

Everybody is a winner at N.Y. Special Olympics

Sixty-five Staten Islanders competed with more than 1,200 men, women and children from across New York State over the weekend during the 1978 New York Special Olympics held in Cobleskill, N.Y., and no matter how they finished, they all turned out to be winners.

Some ran faster than others, of course, and some jumped higher, but all the mentally retarded persons who competed had fun, plenty of companionship, and a chance to compete, and that's what keeps the "special" in Special Olympics.

The 1978 host site for the annual event was the State University of New York Agricultural and Technical College at Cobleskill. Staten Island's Wagner College was the site of last year's competition that was co-sponsored by the college and the Advance.

The event open to mentally retarded persons over 10 years old, consisted of 10 events, divided into groups according to age. The events included track competitions, swimming, soft ball throw and a wide variety of physical tests tailor-made for the participants.

Competitors were divided into 32 groups according to their geographic locations in the state, and Staten Island took more individual medals than any other single area. Ninety-five percent of those in the Island division took home first, second or third place medals.

One Island sponsor, the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook, took nine gold, nine silver, and six bronze medals with a team of 20 athletes.

Other sponsors from the Island include Staten Island Aid for Retarded Children, Exceptional Children of Staten Island, the Staten Island Association of Children with Retarded Mental Development, the Staten Island Occupational Training Center, the Staten Island Adult Training Center and the public school division of Children with Retarded Mental Development.

The Special Olympics games are held annually around the world and sponsored by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation. The events boast nearly one million participants and 250,000 volunteers. Each year, almost 15,000 competitions are held in 23 countries.

The weekend's events also included various clinics designed to develop ability in a variety of physical endeavors including badminton, judo, dance and wrestling. The sports activities were augmented by musical performances, picnics and shows.



This Staten Islander shows how the job is done in the standing broad jump.

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