



Other participants cheer as two competitors take off in a sprinting race in the Special Olympics held yesterday at the Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook. S.I. Advance photos by Larry Lettera

"They train in all the events," said Linda Abel, a recreation therapist who also sported the team colors.

"They've come such a long way," she continued. "In the beginning, some couldn't even run. Now, I get so excited to see their faces when they've won. But just to see them run is great, too."

Salinardi extended thanks to the many volunteers who showed up to help in the events, including some from Tottenville, New Dorp and Moore Catholic High Schools, the Knights of Columbus and the Blue Knights.

In addition, Burger King supplied food for the contestants, the American Legion Auxiliary some assistance and the Richmond County Drum and Pipe Corps a touch of music.

Even the Army got into the act, donating a tent structure that housed magicians and other surprises for contestants and visitors alike.

As Salinardi stood near the broad jump, he smiled and reflected on the games.

"It's the greatest feeling in the world seeing these kids participate and to be involved from the training right through the games," he said. "But it's also great to see volunteers getting the idea how thrilling it is to work with kids like this. It's all very positive."



Jeff Raines, left, receives his medal at the Special Olympics as David Robinson, right, waits to get his.