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Laura Colombo
Junior

OLYMPICS | Volunteers help make the Special Olympics possible for athletes

Continued from Page 9

"We have some athletes who have mobility issues, so we haven't figured out how we're going to get them inside Pershing yet," Velasquez said. "Also, the parking lot is closed, and where we normally do our Olympic Village is closed, so it's an adjustment this year."

Despite the hard work of the Special Olympics committee, the members said that without the volunteers from Truman and the Kirksville community, the Special Olympics and the Young Athletes Program would not be possible. Volunteers called "buddies" are paired with particular athletes and accompany and encourage them throughout their events. Other volunteers time the races, measure the distances and record the athletes' scores in all the events.

Junior Laura Colombo, who is in charge of buddy recruitment, said this practical usefulness of the volunteers is eclipsed by what the buddies provide for the athletes.

"I've heard from many different athletes that buddies are what makes the day," Colombo said. "They have fun getting to know their buddies and getting to hang out with them, so having that buddy there and making that personal connection with them is something the athletes look forward to at the games."

The opening ceremony of the Special Olympics will begin at noon in Pershing Arena. The events of both the Special Olympics and the Young Athletes Program will begin at 1 p.m. in Stokes Stadium. The Olympic Village will be set up on the road in front of the stadium, closing it to all traffic. In case of inclement weather, all of the activities will take place in Pershing Arena.

Dodgeball helps stress

Playground game allows students to break free from University anxiety

BY HANNAH DOUGLAS
for the Index

Cradling the end lines of the Pershing small gymnasium, stirring students fixated on the small spheres in front of them and prepared to bolt upon the cue, "Three, two, one ... dodgeball!"

Junior Brian Hoard stood among them, not thinking about the stress of his schoolwork or job. Instead, he kept his mind on the game. Hoard, a member of the organization Pitlords of Dodgeball, said that for the past three years, the dodgeball games every Friday night have served as his stress releaser.

"Here, we're just basically focusing on the now and not really having to worry about all the other elements of our lives," Hoard said.

Hoard said that with the school's hectic atmosphere, there are seldom opportunities to get together with a large group of friends, but with the Pitlords of Dodgeball, everyone comes together to exercise and socialize.

"This exertion of effort is a break from that monotony we experience in everyday life," Hoard said.

Although there are risk factors, such as injury, associated with playing dodgeball, Hoard said it is always worth it.

"It really feels like you're doing something almost productive when you have bruises or scrapes or scars, that actually you're accomplishing something ... and you're doing more with the workout," Hoard said.

What Hoard might not have realized is that although there might be risks involved with playing a contact sport, with each toss of the ball and each quick sprint or jump, he is improving his physical health.

Brandon Mack, a physical therapist at the Health & Fitness Center of Northeast Regional Medical Center, said the main benefit of a sport like dodgeball is that it attracts individuals who might not have been inter-

ested in other sports and otherwise would have missed out on physical activity.

He said dodgeball not only is a way for those playing to release stress but also increases heart rate, improves muscular strength and helps improve hand-eye coordination for younger players.

Compared to a workout at the gym, Mack said dodgeball involves many areas of the body, allowing the player to work on more than just target areas, such as if someone were to lift weights to strengthen the upper body.

"I think definitely dodgeball is a better overall workout as far as the muscular endurance, the cardiovascular, the strengthening, kind of all wrapped in one," Mack said.

Depending on the activity level of the person playing, dodgeball is beneficial when played, on average, in 30-minute to hour-long increments up to three times a week, he said.

Mack said there are more positive than negative aspects with a game of dodgeball because injury is a possibility with any sport, and if those with a lower level of activity were to ease their way into the game by playing in even shorter increments of 15 to 20 minutes each day, it would reduce the risk of injury.

He said one of the keys to dodgeball is its appeal to individuals who don't enjoy running on a treadmill or going to the Student Recreation Center regularly but can still be active, and he said college students definitely would benefit from it.

Ben Eggering, Pitlords of Dodgeball president, said he wants to provide a welcoming environment for anyone who wants to play, lords or ladies.

Eggering said that when the organization began in fall 2007, when they would play in the pit — hence the name — by Pickler Memorial Library, there were about 10 to 15 people.

This semester, the Pitlords of Dodgeball became an official on-campus organization with about 60 to 80 members, and Eggering said he still meets someone new every Fri-



Hannah Douglas/for the Index

Brandon Mack, a physical therapist at the Health & Fitness Center of Northeast Regional Medical Center, said the participants of the dodgeball increase heart rate, improve muscular strength and improve hand-eye coordination.

day night.

"Come Friday, everyone just wants to let off some steam, throw a dodgeball at someone and have a good time doing it," he said.

Eggering said the Pitlords of Dodgeball is continuing to grow with new members and he hopes he can provide that positive ac-

tive atmosphere in Fridays to come.

"It may work for other people to go out to the rec [center] and try to improve themselves in that way, but I guess for us this is sort of a different way of doing that ... our way that we feel is best for us," Hoard said.

Student dedicates life to public service after assault

BY STACIE SAGASER
for the Index

Junior Thomas Schonhardt never thought that being assaulted last summer would lead him to his future career as a firefighter.

Schonhardt was assaulted in Kirksville June 20, 2009. Schonhardt suffered injuries to the face, including a broken nose, broken air passages, fractured eye sockets and a fractured jaw. Because of the assault, Schonhardt wants to dedicate his life to public service.

It has been 10 months since the assault, and Schonhardt said he still is coming to terms with it all.

"Physically, I understand it happened and there's nothing I can do about it," Schonhardt said. "Emotionally, I still can't grasp why anyone would do that to another human being."

Schonhardt has endured three reconstructive facial surgeries

while taking 14 credit hours and devoting time to his roles as IFC President, Blue Key member, Greek Life intern, special events chair for Beta Theta Pi, Lambda Pi Eta member and Learning Opportunities employee.

Schonhardt said he enjoys his involvement on campus because it allows him to help others. Schonhardt said helping others and staying busy helps keep his mind off that June day and the toll it has taken on him and his family.

"I'm normally a really happy person, but this incident has just dulled me down," Schonhardt said. "I'm starting to get back to my old crazy, happy way, but it's just taking a long time. It's hard to come back to 100 percent, especially since I know my face will never look 100 percent."

Schonhardt said the assault has impacted all aspects of his life.

"My surgeries are extremely painful and have caused me to miss a lot of school and even miss out on



Photo submitted

Thomas Schonhardt said he is going to become a firefighter to help others.

a couple job opportunities," Schonhardt said. "Socially, I am finding it really hard to trust people now and find myself being a lot more timid than I used to be."

Schonhardt said that although the assault has had a profound negative effect on his life, it has caused him to truly value those around

him.

"Hearing the surgeon say I was so close to being killed from this really made me sit down and think about a lot of things," Schonhardt said. "I call my mom about three times a day. It's really brought me a lot closer to my parents and friends."

Beth Tuttle, director of Greek Life, said Schonhardt "has a tremendously good heart and goes into everything with excitement." "It's great to be able to work with students, like Thomas, that are so excited about the opportunities they have as a leader," she said.

Tuttle said a fond memory she has from working with Schonhardt was when he helped put together a kid's carnival for this past family day. Tuttle said that while preparing for the carnival, Schonhardt said he thought he could learn online how to make balloon animals, and he showed up to the

carnival and started cranking out everything from dogs to dragons and giraffes.

"That's just Thomas," Tuttle said. "If he gets excited about something, he'll go all out."

Tuttle said the carnival also included pie-in-the-face stations, which Schonhardt took part in.

"Here's someone with a face injury letting little kids pie him in the face," Tuttle said.

Junior Seth Hampel, Beta member and friend of Schonhardt, said Schonhardt is a motivation to him.

"Any little thing now, like a test or something, I start to get down about, I'm like 'Really?'" Hampel said. "Thomas almost lost his life and has to deal with that among a million other things, and he's chipper."

Hampel said he's glad Schonhardt is using a terrible experience to do good and thinks his friend "will make one hell of a firefighter."

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