



**Special  
Olympics**  
Texas

# EKS

## EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER DAY September 24, 2016

*For if you seek JOY, come see the athletes of Special Olympics!*

YOU ARE THE STARS AND THE WORLD IS WATCHING YOU. BY YOUR PRESENCE, YOU SEND A MESSAGE TO EVERY VILLAGE, EVERY CITY, EVERY NATION. A MESSAGE OF HOPE. A MESSAGE OF VICTORY. THE RIGHT TO PLAY ON ANY PLAYING FIELD: YOU HAVE EARNED IT. THE RIGHT TO STUDY IN ANY SCHOOL: YOU HAVE EARNED IT. THE RIGHT TO HOLD A JOB: YOU HAVE EARNED IT. THE RIGHT TO BE ANYONE'S NEIGHBOR: YOU HAVE EARNED IT.

*When our hearts are touched, and when they are open, then, there is a world on fire.*

IF YOU SEEK PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING, COME SEE THE ATHLETES OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS!

*Special Olympics athletes are spokespersons for freedom itself - they ask for the freedom to live, the freedom to belong, the freedom to contribute, the freedom to have a chance. And, of all the values that unite and inspire us to seek a better world, no value holds a higher place than the value of freedom.*

IF YOU SEEK COURAGE OR STRENGTH OR SKILL, COME SEE THE ATHLETES OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS!

*Thirty years ago, the world said you were not able to run 100 meters. Today, you run the marathon. Thirty years ago, the world said you must remain hidden away in institutions. Today, you are being seen on international television throughout the world. Thirty years ago, the world said you could not make worthwhile contributions to the community of humanity. Today, you bring together even warring nations on the playing fields of sports. It is no secret, no mystery, why you have come so far so fast on this landmark journey of justice.*

*It is your courage, your skill, and the boundless determination of your spirit that lets you soar to new heights every year in almost every country in the world. You are teaching all nations the healing power of the human spirit. You are demonstrating to the entire world that disabled people are not unable, and that each and every person on our planet deserves a full and fair chance to make the very very most of their own ability.*

AND IF YOU SEEK TO EMBRACE THE WORLD AND TO FIND IN HER A FRIEND, STOP YOUR SEARCH! THE GREAT AND NOBLE ATHLETES OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS, SO OFTEN REJECTED AND TOO MANY TIMES TOLD "NO," ARE LIVING IN YOUR VILLAGES AND CITIES AND TOWNS, AND THEY ARE THE TRUE MESSENGERS OF "YES!"

*I hope that many of you will join in my special mission to make the world safe for people with intellectual disabilities and to make the world safe for human dignity.*

WHEN WE WAKE TOMORROW, LET US NOT FORGET THAT WE HAVE MILES TO GO TO OVERTURN THE PREJUDICE AND OPPRESSION FACING THE WORLD'S 180 MILLION CITIZENS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES. BUT WHAT JOY FOR TOGETHER WE HAVE BEGUN. MAY YOU EACH CONTINUE TO SPEND YOUR LIVES IN THIS NOBLE BATTLE. MAY YOU OVERCOME IGNORANCE. MAY YOU CHALLENGE INDIFFERENCE AT EVERY TURN. AND MAY YOU FIND GREAT JOY IN THE NOONDAY LIGHT OF THE GREAT ATHLETES OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS!

*The founder of Special Olympics and champion for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities*