interacted with people with intellectual disabilities overcome fears of such individuals.

Indiana's small group of Area Coordinators took on one of ISO's most important volunteer roles. Coordinators developed competitions and oversaw programs for ISO's multi-county Areas. These individuals often had experience working with people with intellectual disabilities. ISO's first group of Area Coordinators included John Price of McDonald Hopeland, a sheltered workshop for people with mental disabilities, and Lloyd Dean of the Muscatatuck State Hospital, an institution for people with intellectual disabilities.[134] In 1976, two rehabilitation therapy directors at state mental hospitals, John Jenkins and Byron Welker, became Area Coordinators. Jenkins, who worked at Madison State Hospital, had been involved with Special Olympics early, taking athletes to the first event in Chicago in 1968. Welker served as an Area Coordinator for two years while working at Muscatatuck and again when he took a job at Central State Hospital in Indianapolis.[135] In addition to mental disability facility workers, special education teachers, like TeGrotenhuis and Lorrie Woycik, often served as ISO Area Coordinators.

Special education teachers made up a large portion of ISO coaches and chaperones. They enjoyed watching their students have new experiences and gain confidence. A Milan Elementary School teacher who coached athletes for, and

[133] Shorter, 137.

[134] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 4.

[135] ISO, Inc., "State Institutions – A Volunteer Source," *Newsletter* (Winter 1982), *The Special Olympics Public Relations Handbook: Public Relations, A to Z* (binder), SOI.

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chaperoned them at, an ISO Winter Games stated, "The kids love staying at the hotel. Some of them have never even been out of Milan before." A teacher at the 1978 Summer Games said, "They [Special Olympians] feel a lot better about themselves and gain a higher self-esteem."[136] Other volunteer coaches and chaperones did not have special education backgrounds. Mark McCoy, a worker at the Paoli Peaks ski shop, became involved with Special Olympics through the Paoli Kiwanis Club. He described being a Special Olympics coach as "a thrill a minute." Peg Yoder, the owner of a skating rink in Auburn, Indiana, had already been teaching a boy with mental disabilities to roller skate when roller-skating premiered at the 1989 Summer Games. She coached two athletes for the event.[137] ISO provided opportunities for people like McCoy and Yoder to increase their interaction with people with intellectual disabilities.

Parents of ISO athletes also served the organization. Like mothers who had founded and dominated NARC and other advocacy groups in the 1950s, Special Olympics mothers were eager to become involved in an organization that helped their children.[138] In 1983, a mother, Georgia Buchanan, became ISO's first female

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[136] Rhonda Hite, "Area Coaches Enjoy their Work with Special Olympics Athletes," *1987 Special Olympics Winter Games Preview*, insert in *Paoli News*, January 1987, SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles II," SOI; Cindy L. Baum, "Special Olympics Participants Want to Have Good Time," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 27, 1978.

[137] "Feeling 'Fantastic,' McCoy Looks to Third Year as Local Ski Coach," *1987 Special Olympics Winter Games Preview*, insert in *Paoli News*, January 1987, SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles II," SOI; Catharine Fernando, "Skating New, but Medals Familiar to Olympians," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 4, 1989.

[138] Historian Kathleen W. Jones has noted that, "It comes as no surprise that the originator of the New Jersey parent groups [which joined with others to form NARC] was a mother. Mothers' organizations in the United States have a history extending back at least to the 1830s, when church-affiliated mothers' clubs formed for both self-edification and to help the children of the poor" (Kathleen W. Jones, "Education for Children with Mental Retardation: Parent Activism, Public Policy, and Family Ideology in the 1950s," in *Mental Retardation in America: A Historical Reader*, ed. James Trent and Steven Noll [New York: New York University Press, 2004], 328).

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president.[139] Others coached athletes, chaperoned participants at competitions, and organized booster groups. At a 1980 Special Olympics Bowling Banquet in Lebanon, Indiana, Roberta Dukes, whose son participated in ISO, received a plaque in recognition of her five years of service. During that time, she had coordinated events, chaperoned athletes, and coached swimming, track and field, and bowling.[140] Linda Richeson, the mother of a 12-year-old Special Olympian, assisted coaches at practices, drove athletes to events, recruited participants, and solicited donations from local businesses. Ella Karris served as treasurer of Area 1's Parent Boosters group and chaperoned athletes, including her 11-year-old son, to the Summer Games.[141]

As a sports organization, ISO may have attracted more fathers than advocacy groups did; many fathers performed the same duties as ISO mothers. Carl Erskine, a native of Anderson, Indiana who played 12 seasons of baseball with the Brooklyn, and then Los Angeles, Dodgers, became one of ISO's most well-known parent volunteers.[142] In 1970, Erskine took his ten-year-old son Jimmy, who was born with Down syndrome, and four other boys to the ISO Summer Games. As his son's participation continued, Erskine became a dedicated volunteer, coaching, chaperoning, and publicizing ISO. Describing Jimmy's victory in a swimming race, he said, "I've been in five World Series. [But] I don't think I've had any big a feeling as seeing that achievement [Jimmy's

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[139] ISO, Inc., *Parents are Special, Too!* brochure [ca. mid-1980s], SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Promotional Materials II," SOI; Bernice O'Connor, "She Brings Special Understanding to Job," *Indianapolis News*, July 8, 1983.

[140] *Lebanon Reporter*, clipping, December 17, 1980, SOI Box 2, Folder "SOI Special Events/Misc.," SOI.

[141] ISO, Inc., "Family Focus," *Sports Report* 16, no. 3 (October 1989), *Sports Report 1987-1992* (binder), SOI; ISO, Inc., "Family Focus," *Sports Report* 15, no. 4 (November 1989), *Sports Report 1987-1992* (binder), SOI.

[142] Bob Hurte, "Carl Erskine," Society for American Baseball Research Biography Project, http://bioproj.sabr.org/bioproj.cfm?a=v&v=l&pid=4148&bid=1188 (accessed February 25, 2012).

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win]."[143] Darrell Nifong, the father of a 26-year-old Special Olympian, became the volunteer coordinator for the Elkhart Special Olympics organization as well as a track and field coach and fundraiser. Clifford Parkhurst, with his wife Dolores, served as Henry County's co-coordinator and drove Special Olympians, including their two sons, to and from swimming practices.[144] Mothers and fathers of ISO participants performed many tasks to help the organization that brightened their children's lives.

Volunteers at ISO events facilitated the competitions and often included community members who were interacting with people with mental disabilities for the first time. Volunteers acted as timers, referees, scorekeepers, and even "huggers" who congratulated athletes after an event and led them to the awards stand. In some cases, volunteers' ISO experiences changed their perspectives of people with mental disabilities. A Metropolitan Parks Department worker at the 1969 games at Bush Stadium remarked of the participants, "Ninety percent of them seem to run normally. Their times are almost comparable to those of average people."[145] After the 1970 ISO Summer Games, Dr. Rutherford Porter of ISU's Department of Special Education observed that while the event "was a very productive experience for retarded children, it was also equally beneficial for those college students who assisted." At a 1979 Madison County meet, a student volunteer observed, "I realized that the athletes have enthusiasm

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[143] Carl Erskine, interview by Kaelynn Hayes, Terre Haute, IN, June 5, 2009. Hereafter cited as Erskine, interview by Hayes.

[144] Paje Etling, "Nifong 'Spirit' Award Winner," *1987 Special Olympics Winter Games Preview*, insert in *Paoli News*, January 1987, SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles II," SOI; ISO, Inc., "Family Focus," *Sports Report* 15, no. 4 (November 1988), *Sports Report 1987-1992* (binder), SOI.

[145] ISO, Inc., "Volunteers Have New Job," *Newsletter* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1979), *The Special Olympics Public Relations Handbook: Public Relations, A to Z* (binder), SOI; "Olympics for Retarded Great Success: Contestants Doubled Expectations."

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and will want to compete and win."[146] By drawing people unfamiliar with mental disabilities to ISO events, volunteer opportunities informed members of the general public about intellectual disabilities.

With support from fundraising and volunteerism, Special Olympics participation increased across the state during the late 1970s. From 1970 to 1979, the organization grew from 3,000 to 15,000 participants.[147] As it entered its second decade, ISO became overwhelmed by rising attendance at the Summer Games. A temporary relocation of the Summer Games in 1986 and 1987 also presented challenges. By managing these complications and continuing to offer its athletes the opportunity to take part in public events, ISO worked against societal exclusion of people with mental disabilities.

By 1982, overcrowding at the Summer Games had become a significant concern for Schmidt and TeGrotenhuis. In 1980, 2,600 athletes came to Terre Haute for the Summer Games. Two years later, attendance climbed to nearly 3,000 participants.[148] The number of athletes, coaches, parents, and volunteers exceeded ISU's capacity. ISO had to find rooms for guests in Terre Haute hotels. "We [ISO] used every bed in every motel in all of Terre Haute to be able to host the Games," TeGrotenhuis stated. Schmidt explained, "We knew that to continue down that path, with that large a population spread out over a city such as Terre Haute, would eventually lead to some real disastrous

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[146] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 7; Mary Mitchell, untitled article, *Newsletter* 3, no. 2 (Spring 1979), *The Special Olympics Public Relations Handbook: Public Relations, A to Z* (binder), SOI. According to the editor's note, this newsletter article was a composite of excerpts from articles Mitchell wrote for the *Anderson Herald*.

[147] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 9; *Indiana Special Olympics Final Report: 1979-80*.

[148] "Special Olympics Continues at ISU," *Terre Haute Tribune*, June 27, 1980; "Olympians Have Heart," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 30, 1985.

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problems." They feared a year would come when the city would be unable to accommodate all who wanted to participate in the Summer Games.[149]

Until 1983, any Indiana Special Olympian could come to the Summer Games because TeGrotenhuis and Schmidt had not made winning at Area Games a requirement to attend the state meet. As one journalist explained, "Organizers of the program emphasize that the competition is geared to give the child a sense of accomplishment, and because of that philosophy, every child who enters the local regionals may enter the state competition."[150] In addition, Area programs varied in quality, so athletes in some Areas had higher chances of winning than athletes in others. Schmidt and TeGrotenhuis felt, however, that the Summer Games should be a reward for training hard and performing well at Area Games. They wanted to allow deserving participants to advance, just as in other sporting competitions.[151] The overcrowding forced ISO to find a balance between its objective of including as many athletes as possible and its effort to become a more sophisticated sports program.

In 1983, Schmidt and TeGrotenhuis introduced a quota system to limit the total number of athletes at the Summer Games to 2,600.[152] Over 40 states already had a quota for Special Olympics State Games, including all the states surrounding Indiana.[153] Schmidt and TeGrotenhuis based the percentage of athletes an Area could bring to the Summer Games on the percentage of its athletes that competed in its Area Games.[154]

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[149] Schmidt, interview by Hayes; TeGrotenhuis, interview by Hayes.

[150] "80 Compete in 'Olympics,'" *Columbus Republic*, May 14, 1973.

[151] TeGrotenhuis, interview by Hayes; Schmidt, interview by Hayes. I further discuss ISO staff's desire to make its events similar to conventional athletic competitions in the following chapter.

[152] "Olympians Have Heart," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 30, 1985. In Chapter Three, I explore ISO supporters' belief that participation mattered more than winning in the Special Olympics.

[153] ISO, Inc., "Reasons for Quota," *Area Guide Indiana Special Olympics* [ca. 1983]: 6, SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Organizational Materials II," SOI.

[154] TeGrotenhuis, interview by Hayes.

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After Area Games, Area committees selected which participants would go to the Summer Games.[155] This solution angered some supporters. Many ISO volunteers opposed the quota, believing that all Special Olympians deserved to compete in the Summer Games. Since "fighting among our local volunteers was very intense," Schmidt and TeGrotenhuis traveled to the 12 Areas to explain the challenges which had led them to establish the quota. Schmidt explained, "It was a very difficult time for us, emotionally and administratively."[156] Besides the prevalence of quotas in other states, Schmidt and TeGrotenhuis' talking points included that even with the quota, ISO's Summer Games would be the tenth largest in the nation.[157]

From organizers' points of view, the quota system improved the quality of the Summer Games. Previously, popular events such as the 50-yard dash and softball throw had run continuously at a frantic pace for hours in order to ensure that every athlete had a turn. Facilitators of the 50-yard dash had to get athletes "out of the housing area, onto the line, to the finish line, [and] to the awards area" in four and a half minutes.[158] After the quota enforcement, the Summer Games' Special Olympians had more time to enjoy their events, organizers focused more attention on each participant, and awards ceremonies became more personal and dignified.[159] ISO supporters slowly adjusted to and accepted the quota. Reflecting on her experiences as an ISO volunteer, a teacher wrote, "Don't

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[155] Wayne Falda, "Games Frenetic but Fun," *South Bend Tribune*, June 10, 1987.

[156] Schmidt, interview by Hayes. I discuss how ISO supporters' emphasis on participation (rather than victory) related to an image of all Special Olympians as "winners" in the next chapter.

[157] ISO, Inc., "Reasons for Quota."

[158] Schmidt, interview by Hayes.

[159] TeGrotenhuis, interview by Hayes.

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always like the quota system, but there is a definite reason [for it]."[160] Schmidt felt the quota had become an accepted part of the Summer Games by 1985.[161]

Once they had resolved the Summer Games overcrowding, Schmidt and TeGrotenhuis continued to encounter difficulties when Special Olympics, Inc. selected Indiana to host an international Special Olympics meet. In the summer of 1983, Bill Locke, a volunteer coach and ISO Area 2 Coordinator, approached Special Olympics, Inc. and Songster to arrange having the 1987 International Special Olympics Summer Games (an event held every four years) at the University of Notre Dame, a private institution in South Bend, Indiana.[162] Although Locke passed away in 1984, efforts to bring the International Games to Indiana continued.[163] While Schmidt and TeGrotenhuis were honored that Indiana would host an international event, they worried that ISO would have to compete with the International Games preparations for local attention and funds. They dealt with the situation cautiously, deciding to play a supportive rather than proactive role.[164]

In order to prepare for the International Games, the University of Notre Dame had to host two Summer Games, a requirement that distressed the ISO Board of Directors. Its members expressed concerns that the temporary move would harm ISO's relationship with ISU. They decided that they would only approve the relocation of the Summer Games if the university agreed with the plan. Dr. Richard Landini, the president of ISU,

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[160] Barb Wilson, "1969 Games Volunteer Profile," (undated), SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Histories," SOI. Possibly to celebrate an anniversary, ISO collected memories of people who volunteered at its first Games by having them fill out a form. The quotation came from Barb Wilson's response to the question, "What comparisons can you draw between the 1969 Games and today's program?"

[161] Schmidt, interview by Hayes.

[162] Schmidt, interview by Hayes. South Bend is approximately 165 miles north of Terre Haute and 75 miles east of Chicago, Illinois.

[163] Phil Richards, "Celebrities Welcome Special Athletes," *Indianapolis Star*, August 3, 1987.

[164] Schmidt, interview by Hayes.

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wrote a letter to the Board expressing that the university took pride in its relationship with ISO and did not anticipate problems if a temporary change in the Summer Games location became necessary.[165]

Despite ISU's approval, the relocation of the Summer Games left Schmidt and TeGrotenhuis with "a queasy feeling."[166] They correctly anticipated that attendance for the Summer Games would decrease because many ISO coaches and athletes could not afford to pay the higher rates charged by the University of Notre Dame for room and board. According to TeGrotenhuis, the location also inconvenienced many athletes. He explained, "Given that it [South Bend] was all at the northernmost part of the state, . . . people couldn't afford to travel that far . . . . ISU is off to this [western] side of the state, but it's still a little more centrally located than other places."[167] The 1986 and 1987 Summer Games in South Bend each only had 1,800 athletes.[168] Even after the event returned to Terre Haute, attendance remained lower than usual; approximately 2,000 athletes attended the 1988 and 1989 events.[169] Over the next 2 to 3 years, ISO built these numbers back up to the quota maximum of 2,600.[170] This recovery, along with the sensitive handling of the quota controversy, ensured that ISO would continue to thrive.

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[165] ISO, Inc., Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting, October 18, 1983, SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Meeting Records," SOI; ISO, Inc., Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting, December 3, 1983, SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Meeting Records," SOI.

[166] TeGrotenhuis, interview by Hayes.

[167] TeGrotenhuis, interview by Hayes. For some athletes, of course, South Bend would have been a more convenient location. Although I could not find Area participation statistics, it seems likely that ISO's northern Areas did not have as many participants as the Areas that included Terre Haute (the home of ISO headquarters) and Indianapolis (the state's most populous city). Therefore, the inability or refusal of coaches and families from the more active Areas to drive to South Bend may have contributed to the lower attendance numbers.

[168] Schmidt, interview by Hayes.

[169] Ron Koch, "Special Olympics Open at ISU," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 4, 1988; Catherine Fernando, "Special Olympics Termed Big Success," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 5, 1989.

[170] Schmidt, interview by Hayes.

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By the time the Summer Games returned to Terre Haute in 1988, the ISO State Office was considering a move to Indianapolis. The State Office staff had grown to include not only Schmidt, TeGrotenhuis, and a secretary, but also a director of training, a director of communications, a micro systems controller, and an office assistant.[171] Terre Haute had been an ideal location when the organization's operations revolved around the Summer Games and the ISO state basketball tournament, both of which took place at ISU. By 1989, however, the office was coordinating 40 events throughout the state and had recognized a need for the "vital associations, support services, department headquarters, and media outlets" based in Indianapolis.[172] Schmidt knew that being located in the capital city would bring "greater visibility" and media coverage to ISO.[173] Therefore, the relocation aligned with ISO's longtime goal of publicizing issues related to people with intellectual disabilities.

The move to Indianapolis required a massive fundraising effort. In the fall of 1988, after choosing to rent a location in northwest Indianapolis, the ISO Board of Directors appointed a steering committee to recruit a General Chairman for a capital campaign.[174] Al Barker, the retired president and CEO of Public Service Indiana, accepted this position, and the campaign raised just under $750,000.[175] ISO also received a $250,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. On July 1, 1989, ISO staff relocated to

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[171] ISO, Inc., "State Office Staff," *Sports Report* 14, no. 6 (March 1988), *Sports Report 1987-1992* (binder), SOI. The micro systems controller, Judy Pennel, managed technology for ISO. In her interview, Judy Campbell mentioned that, "Mr. Pennel put it all [ISO paperwork] on computer[s]."

[172] ISO, Inc., *Capital Campaign Report* (1989), 1, SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Organizational Materials II," SOI.

[173] Schmidt, interview by Hayes.

[174] *Capital Campaign Report*, 3; ISO, Inc., "Guidelines for Move" (1988), SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Organizational Materials II," SOI.

[175] Schmidt, interview by Hayes.

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a temporary office in the AT&T Consumer Products Laboratories in northeast Indianapolis. They planned to move to ISO's new permanent location in December.[176]

In the late 1980s, while launching the capital campaign and relocating, ISO also introduced a new program that increased its athletes' interactions with the public. From October to December 1988, the Indianapolis Unified Basketball League, coordinated by ISO Director of Basketball Michael Furnish, held its first tournament. In this league, an equal number of Special Olympians and athletes without disabilities composed each team. Special Olympics, Inc. had test-piloted unified programs in volleyball, softball, and bowling, but ISO became the first state organization to have a unified basketball program.[177] By allowing Special Olympians to interact with their peers in a group setting, the Unified Sports program contributed to ISO's goal of increasing societal inclusion of people with mental disabilities.

ISO's public awareness efforts also continued toward the close of its second decade. An internal evaluation conducted by ISO reveals that the organization still experienced difficulties with the media, but for different reasons than in its early years. Media representatives sometimes came unannounced to ISO events, making it difficult for organizers, caught off-guard, to convey the "total Special Olympics message."[178] Such situations had not occurred in the early 1970s, when Songster and Campbell had to work hard to attract media attention to ISO. The 1980s evaluation also included a list of ISO's public relations strengths, under which the phrase, "Easy to sell," appeared. The

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[176] Michael A. Carroll (Vice President for Community Development, Lilly Endowment, Inc.), letter to Dennis Schmidt, November 30, 1989, SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Letters I," SOI; ISO, Inc., "Chapter Office Settled in Indianapolis," *Sports Report* 16, no. 2 (September 1989), *Sports Report 1987-1992* (binder), SOI.

[177] ISO, Inc., "Unified Basketball League Explores New Concept," *Sports Report* 15, no. 3 (October 1988), *Sports Report 1987-1992* (binder), SOI.

[178] ISO, Inc., "Indiana Special Olympics Internal Audit" [ca. late 1980s], SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Organizational Materials I," SOI.

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notion that people readily "bought" the concept of Special Olympics contrasts with Songster's account of speaking to school, church, and civic groups about Special Olympics around the time of ISO's founding. During these meetings, Songster felt he was "selling a brand-new product and trying to convince people this was a good idea." By 1989, the media's familiarity with Special Olympics programs had both complicated and simplified ISO's public awareness efforts.[179]

ISO's rapid growth from 1969 to 1989 reflected the national and international expansion of Special Olympics programs. In 1970, 48 states, Washington, D.C., Canada, and France had Special Olympics organizations.[180] By the mid-1980s, over one million participants were competing in Special Olympics programs in all 50 states and more than 50 countries.[181] Songster credited ISO's expansion to community support and the athletes themselves. "We gained support from family members, other businesses in the community, [and] leaders of churches, which made a big difference [in] how we were able to do all this [found ISO]," he explained. The athletes "made us really want to do more and more because no matter . . . how high the objectives we set were, they were always ready to do more."[182] Around the nation and world, other communities and people with intellectual disabilities similarly embraced Special Olympics.

During its first two decades, ISO's founders and staff recognized the potential impact its sporting events could have on the public's acceptance of people with mental disabilities. The desire to reach this potential motivated Songster and Campbell to found ISO and establish connections with educators, community groups, and public figures.

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[179] Songster, interview by Hayes. I analyze portrayals of people with mental retardation that appeared in media accounts of ISO events in Chapter Three.

[180] *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970*, 8.

[181] ISO, Inc., *Parents are Special, Too!*

[182] Songster, interview by Hayes.

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The same objective drove Schmidt and TeGrotenhuis' ambitious fundraising, programming, and problem-solving strategies. Mindful of past marginalization and exclusionary treatment of people with intellectual disabilities, ISO's founders and initial administrators viewed Special Olympics events as a way to bring individuals with mental disabilities into the public sphere and to raise general awareness of intellectual disabilities. ISO pursued these goals through not only expansion of its athletic events, but also fundraising efforts, volunteer opportunities, and its eventual relocation.

One cannot easily measure the influence of Special Olympics programs on the general public's attitudes toward people with mental retardation. But evidence suggests that many people observed a connection between Special Olympics and increased social acceptance of people with mental disabilities. "Nothing I can think of has done more to break down many of the social and psychological barriers confronting the mentally handicapped than has Special Olympics," a journalist wrote in 1989.[183] During the 1987 International Special Olympics Games in South Bend, a newspaper reporter stated, "Society has changed in the way the handicapped are viewed . . . . Special Olympics programs have helped."[184] Schmidt recalled that during his childhood, "You didn't talk about children with problems [mental disabilities] . . . You just kind of stayed away from that [topic]." But the news stories generated by ISO "uplifted . . . the imagery that people now have [of people with intellectual disabilities] . . . . Special Olympics has had a very profound effect on the community, as they perceive individuals with disabilities."[185] Whether or not ISO changed negative stereotypes of individuals with intellectual

[183] Bill Benner, "Something 'Special' for 'Olympians,'" *Indianapolis Star*, October 26, 1989.
[184] Bill Moor, "Games Show that Our Kids Can Be Better than We Were," *South Bend Tribune*, August 7, 1987.
[185] Schmidt, interview by Hayes.

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disabilities, it did, as the next chapter reveals, convey and promote many images of these individuals in its quest to create awareness and inclusion of them.

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CHAPTER THREE

CONFLICTING CONCEPTS:

ISO'S IMAGES OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

In ISO's effort to increase awareness and inclusion of people with mental disabilities, *how* it depicted such people had significance. Throughout its first two decades, ISO created both deliberate and unintentional images of people with mental retardation and of Special Olympians. ISO's portrayals appeared in its practices, publications, and statements to the media, as well as in journalists' accounts of its events. These sources show that ISO did not create a consistent image of people with intellectual disabilities. Instead, it conveyed and implied multiple depictions that sometimes contradicted each other and ISO practices.[186]

The fact that ISO could not control what journalists wrote about Special Olympics and people with mental retardation contributed to the existence of different portrayals of people with mental retardation. Since many people may have read about ISO only in newspapers, the images of people with mental disabilities presented by news reporters were significant. Journalists do not write objectively about topics, but create stories by interpreting events through their own eyes.[187] Journalistic accounts give insight into how media reporters, as well as the people they interviewed, perceived people with intellectual disabilities and Special Olympians.

ISO created three conflicting sets of portrayals. First, its paternalistic treatment of people with mental disabilities supported its image of them as children, but opposed its

[186] Throughout this chapter, the term "images" usually refers to impressions or notions, not visual pictures. I use "images," "depictions," and "portrayals" interchangeably.
[187] Douglas Biklen, "Framed: Print Journalism's Treatment of Disability Issues," in *Images of the Disabled, Disabling Images*, ed. Alan Gartner and Tom Joe (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1987), 83.

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portrayal of them as productive citizens. Some ISO practices, such as the exclusion of athletes in leadership positions in the organization, implied that people with mental retardation could not act independently or make important decisions.[188] Second, ISO portrayed people with intellectual disabilities as average people *and* as stereotypical sources of inspiration or objects of pity. Statements in ISO publications and newspaper stories revealed this contrast. Some claimed that people with mental disabilities had much in common with people without disabilities, while others asserted they were heroes who deserved compassion. Third, in the case of Special Olympians specifically, a dichotomy emerged when ISO cast its athletes either as competitors in a valid sports program or as "winners" who triumphed simply by participating.[189]

Overall, the opposite pairs of images existed concurrently throughout ISO's first two decades; no transitions from one image to another took place. In the case of portraying people with mental retardation as children and as productive citizens, use of the word "children" to describe Special Olympians became less common in ISO materials over time but did not disappear completely. The divergent portrayals of people with intellectual disabilities as normal people and as stereotypical figures of heroism or pity appeared with close to equal frequency in ISO materials. Although the depiction of Special Olympians as normal athletes increased during ISO's second decade, it did not displace the one of them as unconventional winners. Whether or not the images implied and presented by ISO and reporters influenced how the public perceived people with

[188] Since this contrast involves examination not just of ISO materials, but also practices, it constitutes a larger part of my discussion than the other two contrasts.

[189] In my discussion of the second and third contrasts, I use the terms "average," "normal," and "regular" interchangeably to mean "typical."

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mental retardation, they illustrated that from 1969 to 1989, diverse notions of people with intellectual disabilities contended with each other.

Some scholars, discussed below, accuse Special Olympics of paternalistic treatment of its athletes. Paternalistic attitudes toward people with mental disabilities in the second half of the twentieth century partly resulted from parent advocates' strategies.[190] From the 1940s through the 1960s, many parents who advocated for people with mental retardation portrayed them as needy dependents or children to gain legislation and funding. Drawing on the rhetoric of progressive Democrats "that the state had a social responsibility to prevent human suffering," parents asserted that the U.S. government had an obligation to provide for those in need, including people with mental retardation.[191] Casting people with intellectual disabilities as "eternal children" brought about educational services since placing emphasis on children made schools the main area of public intervention. The portrayal of people with mental disabilities as dependents also perpetuated a system in which authorities, such as teachers, medical professionals, and parents, maintained control over people with mental retardation.[192]

Through paternalism, dominant groups in society keep others in subordinate positions while also expressing compassion toward them.[193] Social work professor Timothy Stainton defined paternalism as "interference with a person or group by another

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[190] Paternalism toward people with intellectual disabilities began earlier than the era discussed here. In the 1910s, superintendents of facilities for people with mental retardation assumed "a patronizing attitude" based on the belief that "mental defectives" could never mature past childhood and therefore had to be treated as children (Bell and Tyor, 108).

[191] Carey, 117-118.

[192] For schools as sites of intervention, see Pollack, 105. For the continuation of control over people with mental disabilities, see Carey, 133.

[193] Harlan Hahn, "Disability and Rehabilitation Policy: Is Paternalistic Neglect Really Benign?" *Public Administration Review* 42, no. 4 (July-August 1982): 388.

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person or group in order to promote the good of those interfered with."[194] Since the first party subjectively determines what constitutes "the good" for the second party, paternalism occurs when the first party exercises control over the second party to, *ostensibly*, improve the second party's well-being. Although many theorists object to paternalism on the grounds that it undermines individuality by taking away the capacity to make choices, others defend it. Philosophers who support paternalism see "absolute opposition to all paternalism . . . as a doctrinaire and incompassionate overreaction, contrary to our humanitarian impulses and good sense."[195] Most philosophers agree that certain circumstances make paternalism necessary, but opinions about what conditions override the right to self-determination vary widely.[196]

Emerging at the end of an era that supported paternalistic conduct toward people with intellectual disabilities, Special Olympics programs had governance and recruitment practices that treated participants as dependents. Critics of Special Olympics have cited the absence or low numbers of people with mental retardation in the organization's leadership positions as a paternalistic feature.[197] People without mental disabilities have authority over the organization and its events, making Special Olympians passive

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[194] Timothy Stainton, *Autonomy and Social Policy: Rights, Mental Handicap, and Community Care* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 1994), 83. Since the late 1800s, scholars have debated definitions of paternalism. For an overview of paternalism theories, see John Kleinig, *Paternalism* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1983), 3-78.

Like philosophers, historians have examined paternalism. Eugene Genovese included it in his interpretation of slavery in the American South, and several others have argued it played a role in nineteenth-century industrial labor systems (Donald Reid, "Industrial Paternalism: Discourse and Practice in Nineteenth-Century French Mining and Metallurgy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 27 [October 1985]: 579).

[195] Kleinig, 38.

[196] Barbara Baum Levenbook, "Examining Legal Restrictions on the Retarded," in *Ethics and Mental Retardation*, ed. Loretta Kopelman and John C. Moskop (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1984), 212.

[197] Storey, 38-39; Harmer, 81.

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recipients of services.[198] Exercise scientist Peter Harmer also identified paternalistic tendencies in Special Olympics' recruitment methods, which targeted teachers, caregivers, and community groups rather than people with intellectual disabilities themselves. This recruitment style implicitly suggested that potential Special Olympians could not make their own decisions.[199] The following discussion offers reasons for ISO's paternalistic practices, first examining leadership opportunities and then recruitment.

Harmer stated that some scholars justify paternalism by claiming that it maximizes freedom. They view as admissible paternalistic interferences that ultimately expand the options available to the controlled party. In reference to Special Olympics, this view implies that depriving athletes of leadership opportunities resulted in greater psychological, social, and physical freedoms. The deprivation ensured that athletes were not burdened by heavy responsibilities and fully able to participate in the program's activities.[200] ISO sources indicate that the organization did not offer people with mental disabilities administrative positions during its first two decades. From 1969 to 1989, the board of directors typically included businesspeople, university administrators, mental health professionals, ISO Area Coordinators, and parents of Special Olympians.[201]

During the 1970s and most of the 1980s, ISO staff likely lacked the time and resources to train Special Olympians for leadership duties. However, toward the end of its second decade, ISO began offering athletes the chance to be Special Olympics

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[198] Storey points out that people with disabilities run organizations like Paralympics and Deaflympics.

[199] Harmer, 80-82.

[200] Harmer, 85-86.

[201] "14 People Make up Special Olympics Board of Directors," *1985 Special Olympics Winter Games Preview*, insert in *Paoli News*, January 1985, SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles II," SOI; "Smith Sets Special Olympics Goal of Outreach Support," *1988 Special Olympics Winter Games Preview*, insert in *Paoli News*, January 1988, SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles II," SOI; "Special Olympics in Financial Trouble," *Monon News*, February 10, 1977.

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spokespeople. This development may have resulted from the rise of self-advocacy for people with mental disabilities in the 1970s and 1980s. People with intellectual disabilities formed and ran groups such as People's First International and United Together. By 1984, over 100 self-advocacy programs for people with intellectual disabilities existed in the United States. The groups advocated for independent living and employment opportunities and taught people with mental disabilities how to speak out for their causes.[202] Members preferred that the number of people without mental retardation in the groups was small and did not include service provision employees because their interests might conflict with those of people with intellectual disabilities.[203] Self-advocacy groups showed that people with mental disabilities could articulate their experiences and manage organizations.

Although it would not be until the 1990s that Special Olympians joined boards of directors, Special Olympics, Inc. did create a way for its participants to be more than just athletes.[204] In 1987, it launched the Athletes for Outreach program, which trained Special Olympians to become spokespeople.[205] The program benefited Special Olympics, Inc. by furthering its recruitment efforts, but also allowed people with mental disabilities to speak openly about their own experiences. ISO staff embraced the program, and in

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[202] Scheerenberger, 133-134; Doris Zames Fleischer and Frieda Zames, *The Disability Rights Movement: From Charity to Confrontation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001): 113. In 1974, People's First International began in Oregon, and chapters then spread around the country. Members (a majority of whom had intellectual disabilities) often objected to the opinions of parents and medical professionals. United Together, formed by people with mental disabilities and other developmental disabilities, held its first conference in Arlington, Virginia, in 1981. The meeting featured a speech by U.S. senator Robert Dole.

[203] Bonnie Shoultz and Paul Williams, *We Can Speak for Ourselves: Self-Advocacy by Mentally Handicapped People* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 93-94. For example, if staff at a mental retardation facility helped establish a self-advocacy group, they might discourage the self-advocates from protesting the facility's practices.

[204] In 1998, Shannon Lamb became the first athlete on ISO's Board of Directors (SOI CEO Michael Furnish, e-mail message to author, April 4, 2013).

[205] Special Olympics Minnesota, "Program History," http://specialolympicsminnesota.org/Global_Messenge.php (accessed July 1, 2012).

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February 1990, six ISO athletes, as well as eight Special Olympians from Ohio, Kentucky, and Illinois, attended a three-day workshop in Indianapolis to learn recruiting techniques and presentation skills.[206] Although the outreach program allowed athletes to expand their participation beyond competing in ISO events, Special Olympians remained as dependents because they still lacked authority over the organization.[207] The exclusion of athletes on Special Olympics boards of directors prior to the 1990s implicitly suggested that people with mental disabilities could not handle duties of governance.

Notions of mental competence, defined by medical ethics scholar Daniel Wikler as the "intellect's power in meeting a challenge," played a role in defending paternalism not only in Special Olympics administration, but also its recruiting methods.[208] Wikler noted that people who restrict the liberties of those with mental disabilities often cite a perceived lack of mental competence to justify their actions. Some authorities believe that people with mental retardation cannot fully appreciate what is at stake in decision-making, adequately weigh alternatives, or take responsibility for consequences. Under this reasoning, it follows that people with (what society has deemed) normal mental capabilities should make decisions for those with mental disabilities.[209] Identifying people with mental retardation as mentally incompetent supports the idea that they cannot

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[206] ISO, Inc., "Indiana Special Olympics Gains Spokespersons," *The Sports Page* 10, no. 5 (Spring 1990): 1, *The Special Olympics Public Relations Handbook: Public Relations, A to Z* (binder), SOI.

[207] Now known as Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs), the outreach programs currently offer more opportunities to Special Olympians. As of July 2012, one athlete was serving on SOI's Board of Directors and several others have joined event committees or become sports coaches and officials as a result of ALPs (SOI, "ALPS Initiatives," http://soindiana.org/programs/athlete-leadership-programs/alps-initiatives/ [accessed July 1, 2012]).

[208] Daniel Wikler, "Paternalism and the Mildly Retarded," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 8, no. 4 (Summer 1979), 384. Wikler argued that society has set standards that render people either competent or incompetent. But John C. Moskop challenged this characterization of competence as an all-or-nothing trait. He argued that because tasks require different levels of competence, people can be competent in some areas and incompetent in others. Moskop asserted that legal policies for people with mental retardation needed to "be adaptable to very different situations and needs" ("Competence, Paternalism, and Public Policy for Mentally Retarded People," *Theoretical Medicine* 4 [1983]: 292-293).

[209] Wikler, 379.

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evaluate the possible benefits they would gain by joining Special Olympics. Harmer cited this notion as the reason that Special Olympics programs did not recruit potential Special Olympians directly, but through others without intellectual disabilities.[210]

ISO recruited athletes through groups rather than on an individual basis. Founders Thomas Songster and Judy Campbell relied heavily on schools, mental health institutions, and other groups to identify potential participants for the Summer Games they oversaw. They contacted the Indiana State Board of Health and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction's Division of Special Education, whose representatives sent ISO information packets to schools with special education programs. The cover letter urged "schools to become interested and participate in the 1970 Indiana Special Olympics" and to "utilize the enclosed materials to encourage and prepare your students for participation."[211] The letter implied that school officials, not students themselves, would make decisions about Special Olympics involvement. Songster and Campbell may have felt that the students would require help in deciding to join Special Olympics because they were children, not because of their mental disabilities. However, Songster and Campbell also contacted mental health institutions and sheltered workshops, where mental health professionals and employers would be making decisions about Special Olympics participation for adults with mental retardation.

The paternalism of ISO's early recruitment methods resulted from Songster and Campbell's goal to find and invite large numbers of potential Special Olympians. Before

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[210] Harmer, 84.

[211] Robert Yoho, H.S.D., Assistant State Health Commissioner, Indiana State Board of Health and Leslie Brinegar, Director of Division of Special Education, Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, letter to "All Special Education Teachers, Directors of Special Education, and Superintendents of Schools with Special Education Programs," March 31, 1970, *Tom Songster, State Handbook, 1972* (binder), SOI.

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ISO developed a strong base of athletes, volunteers, and supporters, Songster and Campbell had no way of knowing where individuals with intellectual disabilities lived in the state besides state institutions. Songster recalled, "In the beginning, our greatest challenge was finding the athletes to be a part of the program."[212] He and Campbell had to recruit through schools, institutions, and community groups in order to quickly locate possible participants. A need for efficiency dictated ISO's early recruitment practices more than the notion that mental disabilities rendered potential participants unable to make their own decisions.

Although some of the organization's practices intimated that the staff viewed Special Olympians as unfit for major responsibilities and decision-making, closer examination reveals that limits on resources and time made impractical the training of athletes for administrative positions and the direct recruitment of participants. In addition, ISO's goals and strategy differed from those of self-advocacy groups; ISO did not seek to empower people with mental retardation by teaching them to govern a group, but to build their confidence by training them in sports. While ISO treated athletes as dependents at times, the organization did not actively promote the image of people with intellectual disabilities as being mentally incompetent. Since the general public did not know the composition of the ISO Board of Directors or how ISO recruited athletes, it is likely that only people with close ties to mental retardation advocacy may have noticed ISO's paternalistic practices. However, another depiction of people with mental disabilities closely linked to the portrayal of them as dependents came across strongly in ISO materials and practices seen by the public: the image of them as children.

[212] Songster, interview by Hayes.

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The depiction of people with mental retardation as "eternal children" gained popularity from 1950s parent memoirs. With titles like Pearl Buck's *The Child Who Never Grew*, the memoirs emphasized the "helpless innocence" of people with mental disabilities and linked intellectual disabilities to childhood. As mentioned before, parent advocates of the 1950s and 1960s found it beneficial to portray people with mental retardation as children. By doing so, they could gain public sympathy and demand lifelong services for their children.[213] Some mental retardation professionals criticized the depiction of those with intellectual disabilities as children, claiming it denied people with mental retardation the right to mature and interact in society as adults. In 1972, psychologist and scholar Wolf Wolfensberger argued that people who perceive those with mental retardation as children do not make adequate adaptational and developmental demands of them.[214] Despite opposition, the characterization of adults with mental disabilities as children persisted, and ISO expressed it often.

During their time with ISO, Songster and Campbell created a mixed message about whether or not all Special Olympians were children. They sometimes referred to participants exclusively as children, but other times used the word "children" in addition to terms that could refer to people of any age. In a "Sample Letter to Acquaint Organizations with Special Olympics," Songster and Campbell referred to Special Olympians only as children. They defined the upcoming 1970 Games as "a field and track meet for retarded and handicapped children" and thanked readers for their "interest

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[213] Pollack, 98, 101; Carey, 118.

[214] Carey, 119; Wolf Wolfensberger, *The Principle of Normalization in Human Services* (Toronto: National Institute on Mental Retardation, 1972), 23-24. Wolfensberger became an influential figure in mental disability policy through his work on the concept of normalization, which I discuss later in this chapter.

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in these deserving children."[215] In the introduction to the 1973 Summer Games program booklet, the writer described ISO as a "program for retarded individuals" and later referred to the athletes as "participants" and "citizens." But the concluding paragraph stated ISO's goal as providing opportunities "for all mentally retarded children in Indiana," and the terms "boys" and "girls" described events for all age groups.[216]

A shift away from characterizing all Special Olympians as children appears in ISO documents by the mid-1970s. In one promotional pamphlet, the writer referred to Special Olympians as "participants," "athletes," and "citizens" and stated that ISO served "people eight years old and up." Although the writer asserted that the story of Special Olympics "is told in the mind of a child or parent when a youngster finally experiences the taste of success," this statement introduced a block quotation from Carl Erskine about his son's first Special Olympics race. Rather than casting Special Olympians as children, this "youngster" reference highlighted the experience of a participant who was a child.[217] Unlike the 1973 Summer Games program, the 1985 brochure almost exclusively called Special Olympians "athletes" and used "male" and "female" to describe competitions.[218]

ISO's early emphasis on youth may have resulted from many of its first athletes being children, as well as society's higher level of comfort with children, rather than adults, with disabilities. At Indiana's first Special Olympic Games at Bush Stadium in

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[215] Judy Campbell and Thomas Songster, "Sample Letter to Acquaint Organizations with Special Olympics," February 25, 1970, *Tom Songster, State Handbook, 1972* (binder), SOI. This sample letter was addressed to the Jaycees (Junior Chamber of Commerce) of Indiana. Since ISO's 1970 report mentions the Terre Haute Jaycees as supporters of the 1970 Games, it seems likely that Campbell and Songster used the letter.

[216] ISO, Inc., *1973 Summer Games*, event program (1973), SOI Box 2, Folder "SOI Events Pamphlets I," SOI.

[217] ISO, Inc., *Indiana Special Olympics*, pamphlet [ca. mid-1970s], SOI Box 1, Folder "Promotional Materials I," SOI.

[218] ISO, Inc., *1985 Summer Games: June 27, 28, 29, 1985*, event program (1985), SOI Box 2, Folder "SOI Event Pamphlets I," SOI.

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1969, 62 percent of the participants came from public schools.[219] Having found that special education programs responded strongly to recruitment efforts, Songster and Campbell highlighted children in ISO materials. Referring only to children in informational letters drew in people who felt uncomfortable around adults with mental disabilities. Disability activist Evan Kemp, Jr. explained that poster children used in fundraising telethons (discussed later in this chapter) fueled the perception that, "The handicapped child is appealing and huggable – the adolescent or mature adult is a cripple to be avoided."[220] Although Kemp was speaking about people with physical disabilities, the same aversion to adults likely existed in relation to people with intellectual disabilities. Songster and Campbell did not exclude adult participants from ISO, but their terminology in ISO materials sometimes erased the existence of older Special Olympians.

As ISO grew, however, its membership changed. Probably as a result of continued participation of athletes who had joined as children or teenagers, by 1989, 60 percent of Indiana Special Olympians were adults.[221] In 1986, Dennis Schmidt, ISO's executive director, informed the board of directors about declining numbers of school-age participants. The following year, the ISO Planning Committee recommended removing Adult Programs (which sought "to continually involve more adults in sports and leisure

[219] "Olympics for Retarded Great Success: Contestants Doubled Expectations."

[220] Joseph Shapiro, *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Random House, 1994), 22. Shapiro, a journalist, spent five years interviewing several hundred people for his account of the disability rights movement.

Evan Kemp, Jr. had a muscle-weakening disease called Kugelberg-Welander syndrome. Kemp fought for the passage of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act and served as the chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under President George H.W. Bush.

[221] ISO, Inc., *The Indiana Special Olympics*, informational folder (1989), SOI Box 1, Folder "Promotional Materials II," SOI.

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activities") from ISO's five-year plan.[222] These items imply that ISO staff felt that the organization had ample numbers of adult athletes and was serving them well enough to not require a special initiative for them.

The increase in adult Special Olympians may have contributed to the decrease of child references in ISO materials. But ISO's increased sensitivity to adult athletes also reflected, and may have been inspired by, Special Olympics, Inc.'s discouragement of infantilizing people with mental retardation. The style guide for the 1987 International Summer Special Olympics Games instructed, "Always refer to Special Olympians as 'athletes,' not 'kids.'"[223] The previously-discussed rise of self-advocacy groups may have also brought about more accurate portrayals of Special Olympians. Some groups, like certain chapters of ARC (formerly NARC), both trained self-advocates and supported Special Olympics.[224] This link made Special Olympics organizers sensitive to how juvenile portrayals could harm the desires of people with mental disabilities to be treated as independent, capable adults.

Although characterizations of people with mental disabilities as children decreased in ISO's written materials, an emphasis on children pervaded ISO events. According to some critics, Special Olympics programs infantilize adults with mental retardation by featuring childish festivities at competitions.[225] In 1969, at the Bush Stadium event, a magician and clown entertained participants. Competitors in ISO's Area 8 Games at Indianapolis' Ben Davis High School in 1976 received a visit from

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[222] ISO, Inc., Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting, September 24, 1986, SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Meeting Records," SOI; ISO, Inc., Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting, March 10, 1987, SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Meeting Records," SOI.

[223]Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, *1987 International Summer Special Olympics Games Style Guide* (1987), SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Media Materials," SOI.

[224] For a brief description of ARC chapters' mixed feelings about self-advocacy, see Carey, 158.

[225] Brickey, 29.

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Ronald McDonald, the clown mascot for McDonald's restaurants. A magician and people dressed as the cartoon characters Scooby-Doo and Yogi Bear came to the Summer Games in 1977.[226] Adult athletes likely enjoyed these diversions as much as younger Special Olympians. However, the childish atmosphere may have led spectators to perceive people with intellectual disabilities as children who never mature.

Despite some changes to ISO Summer Games entertainment, the trend of child-friendly elements continued during ISO's second decade. In 1981, Terre Haute volunteers established Tent Town (later known as Olympic Town), an area of activity tents, as part of the Summer Games. Ohio Special Olympics had created the concept, and the 1979 International Summer Special Olympics in Brockport, New York, featured a Tent City.[227] ISO's Tent Towns usually featured displays that could appeal to people of all ages. In 1981, athletes and spectators could view police cars, ambulances, and fire trucks. The 1986 Olympic Town offered visitors "historical displays, race cars, [and] antique cars." The Indiana Bass Association exhibited boats at the 1989 Olympic Town. Still, children's activities like petting zoos, magicians, carnival games, and puppet shows dominated ISO's Tent and Olympic Towns.[228]

No evidence indicates that ISO staff purposely portrayed Special Olympians as children. The emphasis on children in early ISO written materials and event entertainment resulted from contextual factors like the high numbers of young ISO

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[226] "Olympics for Retarded Great Success: Contestants Doubled Expectations"; Bill Benner, "A Day of Receiving, Giving," *Indianapolis Star*, May 23, 1976; Kaye Hoole, "Special Olympics Athletes Winners," *Terre Haute Tribune*, clipping [ca. 1977], SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles I," SOI.

[227] ISO, Inc., "Tent Town Featured at Summer Games," *Newsletter* 5, no. 2 (Spring 1981), *The Special Olympics Public Relations Handbook: Public Relations, A to Z* (binder), SOI.

[228] ISO, Inc., *Indiana Special Olympics Summer Games: June 25-27*, event program (1981), SOI Box 2, Folder "SOI Events Pamphlets II," SOI; *Special Olympics Indiana 1986 Summer Games*, event program, 1986, SOI Box 2, Folder "SOI Events Pamphlets II," SOI; Dave Delaney, "Summer Games Open Today at ISU: Special Olympics celebrates 20 years in city," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 2, 1989.

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athletes during the organization's early years and the pre-existing image of people with mental disabilities as children popularized by memoirists and advocates. However, despite efforts to eliminate "children" references and have varied forms of entertainment at Olympic Towns, ISO still conveyed the image of people with mental retardation as eternal children. This portrayal contrasted with the depiction of people with mental disabilities as productive citizens, an image that ISO staff *intentionally* promoted.

As previously discussed, the portrayal of people with intellectual disabilities as dependents did not receive universal approval. From the 1940s through the 1960s, some professionals, such as special educators, therapists, and social workers, began exploring the capabilities of individuals with mental disabilities. They argued that people with intellectual disabilities who demonstrated potential for learning, social adaptation, and morality deserved to have access to services and to participate in their communities. This criteria system rejected the early twentieth century's eugenics-based argument that people with mental retardation suffered inherent incompetence and posed a danger to society. But it also excluded those with severe mental retardation and ensured that professionals, by determining what standards had to be met for access to services and rights, maintained ultimate control over people with intellectual disabilities.[229]

The desire to maintain control kept many parents and professionals from becoming heavily involved in the growing disability rights movement.[230] The movement originated in the 1960s at the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, where students with physical disabilities established community living centers for themselves. After seven people with severe disabilities

[229] Carey, 83, 100-104.
[230] Carey, 138.

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opened the Center for Independent Living in Berkeley, California in 1972, people from different disability groups began working together to gain the services they needed.[231] This camaraderie had not formed in previous decades because the dominant medical model of disability had emphasized the differences among disabilities and prevented disability activists from joining together.[232]

During the 1970s, a sociopolitical view that defined disability as "a product of the interaction between the individual and the environment" emerged. According to this view, all people with disabilities faced prejudice and discrimination, and adaptation of the social environment to their abilities became the solution to their problems. In 1974, activists founded the first cross-disability interest group, the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities.[233] Its members worked to ensure the April 28, 1977 signing of Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, which prohibited discrimination against people with disabilities by employers and organizations receiving federal financial assistance.[234] By the late 1970s, disability rights movement leaders had defined their core values and beliefs and formed relationships with other civil rights associations in Washington, D.C.[235]

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[231] Robert Funk, "Disability Rights: From Caste to Class in the Context of Civil Rights," in *Images of the Disabled, Disabling Images*, ed. Alan Gartner and Tom Joe (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1987), 14-15; Zames Fleischer and Zames, 13.

[232] Harlan Hahn, "Civil Rights for Disabled Americans," in *Images of the Disabled, Disabling Images*, ed. Alan Gartner and Tom Joe (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1987), 181-182.

[233] For sociopolitical framework, see Hahn, "Civil Rights for Disabled Americans," 182-183. For the founding of the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, see Funk, 15.

[234] Zames Fleischer and Zames, 52. After the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare delayed the signing of Section 504, disability activists organized demonstrations and sit-ins at the Department's ten federal offices across the nation and its Washington, D.C. office on April 5, 1977. San Francisco protestors staged a 25-day sit-in. The protests, supported by the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, represented the first significant show of strength by the disability community (Zames Fleischer and Zames, 53-55).

[235] Richard K. Scotch, "Politics and Policy in the History of the Disability Rights Movement," *Milbank Quarterly* 67 (1989): 392.

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Movement leaders often did not consider disability interest organizations that were run for people with disabilities, rather than *by* them, as part of the disability rights movement. In the eyes of some activists, groups controlled by people without disabilities did not sufficiently support the movement's ideals of self-help and independence.[236] Many parents of children with mental retardation and professionals in the field of intellectual disabilities, therefore, did not fully participate in the disability rights movement. While professionals and parents felt that people with mental disabilities should have access to some rights, many did not view them as fully autonomous people capable of self-determination. Caregivers and medical professionals still wanted to retain the power to make decisions for people with intellectual disabilities and did not promote certain rights, such as those to marriage and privacy, for these individuals. Nor did many mental disability advocates hold demonstrations or protests (like those of disability rights movement activists), anxious that such actions would bring negative attention to people with intellectual disabilities. Courts served as the main arenas of mental retardation advocacy, where parents and other advocates focused on rights to services like education and treatment.[237]

Even as parents and professionals controlled the types of rights people with mental disabilities could gain in the 1970s, other groups expressed support for individuals with intellectual disabilities being treated as citizens with full rights. In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of General and Special Rights of the

[236] Scotch, 383; Carey, 136-138.

[237] Carey, 138-139, 158. As a result of the court cases *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (1971) and *Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* (1972), the U.S. Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975. The act required that all public schools provide special education for children who did not benefit from traditional educational methods (Winzer, 118-119, 122).

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Mentally Retarded, a document produced by the International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped. The first article stated, "The mentally retarded person has the same basic rights as other citizens of the same country and same age." The AAMD created a list of rights for people with mental retardation in 1973, including "the right to freedom of choice within the individual's capacity to make decisions and within the limitations imposed on all persons" and "the right to marry and have a family of his or her own."[238] The President's Committee on Mental Retardation (formed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1966) asserted that "retarded people have the same rights, legal and constitutional, as every other United States citizen" in its 1976 publication *Mental Retardation: Century of Decision*.[239]

In contrast to mental disability professionals and parents who emphasized services and groups like the AAMD that emphasized full rights, Special Olympics, Inc. communicated a message about the citizenship of people with mental retardation that focused on productivity. The medical model of disability had characterized disability as an "economic imperfection" associated with unemployability.[240] Eunice Kennedy Shriver fought against this perception in her 1962 *Saturday Evening Post* article by writing about Abilities, Inc., a Long Island, New York electronics company that trained and employed people with intellectual disabilities.[241] Sports could contribute to employment of those with mental retardation because, as stated in a "Facts on Special Olympics" sheet, "Success on the playing field often carries over into the classroom, the

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[238] For the full lists of articles of the Declaration of General and Special Rights of the Mentally Retarded and of the AAMD statement, see Scheerenberger, 124-125.

[239] Carey, 143.

[240] Hahn, "Disability and Rehabilitation Policy," 388.

[241] Shriver, "Hope for Retarded Children."

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home, and the job."[242] Shriver felt that Special Olympians' athletic successes would motivate them to achieve in other areas of their lives and become productive citizens.

By basing its notion of productive citizenship on employment, Special Olympics, Inc., avoided taking a stand on whether or not people with intellectual disabilities should marry and have children.[243] From 1960 to 1984, judicial authorization of sterilization of people with mental retardation decreased as courts began to recognize the reproductive rights of these individuals. But parents remained unsure if their grown children with mental disabilities could manage marriage and parenthood.[244] Shriver addressed rights considered to be controversial for people with mental retardation through the Kennedy Foundation's work on medical ethics. The foundation created films such as "The Right to Reproduce" to facilitate discussion about the ethical implications of intellectual disabilities.[245] With the foundation handling contentious matters, Special Olympics, Inc. did not characterize Special Olympians as spouses or parents, but just as "citizens."

An early Special Olympics, Inc. promotions and public relations guide listed quotations approved for use in media releases by Special Olympics state programs. Many of the statements emphasized that participating in Special Olympics helped athletes become active citizens. For example, Shriver asserted that Special Olympics allowed people with intellectual disabilities to "experience the excitement that comes with being a vital, successful, sought after member of our society." Her mother, Rose Kennedy, said,

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[242] Special Olympics, Inc., "Facts on Special Olympics," October 1978, FWSDC Collection, Box 8, Folder 1, Indiana State Archives, Indianapolis.

[243] Wolfensberger traced Americans' discomfort with the sexuality of people with mental disabilities to the "alarmist period" of 1890 to 1920, when fears "that the deviant would beget the deviant" led some professionals to advocate involuntary sterilization of people with mental retardation and other perceived imperfections, such as criminal behavior (Wolfensberger, *The Principle of Normalization*, 167).

[244] Scheerenberger, 190-194. During the 1960s, many judges viewed the sterilization of people with intellectual disabilities as a way to prevent future burdens on welfare departments.

[245] Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, "Fact Sheet" [ca. 1972], FWSDC Collection, Box 8, Folder 1, Indiana State Archives, Indianapolis.

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"Very often when they [Special Olympians] compete, they find they possess abilities they did not know they had . . . . If they can do this, maybe they can go out and handle jobs in the other competitive fields encountered in adult life."[246] Whether or not such quotations ever appeared in press releases about Special Olympics events, their availability for use demonstrated the organization's intent to promote the portrayal of people with mental retardation as worthy citizens.

ISO staff embraced Shriver's depiction of people with mental disabilities as active citizens. The organization used the term "citizen" to emphasize that its athletes deserved to be treated as members of their communities, not outsiders.[247] In its first annual report, the organization concluded that Special Olympics could lead to "happier and more productive lives for that large portion of our citizenry that are termed mentally retarded."[248] ISO staff felt that although people with mental disabilities were members of society, their participation in it could be improved. ISO did not express such opinions only in internal documents, but also in public materials. In a pamphlet mailed to Indiana households in the early or mid-1970s, ISO claimed, "In Special Olympics they [people with intellectual disabilities] learn the physical skills, the cooperation, the coordination and the confidence needed to live, participate and work in the community."[249] By emphasizing Special Olympics programs' potential role in creating people who

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[246] Special Olympics, Inc., "Comments Which May be Used in Preparing Media Releases and Stories," *Promotions and Public Relations* [ca. 1969], SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Media Materials," SOI.

[247] Carey asserted that in relation to people with intellectual disabilities, citizenship cannot be characterized as a legal status which guarantees equal rights to all who hold it. She explained, "People with intellectual disabilities may hold U.S. passports documenting their citizenship yet may be denied a host of rights offered to fellow citizens" (22-23).

[248] ISO, *Indiana Special Olympics Report: 1970* (June 1970), 1-2, SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Reports," SOI.

[249] ISO, Inc., *Join the World of Winners*, pamphlet [ca. mid-1970s], SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Promotional Materials I," SOI.

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contributed to their communities, ISO reached out to people who did not have personal reasons to support the organization.

In comments to newspaper reporters, ISO volunteers and staff often echoed Shriver's belief that Special Olympics participation contributed to proficiency in other aspects of athletes' lives. In 1973, Dave Lantz, a Wabash College baseball coach who managed a local ISO meet, said, "Success on the playing field often has carried over into the classroom, the home, and the workshop."[250] Schmidt communicated this message consistently throughout ISO's first two decades. In June 1975, he told a writer, "We want to show the public that the kids [Special Olympians] can be a useful part of our society." Over ten years later, a reporter wrote, "Schmidt said that a positive experience in sports builds a positive self-image and that image often carries over into the classroom, home, and job."[251] ISO incorporated Shriver's emphasis on the potential productivity of people with intellectual disabilities into its overall philosophy, endorsing a perceived link between athletic success and employment for people with mental retardation.[252]

Besides publications and media stories, ISO used Special Olympians themselves to prove that its program helped people with intellectual disabilities become successful citizens. At the 1976 Area 8 Games in Indianapolis, the opening ceremonies featured a speech by Terry Giovanoni, a former ISO participant. Inspired by his Special Olympics

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[250] "'Mixing Socially' Most Important Thing in Special Olympics," *Crawfordsville Journal Review*, May 5, 1973.

[251] "Indiana State to Host Special Olympics Program," *Terre Haute Tribune*, June 21, 1975; "Special Olympics 'Frat' Enjoys Growth," *1986 Winter Games Preview*, insert in *Paoli News*, January 1986.

[252] No ISO records indicate how many athletes were employed while or after they participated in Special Olympics. In 2005, a Special Olympics, Inc. telephone survey of 579 athletes from 7 of the 8 U.S. Special Olympics regions revealed that 52 percent of Special Olympians over the age of 18 were employed either at a sheltered workshop or business (Gary N. Siperstein, Coreen M. Harada, Robin C. Parker, Michael L. Hardman, and Jayne McGuire, *A Comprehensive National Study of Special Olympics Programs in the United States*, Washington, D.C., 2005). This percentage is higher than national estimates of people with intellectual disabilities who are employed, which range from 10 to 30 percent, but there is no conclusive evidence that Special Olympics participation leads to employment.

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experiences, Giovanoni was pursuing a college degree in physical education. He directed his remarks to the athletes, praising their "courage in the daily struggle to reach your hopes and dreams."[253] Yet his presence and story also demonstrated to those without disabilities in the audience that people with mental retardation could excel not only in sports, but even in higher education and public speaking. Giovanoni exemplified the image ISO intended to create of Special Olympians. He was not a dependent with childish behavior, but a citizen who could contribute to society.

The portrayal of people with mental retardation as employable citizens undermined historical perceptions of them as abnormal beings who needed to be kept out of mainstream society. By asserting that people with intellectual disabilities could contribute to society, ISO staff and supporters tried to eliminate the discomfort and negativity produced by earlier portrayals of them. The productive citizen depiction correlated with another portrayal publicized by ISO, that of people with mental disabilities as normal people. In the same year ISO was founded, a theory called normalization became a guiding principle in American mental disability advocacy. As parents and professionals sought to integrate people with intellectual disabilities into non-institutional settings and routines, ISO supported the efforts by endorsing the depiction of Special Olympians as people who had much in common with people without disabilities.

Normalization first appeared in "An Act concerning the Care of the Mentally Retarded and other Exceptionally Retarded Persons," an act passed by the Danish government in 1959.[254] Ten years later, the executive director of the Swedish Association for Retarded Children, Bengt Nirje, wrote a chapter about normalization for a

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[253] Bill Benner, "A Day of Receiving, Giving," *Indianapolis Star*, May 23, 1976.
[254] Scheerenberger, 116.

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monograph sponsored by the U.S. President's Committee on Mental Retardation. Soon afterward, psychologist Wolf Wolfensberger, who would become internationally-renowned for his work in mental retardation services, popularized normalization in the United States. He defined it as the "utilization of means which are as culturally normative as possible, in order to establish and/or maintain personal behaviors and characteristics which are as culturally normative as possible."[255] In other words, people with mental retardation should live in conditions that replicated, as closely as possible, those of people without disabilities. Wolfensberger and other supporters of normalization advocated for people with intellectual disabilities to attend public schools and live in private homes, stating that institutions imposed abnormal routines and impersonal relationships on people with mental disabilities.[256]

Wolfensberger recognized that people involved in "relatively benign but paternalistic or pity-derived human service projects" would object to normalization. A few parent organizations, like Voice of the Retarded and the Congress of Advocates, opposed normalization because it supported deinstitutionalization. These parents wanted institutionalization to remain as an option for the care of people with mental disabilities.[257] Superintendents of mental retardation institutions were divided over normalization. Of 39 administrators of public residential facilities surveyed at the 1973 AAMD convention, just under half felt optimistic about normalization, while the rest expressed negative or neutral feelings.[258] By 1982, the National Association of

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[255] Wolfensberger, *The Principle of Normalization*, 27-28.

[256] David J. Rothman and Sheila M. Rothman, "The Litigator as Reformer," in *Mental Retardation in America: A Historical Reader*, ed. James Trent and Steven Noll (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 450.

[257] Wolfensberger, *The Principle of Normalization*, 237. For parental support of institutionalization, see Carey, 166-167.

[258] Scheerenberger, 118.

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Superintendents of Public Residential Facilities for the Mentally Retarded was cautiously supporting the establishment of smaller facilities, but expressing concerns that some people would still require the care of "total institutions."[259] Despite such doubts, normalization became the rationale that initiated the deinstitutionalization of people with mental retardation.[260]

Like normalization, Shriver's founding of Special Olympics, Inc. stemmed from a desire to provide people with mental disabilities experiences they had previously been denied. As explained in the previous chapter, Special Olympics programs were preceded by 1950s mental retardation day camps that parents created to give children with intellectual disabilities the "normal" experience of camping. The camps allowed attendees to participate in recreational activities already enjoyed by children without disabilities.[261] Shriver, a competitive woman who played sports with fierce intensity, viewed athletic competitions as another normal life experience that people with intellectual disabilities deserved.[262]

Shriver also demonstrated support for normalization through her advocacy of community services for people with mental disabilities. In 1962, she wrote, "There is no excuse for these people [with mental retardation] having to live neglected lives in the dark garrets and medieval institutions which are hangovers from yesteryear." She called for communities to create recreation programs and sheltered workshops for people with

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[259] Susan Rose-Ackerman, "Mental Retardation and Society: The Ethics and Politics of Normalization," *Ethics* 93 (October 1982): 93.

[260] Trent, 264. The term "normalization" became so popular that, according to Wolfensberger, people did not take it seriously as a "megatheory of human service." In 1983, he introduced the phrase "social role valorization" to define normalization's goal of attaining socially valued roles for previously devalued people (Wolfensberger, "Social Role Valorization: A Proposed New Term for the Principle of Normalization," *Mental Retardation* 21, no. 6 [1983]: 234, 236-237).

[261] Jones, 335.

[262] For more on Shriver's competitive nature and love of sports, see Shorter, 55-56.

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mental retardation, lamenting that “less is being done at the community level [for people with mental retardation] than for any other afflicted group.”[263] During a press conference at ISO’s 1970 Summer Games, Shriver told reporters that “retarded children’s associations” could not be expected to carry out Special Olympics programs by themselves. Instead, entire communities needed to support Special Olympics.[264] Like proponents of normalization, Shriver wanted to end segregation of individuals with mental retardation.

Wolfensberger felt that Special Olympics programs benefited participants and promoted normalization. He cited that Special Olympics events were often held in “normative settings” such as college campuses, pointing out that athletes who competed at Syracuse University in New York visited the nearby neighborhood. Such visits, as well as the large numbers of people without disabilities who attended Special Olympics events as volunteers, coaches, or spectators, ensured that athletes were “apt to have contact with, or at least exposure to, ordinary citizens.” Although Wolfensberger criticized Special Olympics for its “clownery motifs,” he concluded that among Special Olympics’ drawbacks, “social segregation is not a big one.”[265] According to Wolfensberger’s theory, ISO promoted normalization of people with mental disabilities by holding its Summer Games at ISU.

To encourage interaction between people with and without mental disabilities, ISO staff and supporters endorsed a portrayal of people with mental retardation as humans with the same needs and desires as everyone else. ISO’s Director of Training,

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[263] Shriver, “Hope for Retarded Children.”

[264] Carl Bender, “700 Children in Olympics,” *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 21, 1970.

[265] Wolf Wolfensberger, “Of ‘Normalization,’ Lifestyles, the Special Olympics, Deinstitutionalization, Mainstreaming, Integration, and Cabbage and Kings,” *Mental Retardation* 33, no. 2 (1995): 128-129.

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Mark Scudder, wrote in a magazine article, "Physical and recreational activities are of great benefit to . . . an individual. The same holds true for an individual who happens to be mentally retarded."[266] An ISO pamphlet pointed out that individuals with intellectual disabilities desired appreciation and recognition like the rest of the population, stating, "All of us need to feel special in some way. For the mentally handicapped, this feeling is sometimes far too elusive."[267] A spectator at the 1977 Summer Games expressed similar sentiments, telling a reporter, "They [people with mental retardation] need the feeling of being good at something and winning just like everyone else."[268] By demonstrating what people with mental retardation had in common with others, ISO hoped to increase public acceptance of them.

However, other images of people with mental disabilities that appeared in ISO materials promoted common stereotypes of people with disabilities, reinforcing widely-held perceptions that they were different from people without disabilities. ISO supporters and staff, as well as media reporters, sometimes depicted Special Olympians as heroic or piteous figures. Statements that highlighted the great efforts Special Olympians put forth in their athletic endeavors cast them as valiant, inspirational beings. Comments that emphasized perceived disadvantages of mental disabilities portrayed them as people deserving of pity. As much as these depictions differed from each other, both contradicted the portrayal of Special Olympians as average people.

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[266] Mark Scudder, "Physical Fitness for the Mentally Retarded," *Profile Magazine*, clipping [ca. mid-1980s], SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Promotional Materials I," SOI.

[267] ISO, Inc., *Indiana Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics*, pamphlet (1986), SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Fundraiser Materials," SOI.

[268] Kaye Hoole, "Special Olympics Athletes Winners," *Terre Haute Tribune*, clipping [ca. 1977], SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles I," SOI.

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The heroic image of Special Olympians suggested that children and adults with mental disabilities were extraordinary because they had to overcome their disabilities to achieve athletic success. Schmidt explained that ISO athletes "are not necessarily competing against each other, but rather every athlete is competing against his own mental disabilities. They are proving that what was thought to be impossible can be done." One reporter stated that during an Area Games competition, "Whatever the event, the participants tried their mightiest."[269] A columnist who ate at a McDonald's restaurant with a group of adult Special Olympians wrote, "They [Special Olympians] know better than most what it takes to overcome all odds to come out winners." Another journalist observed, "The Special Olympians' long, difficult battles have taken place away from the sports arena," implying that people with mental retardation conquered great challenges in addition to Special Olympics competitions.[270] These reverent statements encouraged readers to draw inspiration from ISO participants' triumphs.

Even today, the portrayal of people with disabilities as inspirational heroes appears often in media reports. News reporters have "'stock' ways of presenting a particular issue." Time constraints cause news writers to rely on quickly-developed frameworks through which they present their stories. Media reporters often use as a theme the concept of athletes with disabilities displaying bravery and fortitude in spite of their disabilities.[271] As positive as this portrayal seems, disability policy analyst Marilyn Golden contended that emphasizing the extraordinariness of athletes with disabilities

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[269] "Special Olympics 'Frat' Enjoys Growth," *1986 Winter Games Preview*, insert in *Paoli News*, January 1986, SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles II," SOI; Bill Benner, "A Day of Receiving, Giving," *Indianapolis Star*, May 23, 1976.

[270] Susan J. Kaufman, "Olympians Are All Winners," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 30, 1985; Bill Moor, "Special Olympics Made for Fun, Not for Tears," *South Bend Tribune*, June 12, 1986.

[271] Biklen, 81-83.

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reinforces society's low expectations of them. Members of the disability rights movement disliked portrayals of people with disabilities as overachieving heroes (which they derisively called "supercrips") because many people with disabilities simply wanted to lead ordinary, fulfilling lives, not inspire others.[272] ISO's portrayal of Special Olympians as people who prevailed over great odds contradicted the depiction of them as ordinary people.

In addition to being portrayed as sources of inspiration, people with disabilities are depicted as objects of pity in popular culture.[273] According to Wolfensberger, the "pity perception" of people with disabilities usually results in compassion for and acceptance of them, but also creates the possibly inaccurate impression that they are suffering. Education professor Keith Storey asserted that phrases like "suffers from," when used in reference to people with intellectual disabilities, creates negative self-fulfilling prophecies for them.[274] People with mental retardation who perceive their disability as an affliction may feel too hopeless to challenge themselves, thereby limiting their own opportunities. Many people involved with the disability rights movement wanted to eliminate the perception that people with disabilities need pity.[275] However, pity proved an effective tool for post-World War II fundraising telethons held by disability organizations like the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the United Cerebral Palsy Association. During the telethons, organizers displayed children with the particular disability, known as "poster children," to garner sympathy (and money) from viewers.[276]

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[272] Marilyn Golden, "Not on the Front Page," *Progressive* 56, no. 3 (March 1992): 43; Shapiro, 16.
[273] Shapiro, 30.
[274] Wolfensberger, 20; Storey, 37.
[275] Shapiro, 13-14.
[276] Zames Fleischer and Zames, 10-11. For a discussion of the role telethons played in American perceptions of disability, see Paul K. Longmore, "The Cultural Framing of Disability: Telethons as a Case Study," *PMLA* 120, no. 2 (March 2005): 502-508.

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Special Olympics organizations also used pity to gain publicity. In 1985, Special Olympics, Inc. launched one of its most successful promotions, a 1985 commercial featuring E.T., the lovable alien from Stephen Spielberg's popular movie *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*. In the commercial, E.T. became teary-eyed as he watched a boy with mental retardation trying several times to clear a high-jump bar. After a voice-over said, "All they need is a little help from a friend," the scene switched to one of the boy making the jump at a Special Olympics competition.[277] The advertisement sought to garner support for Special Olympics by making viewers feel sorry for the young athlete, who had to endure failure until he gained the support of Special Olympics. ISO employed a similar technique in a promotional pamphlet, stating, "If you're mentally retarded, being told 'you can't' becomes an all too familiar phrase . . . . And all you ask for is a chance to try."[278] The pamphlet's portrayal of people with intellectual disabilities as victims of discouragement and exclusion attempted to tug at the heartstrings of readers.

In articles about ISO events, pity-evoking comments from ISO staff and supporters reinforced the widely-held notion, based on the medical model of disability, that people with disabilities had suffered a misfortune.[279] Schmidt told a reporter that Indiana's Special Olympians "do the best they can with what they've got." A journalist described ISO athletes as "people whose way in this world is hard." "They [people with mental disabilities] are victims," another stated.[280] A third claimed that Special Olympics participants had received "a rotten mental or physical break." Margrit Kagi, a Paoli

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[277] Shorter, 179. The commercial can be viewed online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCyWijMbE9E (accessed August 12, 2012).

[278] *Indiana Special Olympics*, pamphlet, mid-1970s.

[279] For a brief discussion of how suffering is defined in the medical model of disability, see Rod Michalko, *The Difference that Disability Makes* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 33-36.

[280] "Special Olympics: 15th Annual Event Ends This Week in Terre Haute," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 23, 1985; "Olympians Have Heart," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 30, 1985; George Wardell, "Special Olympics Opens for 2600 State Participants," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 28, 1985.

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Peaks manager who helped with several ISO Winter Games events, said, "Seeing those athletes puts into perspective how fortunate we are ourselves."[281] These statements, by implying that people with intellectual disabilities had a disadvantage that encumbered and oppressed them, inspired pity.

ISO portrayed people with mental disabilities as piteous or heroic to increase acceptance of people with intellectual disabilities and to raise funds. By casting them as brave or helpless figures, ISO tried to make people with mental retardation less threatening to people who were unfamiliar with and even wary of them. In addition, people who felt compassion toward Special Olympians were more likely to donate to ISO. When asking readers for donations in 1979 and 1980 newsletters, ISO writers stated that in Special Olympics, "It is the invincible spirit which overcomes all handicaps [that counts]" and, "Sadly, the ball is never thrown to them [people with mental retardation] even though . . . they are ready to do their best."[282] Whether or not these disability stereotypes resulted in donations, they emphasized differences between people with mental retardation and people without disabilities.

Just as ISO presented its participants as both average and unique people, it conveyed contrasting depictions of them as normal athletes and as unconventional sports players. Emphasis on the similarities between Special Olympians and athletes without disabilities became more prominent during the 1980s, but portrayals of Special Olympians as optimistic and inherent victors remained consistent throughout both

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[281] Bill Benner, "Special Olympics Provide Plenty of Perspective," *Indianapolis Star*, May 12, 1978; "This Season's Games Different from Past," *1985 Special Olympics Winter Games Preview*, insert in *Paoli News*, January 1985, SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles II," SOI.

[282] ISO, Inc., "Giving – Key to Special Olympic Spirit," *Newsletter* 3, no. 4 (Fall 1979), *The Special Olympics Public Relations Handbook: Public Relations, A to Z* (binder), SOI; ISO, Inc., "The Special Olympic Spirit," *Newsletter* 4, no. 4 (Fall 1980), *The Special Olympics Public Relations Handbook: Public Relations, A to Z* (binder), SOI.

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decades. Even when discussing its participants specifically as athletes (rather than just people), ISO did not create a consistent image.

Characterizations of Special Olympians as conventional athletes increased as ISO made its programs more sophisticated, especially during its second decade. In 1980, ISO offered training workshops to bowling and basketball coaches; upon completion, the coaches became certified and could enter their teams in Special Olympics events.[283] The initiatives reflected Schmidt's opinion that ISO should "provide a bona fide sports program, not just a fun event."[284] Although rising participation had primarily caused the Summer Games quota system in 1983, Schmidt also saw the quota as a way to make Special Olympics more like other athletic competitions. With the quota system, he stated, Special Olympians "had some degree or measure . . . [by which] to advance to the Summer Games, much like you find in all competitions, whether it be Little League baseball, or whether it be CYO basketball, or whether it be interscholastic athletic programs in high schools."[285] A document about the capital campaign to be launched for ISO headquarters' move to Indianapolis stated that ISO provided "the physical training and the emotional support of traditional sports programs."[286] ISO staff wanted their programs to be as similar as possible to athletic programs for people without disabilities.

From the notion of Special Olympics as a normal sports program came the portrayal of Special Olympians as normal athletes. In 1985, Schmidt compared the ISO Summer Games to the final four of an Indiana high school basketball tournament, saying,

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[283] ISO, Inc., "Quality is Goal for Special Olympics," *Newsletter* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1980), *The Special Olympics Public Relations Handbook: Public Relations, A to Z* (binder), SOI.

[284] Thomas Layden, "No One is Out of the Race at Summer Special Olympics," *Indianapolis Star*, June 28, 1981.

[285] Schmidt, interview by Hayes. "CYO basketball" refers to Catholic Youth Organization basketball programs.

[286] ISO, Inc., *Capital Campaign Report* (1989): 3, SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Organizational Materials II," SOI.

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"These athletes [Special Olympians] feel as good about themselves as the players on L&M's basketball team do."[287] John Jenkins, an ISO Area Coordinator, explained to a reporter, "The Special Olympics kids are real competitors, and the Special Olympics is a sports event like any other sports event . . . . They look forward to the competition in the same way all athletes look forward to competition."[288] These statements portrayed ISO participants as normal athletes engaging in valid sports competitions, not as children and adults playing recreational games.

In 1995, a study of 288 Special Olympians and 114 university athletes without disabilities revealed that the two groups had similar perspectives on competitiveness, winning, and goal setting. While male Special Olympians did not place as much emphasis on winning as their male peers without disabilities, they demonstrated more competitiveness (defined as "the desire to strive for success") and the same level of interest in setting goals. Female Special Olympians were less focused on competitiveness and winning than the female athletes without disabilities, but also demonstrated the same amount of concern for setting goals. The study's authors concluded that more commonalities than differences existed between athletes with mental retardation and those without intellectual disabilities.[289]

ISO encouraged Special Olympians' parents to treat their sons and daughters as regular athletes. An ISO pamphlet written for parents declared, "One factor seems to

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[287] "Special Olympics: 15th Annual Event Ends This Week in Terre Haute," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 23, 1985. The L&M Braves, a high school basketball team from the small town of Lyons in southwestern Indiana, made it to the semi-state championship game in 1985. (Nick Schneider, "Dream Season: Tiny L&M Made Tourney Run that Drew National Attention 25 Years Ago," *Greene County Daily World*, March 23, 2010, http://gcdailyworld.com/story/1615417.html [accessed June 20, 2012]).

[288] Graham Taylor, "Special Olympics Kids Prepare for 'Their BIG day' in Sports," *Madison Courier*, May 14, 1983.

[289] Joseph Wilson and Dean A. Zoerink, "The Competitive Disposition: Views of Athletes with Mental Retardation," *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (January 1995): 40.

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remain constant: The great influence and importance of parents, and also family, on an athlete's overall sports experience. This is no less true of a mentally handicapped athlete and his or her parents." Evidence indicates that some parents viewed their Special Olympians as normal athletes. The mother of an eight-year-old Special Olympian told a reporter, "It's not just fun and games – it really helps him learn new skills." Carl Erskine explained that his son Jimmy, through his ISO accomplishments, had "taken a spot in the athletic history of the Erskine family," just like his brothers, who played multiple sports, and his sister, who was a gymnast and cheerleader.[290]

However, ISO's portrayal of people with mental retardation as normal athletes did not exist without a divergent one of them as innocently upbeat competitors and inevitable winners. Portrayals that emphasized the uniqueness of Special Olympians supported the arguments of critics who felt that Special Olympics did not provide a normal athletic experience. In 1978, special education professors Edward A. Polloway and J. David Smith asserted that Special Olympics programs highlighted "the traditional purported 'difference' between retarded and normal children" at a time when professionals were trying to deemphasize that difference through integration. They argued that enrolling children in Special Olympics labeled them as having a mental disability, which could cause athletes to develop negative self-concepts or receive poor treatment from peers without disabilities. Psychologist Michael Brickey agreed that participation in Special Olympics led athletes to self-identify as "retarded" and possibly have difficulty participating in integrated activities.[291]

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[290] ISO, Inc., *Parents are Special, Too!* brochure [ca. mid-1980s], SOI Box 1, Folder "SOI Promotional Materials II," SOI; Kaye Hoole, "Special Olympics Athletes Winners," *Terre Haute Tribune*, clipping [ca. 1977], SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles I," SOI; Erskine, interview by Hayes.

[291] Polloway and Smith, 432; Brickey, 75.

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While articles about ISO events did not assert that Special Olympians should be ashamed of their mental disabilities, they did highlight qualities that supposedly made athletes with mental disabilities different from those without disabilities. Writers often expressed admiration for Special Olympians' joy and sportsmanship. An IARC newsletter reported a spectator at the 1969 games in Indianapolis commenting, "They [Special Olympians] seem to have much more enthusiasm. They don't pick favorites. They cheer everyone!" In 1985, Schmidt described the enthusiasm of Special Olympians as "contagious."[292] A father of two Special Olympians stated, "The nice thing about this is there is never an enemy. They [Special Olympians] love everybody." One reporter wrote that "the hugs of unselfish congratulations from teammates show that these athletes are competitors in the best sense of the word" and claimed that what Special Olympians "lack in speed or stamina they make up for in heart."[293] From these sentiments emerged an image of athletes who possessed unwaveringly positive attitudes and treated their competitors kindly.

This idealistic characterization implied that Special Olympians never expressed negativity or experienced a sense of rivalry when they competed, setting them apart from athletes without disabilities. Antagonism and frustration occur in most athletic competitions, and, as a few newspaper articles showed, these feelings affected Special Olympians as well. One athlete told a reporter, "If I finished fifth place, I'd feel lousy." A disappointed swimmer who received a green ribbon for finishing seventh in a race proclaimed, "I don't like this award." The Shares Bears, an ISO basketball team of men

[292] IARC, "Olympics for Retarded Great Success: Contestants Doubled Expectations," *IARC News* 12, no. 2 (Summer 1969), SOI Box 1, Folder "Newsletters I," SOI; George Wardell, "Special Olympics Opens for 2600 State Participants," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 28, 1985.

[293] Ron Koch, "Special Olympics Open at ISU," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 4, 1988; "Olympians Have Heart," *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, June 30, 1985.

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from rehabilitation workshops in Shelbyville and Greenville, Indiana, played in the 1983 International Special Olympics Games. Their assistant coach recalled that in a game against a New York team, "the elbows were flying," and team members described being "roughed up."[294] Despite a few exceptions, accounts of Special Olympians having negative attitudes or engaging in unsportsmanlike conduct rarely appeared in newspapers, possibly because they conflicted with the appealing depiction of people with mental disabilities as cheerful and generous competitors.

The rosy portrayal of people with mental disabilities conveyed in stories about Special Olympics originated from the historical perception of them as what Wolfensberger called "holy innocents" and from a concept that disability scholar Paul K. Longmore described as "compensation." The "holy innocent" perception, prevalent in cultures throughout history and around the world, places people with mental disabilities above other humans by granting them angel status.[295] Perpetuating the "holy innocent" stereotype denies people with mental retardation the privilege to experience all human emotions.[296] When seen as holy innocents, Special Olympians are not permitted to express competitiveness or frustration. Compensation refers to the idea that life, nature, or God compensates people with disabilities with moral, spiritual, and emotional gifts.[297] In the case of Special Olympians, compensation insinuates that they have been bestowed with moral superiority, making them selfless athletes who desire success for their

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[294] Bill Bilinkski, "Fear of Water is Long Gone," *South Bend Tribune*, June 12, 1986; Wayne Falda, "Athlete Learns Fleeting Nature of the Race," *South Bend Tribune*, June 11, 1987; David Syzmanski, "Special Team's Road to Gold Made 'Em Glow," *Indianapolis Star*, August 2, 1983.

[295] Wolfensberger, *The Principle of Normalization*, 21-22. The "holy innocent" perception appears in Islam, Judaism, and Catholicism and has also been noted in the cultures of North American Indians, Central American Indians, Eskimos, Russians, and Central Asians.

[296] Brickey, 75.

[297] Longmore, "Screening Stereotypes," 71. Longmore cited examples of "compensation" in television series that ran during the first two decades of ISO, such as *Ironside* (1967-1975), *Little House on the Prairie* (1974-1982), and *Boone* (1983-1984).

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competitors as well as themselves. Although well-intentioned, the portrayal of all Special Olympians as enthusiastic optimists eager to cheer on their opponents created a limited picture of athletes with mental disabilities.

Special Olympics, Inc.'s lack of emphasis on defeat also contributed to an image of Special Olympians as non-traditional competitors. Special education scholar Keith Storey believed that Special Olympics events created "an artificial environment where the rules are not the same as in integrated settings" by allowing every participant to receive an award. He argued that Special Olympics prevented participants from experiencing risk.[298] Caregivers often reduce risks in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. But disability activist Robert Perske, who coined the term "dignity of risk," claimed that overprotection denied people with mental retardation risk-taking opportunities that aid human development. Perske urged professionals to "find the proper amount of normal risk for every person [with mental disabilities]."[299] The risk of losing in a sports competition represents a normal and beneficial experience for people with mental retardation.

Special Olympics, Inc. acknowledged that its program "is unique in that it accommodates competitors at all ability levels by assigning them to 'competition divisions' based on both age and actual performance." As an ISO newsletter explained,

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[298] Storey, 37.

[299] Robert Perske, "The Dignity of Risk," in Wolfensberger, *The Principle of Normalization*, 195, 200. The practice of awarding prizes to all participants, instead of winners only, has become prevalent in today's society. Members of Generation Y, born between the early 1980s and 2000s, are known as "trophy kids" because their parents sought many ways to shelter them from failure, including making sure they received recognition for athletic participation even when they did not win (Deric M. Greene, "Generation Y," *Encyclopedia of Identity: Volume 1*, ed. Ronald L. Jackson II [Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2010], 309-310). In the 1970s and 1980s, giving all participants awards was more unique to Special Olympics.

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"This gives each athlete a realistic chance for success among peers of similar ability."[300] Maximizing the chances of success for Special Olympians and awarding all participants at least a ribbon protected people with intellectual disabilities from defeat and failure. This protection distinguished them from athletes without disabilities because it meant that no Special Olympians lost; instead, they all won.

ISO promoted the depiction of all Special Olympians as winners (whether the athletes finished in first place or not). One pamphlet stated, "In the Special Olympics everyone wins a medal, because for the mentally retarded, the joy of taking part is victory in itself." Another declared that "the purpose of Special Olympics is not to win, but to do the best you can; for in Special Olympics everyone receives an award."[301] In most newspaper accounts, ISO supporters expressed that the conventional concept of winning did not belong at Special Olympics events. One coach asserted that Special Olympics' success came from the fact "that everybody is a winner." A special education teacher who took four students to ISO's first Winter Games said, "We don't emphasize winning. Practicing and experiencing each event is what counts." Another chaperone stated that Special Olympics athletes "don't have to be good. They can just have a good time."[302] By focusing on participation instead of competition results, these supporters eliminated the possibility of defeat for Special Olympians.

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[300] Special Olympics, Inc., "Facts on Special Olympics," October 1978; ISO, Inc., "Serving the Same People, Meeting the Same Needs: Indiana Special Olympics and Indiana Schools," *Sports Report* 15, no. 2 (September 1988), *Sports Report 1987-1992* (binder), SOI.

[301] *Indiana Special Olympics*, pamphlet, mid-1970s; ISO, Inc., *Indiana Special Olympics*, pamphlet [ca. 1989], SOI Box 1, Folder "Promotional Materials I," SOI.

[302] Kaye Hoole, "Special Olympics Athletes Winners," *Terre Haute Tribune*, clipping [ca. 1977], SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles I," SOI; "Five Area Youngsters Take Part in Indiana's Winter 'Olympic' Games," clipping [ca. 1978], SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles II," SOI; Mary Dieter, "Ski Lifts: Special Olympics Athletes All Win, Supporters Say," *Paoli Courier-Journal*, clipping [ca. 1982], SOI Box 3, Folder "SOI Sports Articles II," SOI.

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ISO supporters' preference for participation over winning explains why many were upset by the quota system enforced in 1983. Suddenly, performing well became a prerequisite for ISO's largest event, and some athletes would be denied what supporters considered a beneficial and positive experience. The change violated the idea that effort mattered more than scores and finishing times, an idea expressed in Special Olympics, Inc.'s official motto, "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." Introduction of the quota system, however, did not eliminate ISO's contention that all competitors were winners. All Summer Games participants still received ribbons, and participation, although limited to 2,600 athletes, still took precedence over winning. A reporter at the 1986 Summer Games observed, "These special athletes came for the joy of participation and competition, not for the rewards of victory."[303] Over time, supporters accepted the quota not only out of necessity, but also because its enforcement did not alter the "everybody wins" atmosphere of the ISO Summer Games.

Depictions of Special Olympians as winners and portrayals of them as regular athletes created different, but positive characterizations of ISO as an organization. By emphasizing that all Special Olympians gained positive recognition as victors at its events, ISO presented itself as providing a worthwhile service to people with mental retardation. According to this view, ISO compromised usual sports rules, such as only recognizing winners, to create a program that benefited previously marginalized members of society. But portraying Special Olympians as normal athletes aligned with ISO's message that people with intellectual disabilities could, when given the chance, perform the same tasks as people without disabilities. In this context, ISO became an organization that made its competitions as conventional as possible to allow people with mental

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[303] Frank Lipo, "Special Olympics Bring Joy," *South Bend Tribune*, June 11, 1986.

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disabilities to prove their capabilities. Inconsistent portrayals of Special Olympians benefited ISO by highlighting its efforts to make athletes with mental disabilities feel special and, alternatively, normal.

The variety of portrayals of people with intellectual disabilities produced by ISO from 1969 to 1989 indicates that during these decades, perceptions of intellectual disability conflicted with each other. In some cases, ISO retained practices and portrayals rooted in the past. Even if ISO staff did not believe, as early twentieth-century medical professionals did, that people with mental retardation never matured and had to be treated as dependents, the organization employed paternalistic practices out of necessity. It also indulged in the inaccurate depiction of people with mental disabilities as children through juvenile entertainment at events. ISO's portrayals of people with mental disabilities as heroes, objects of pity, and perpetually optimistic competitors drew on long-standing stereotypes of people with disabilities.

Just as ISO could not avoid influences of the past, it could not ignore current trends. Therefore, the organization also promoted images of people with mental retardation that reflected new concepts of mental disability. As a result of deinstitutionalization and the self-advocacy movement, some people with mental disabilities were living more independently than before and speaking publicly on their own behalf. ISO supported these initiatives by depicting people with intellectual disabilities as employable citizens and by helping its athletes become spokespeople for Special Olympics. The organization's portrayals of people with intellectual disabilities as regular people and conventional athletes reflected normalization theory, even if some critics felt that Special Olympics did not provide a sufficiently normal experience for

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participants. By emphasizing that all people need physical activity and recognition, and that Special Olympians took sports as seriously as athletes without disabilities, ISO demonstrated that people with intellectual disabilities should have opportunities to experience the common activity of playing sports.

A 19-year-old Special Olympian at the 1981 ISO Summer Games expressed the multifaceted nature of ISO's practices and portrayals when she said that Special Olympics "is just like the real Olympics except it's called Special Olympics and it's for special people."[304] From 1969 to 1989, ISO chose a variety of ways to treat and portray its athletes, emphasizing both their normality and their uniqueness. The contradictions among ISO's practices and portrayals demonstrate that the organization developed at a time when people were both maintaining historical perceptions of disability and creating new ones.

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[304] Thomas Layden, "No One is Out of the Race at Summer Special Olympics," *Indianapolis Star*, June 28, 1981.

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CONCLUSION

"Will you open to us [Special Olympics] the playing fields of your communities?" Eunice Kennedy Shriver asked her audience during a speech at the University of Notre Dame in 1988, 20 years after the founding of Special Olympics, Inc.[305] Her question reflected the organization's mission to fully integrate people with mental disabilities into society. Through thoughtful development of programs and fundraisers, as well as inconsistent portrayals of its athletes, Indiana Special Olympics pursued Shriver's vision of social acceptance of people with mental retardation as capable and worthy individuals. Analysis of ISO's first two decades expands Special Olympics history and demonstrates that both progressive portrayals and long-held stereotypes of people with intellectual disabilities served Special Olympics goals.

Shriver's messages and objectives complemented those of professionals who promoted deinstitutionalization, normalization, and the end of special education classes throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Deinstitutionalization supporters asserted that people with intellectual disabilities could live in small group homes in their communities.[306] Normalization theorists claimed that people with mental retardation deserved to live as similarly to people without disabilities as possible. Some educators and parents averred that children with mental disabilities could learn in regular classrooms. Similarly, Shriver stated that people with mental retardation could perform many of the same feats

[305] Eunice Kennedy Shriver, "Laetare Acceptance Speech," University of Notre Dame, May 15, 1988, http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org/articles/article/100 (accessed December 6, 2012).

[306] As mentioned in Chapter One, a previous effort to help people with intellectual disabilities live in communities took place in the 1850s, when founders of training schools intended to make people with mental retardation self-sufficient. But superintendents overestimated the potential of their students. After only a small percentage of students went on to live successfully in society, school authorities began considering institutional care as an option (Bell and Tyor, 36-37). In the twentieth century, proponents of deinstitutionalization recognized that people with intellectual disabilities might not achieve independence, but could live in communities with proper support.

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as normal athletes. Special Olympics, Inc. reflected the shift from a facility-based paradigm of mental retardation treatment to a services-based one. It also employed the social model of disability in which social supports render disabilities less disabling. Through the service of specialized athletic programs, the organization provided people with intellectual disabilities the support they needed to have the normal experience of playing sports.

My study of ISO from 1969 to 1989 presents a rare multi-faceted version of Special Olympics history. Accounts of Special Olympics do not frequently appear in books about the history of mental retardation in America. When writers briefly mention the organization, they often present a celebratory story of unimpeded progress and success. Psychologist R.C. Scheerenberger wrote, "Naturally, it [Special Olympics] was a tremendous experience for participants and their families . . . . Nearly everyone believed the program completely fulfilled its goals."[307] Presented this way, the narratives of Scheerenberger and others lead readers to believe that because Special Olympics inspired public support, its programs prospered easily.

Despite eventual broad support for Special Olympics, ISO's growth required the efforts of local individuals. Like most new non-profit organizations, ISO had to develop a support base (in its case, athletes and their supporters), raise money, expand, and rely on volunteers. Tom Songster and Judy Campbell held meetings and wrote letters to find potential participants. Dennis Schmidt sought unique fundraisers to keep the organization afloat. Dan TeGrotenhuis integrated and managed new sports that many had felt people with intellectual disabilities could not learn and play. Thousands of volunteers coached, chaperoned, and cheered for Indiana's Special Olympians. Shriver's

[307] Scheerenberger, 252.

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vision of a comprehensive athletic program for people with intellectual disabilities did not come to life simply because it had a laudable mission, as summaries of Special Olympics often allude. ISO staff and volunteers had to overcome financial uncertainties, overcrowding at events, and other problems in order to maintain and improve their Special Olympics programs.

Although many non-profit groups raise awareness about issues, ISO faced the unique difficulty of educating the public about the capabilities of people who had often lived on the margins of society. In the beginning, ISO likely did not evoke as much empathy from the public as did non-profit organizations that represented people with physical disabilities or particular diseases. But ISO still sought to go beyond just running an athletic organization for people with mental retardation. The organization wanted to eradicate low expectations for and negative stereotypes of people with intellectual disabilities. Therefore, ISO strove to convince media reporters to cover its events and publicize Special Olympians' accomplishments. In interviews, staff and volunteers made positive remarks about people with intellectual disabilities and echoed Shriver's belief that their athletic success led to achievements at school and work. Articles about ISO marked a sharp contrast to earlier newspaper stories about people with mental retardation in which editors placed dehumanizing black lines over the eyes of such individuals.

Media stories became just one way that ISO encouraged societal inclusion of people with mental disabilities. In order to make the public realize that individuals with intellectual disabilities did not have to live hidden away in institutions, ISO had to portray its athletes positively. The organization conveyed various depictions of people with intellectual disabilities through not only its statements to the media, but also its

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printed materials (such as pamphlets and newsletters) and its treatment of Special Olympians. Some of these depictions drew from the ideals of Shriver and the disability rights movement, and others stemmed from stereotypes of people with disabilities. Such duality of disability images not only occurred with ISO. As noted by Paul K. Longmore, it also appeared in television programs featuring characters with disabilities during the 1970s and 1980s. Despite contradicting each other, all of ISO's portrayals had the purpose of making people with mental disabilities more familiar and less threatening to the general population.

ISO depicted people with mental disabilities as productive citizens and normal people in several of its materials. By asserting that individuals with intellectual disabilities could perform jobs, ISO fought against the idea that mental retardation prevented people from contributing to their communities and supporting themselves. ISO also sought to reduce the uncertainty and fear some people felt in regard to people with mental disabilities by emphasizing qualities that its athletes had in common with all people. ISO staff and supporters pointed out that people with intellectual disabilities needed and enjoyed physical activity and socialization just as much as everyone else. The portrayal of Special Olympians as average athletes also emerged in ISO statements. The organization asserted that its participants desired victory and cared about competitions as much as athletes who did not have mental disabilities.

These forward-looking portrayals of people with mental disabilities by ISO aligned with Special Olympics, Inc.'s publicity messages and some of the rhetoric of the disability rights movement. In articles and speeches about Special Olympics, Shriver asserted that sports gave Special Olympians the confidence to become productive citizens

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and that people with mental retardation had the right to seek normal life experiences, such as playing sports. Although few mental disability advocates became heavily involved in the disability rights movement because they wanted to retain control over decisions about people with mental retardation, ISO's depictions of its participants as regular people supported the movement's contention that people with disabilities were equal to people without disabilities.

In contrast to depictions of people with mental retardation as employable, average citizens, ISO also portrayed them as sports players whose efforts inherently made them "winners," as extraordinary people to be celebrated or pitied, and as dependents and children. The image of Special Olympians as unique athletes arose from descriptions of them as sports players who did not care about winning, maintained positive attitudes, and supported their competitors. These attributes suggested that Special Olympians, rather than being normal athletes, had moral superiority over such conventional sports players. ISO staff and supporters often claimed that all Special Olympians won simply by participating. While some Special Olympians may have competed only for fun, others wanted to finish in first place. Therefore, the characterization of Special Olympians as upbeat, non-competitive sports players did not always hold true.

In other cases, ISO emphasized its participants' mental disabilities to create portrayals that elicited admiration or pity rather than fear. ISO sometimes presented intellectual disabilities as obstacles that Special Olympians overcame in order to achieve athletic success. The portrayal of people with mental retardation as brave heroes who battled their disabilities reflected the broader stereotype of people with disabilities as inspirational figures who prevailed over tough circumstances. Closely related to this

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stereotype was that of people with disabilities as helpless individuals who deserved pity. When ISO staff and supporters made statements that emphasized how discouraged people with intellectual disabilities must have felt before they could participate in Special Olympics and characterized having an intellectual disability as a misfortune, they led readers to feel sorry for people with mental retardation.

In addition to figures of inspiration and pity, the stereotype of people with intellectual disabilities as children appeared in ISO's treatment of and materials about its participants. ISO, like many Special Olympics groups, recruited participants indirectly through caregivers or teachers and initially excluded people with intellectual disabilities from its board of directors. While scholars like exercise scientist Peter Harmer and education scholar Keith Storey identified these actions as paternalistic, they neglected to consider that limited staff and resources may have caused such actions; Special Olympics coordinators did not necessarily view Special Olympians as dependents who could not make decisions or contribute to the organization's management. Yet early materials often referred to participants of all ages collectively as "children," reinforcing the untrue notion that people with mental disabilities did not mature. Infantilization of Special Olympians became less common in ISO texts throughout the 1970s as a result of not only an increase in the numbers of adult athletes, but also a growing awareness of adults with intellectual disabilities asserting themselves through self-advocacy groups.

The stereotypes conveyed by ISO created inaccurate caricatures of people with intellectual disabilities. However, ISO used these depictions not to belittle Special Olympians, but to gain support for Special Olympics and societal integration of people with mental retardation. Portrayals of them as eternal children fought against negative

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images of them as strange and disconcerting figures by associating them with the innocence, meekness, and joy of children. Depictions of them as heroes overcoming challenges refuted notions of them as people who could only live passively in institutions. ISO conveyed them as figures of pity to inspire people to help Special Olympians by becoming involved with ISO. The organization described its participants as enthusiastic, generous competitors to draw audiences to its events.

These stereotypes, like the medical model of disability that highlights physical symptoms of disabilities, set Special Olympians apart from people without disabilities. However, by emphasizing supposed unique qualities of Special Olympians, ISO worked to integrate people with mental retardation into society. ISO staff and supporters hoped to make people with mental retardation seem approachable enough that the public would accept them not only as athletes, but as employees and neighbors. Although the stereotypical portrayals contrasted with ISO's depictions of people with mental disabilities as average people and athletes, they ultimately served the same goal of increasing social acceptance of people with intellectual disabilities.

My study of the first two decades of ISO and its images of people with mental retardation constitutes a small slice of Special Olympics history. ISO's past features unique aspects that future researchers could further explore, such as the organization's long-lasting relationship with Indiana State University and its co-founders' becoming influential in Special Olympics at the national level. Moving beyond Indiana, more state histories of Special Olympics programs would reveal other distinct stories, highlight regional differences in sports played, and provide a richer picture of Special Olympics Inc.'s past. Analysis of Special Olympics visual imagery would uncover additional

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portrayals of people with mental disabilities that the organization conveyed, as well as insight into how the organization used photographs and television advertisements to represent a disability that does not always have visible symptoms.

A historical account that incorporates oral history interviews of Special Olympians would offer an enlightening perspective on the organization's influence in participants' lives. Such a social history, when compared to similar research on people with physical disabilities, could reveal differences among disability groups. Researchers could determine what athletic organizations existed for people with physical disabilities at the time that Special Olympics, Inc. emerged and if athletes in those organizations had similar roles and motivations. By uncovering more about the past of Special Olympics, future scholars will contribute to a more extensive understanding of disability history in the United States.

From 1969 to 1989, Indiana Special Olympics grew from an inaugural track and field and swimming event to a year-round program of training and competition in 14 sports. The small staff and multitude of volunteers who made this expansion possible hoped that Special Olympics would publicize the capabilities of people with intellectual disabilities and encourage their inclusion in society. With contrasting portrayals of their athletes as either normal or extraordinary, ISO strove to change the negative attitudes toward people with mental retardation that had justified segregating such people from the rest of society.

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