



NCAS IMPACT

NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR ACADEMICS AND SPORTS

NORTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER

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CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SPORT IN SOCIETY

NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR ACADEMICS AND SPORTS

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Bridgewater State Keeps *Special Olympic* Torch Lit

"It makes me proud to call myself an athlete because I share this title with these kids."

BRIDGEWATER, MA – In 1994, NCAS member school, Bridgewater State College, lit the torch of the *Special Olympics* on its campus. Nine successful years later - the flame burns brighter than ever. Approximately 100 Bridgewater State College student-athletes assemble on the final Sunday every April to coordinate their annual *Special Olympics* extravaganza.

Approximately 200-250 Special Olympians, ranging in ages from eight to 40, compete in the *Special Olympics* South Sectional Aquatics Meet. Bridgewater State's entire Kelly Gymnasium and Pool complex hosts the meet, in addition to recreational activities, including: street hockey, indoor soccer, basketball, obstacle course and swimming.



A Special Olympian with a Bridgewater State College Student-Athlete volunteer.

"During the four years I have been volunteering ... I have been privileged to be a small part of their lives," said Shaunessey Egan, a senior member of the women's swim team, Special Education/ Psychology double major, and Champs/Lifeskills participant. "What they have taught me about persistence, perseverance and heart I have carried with me – both into my own athletic endeavors and through out my day-to-day life," said Egan.



Bridgewater State College Student-Athletes coordinate pool activities at the annual *Special Olympics* event held each April on campus.

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Holy Cross *Big Brothers* Make 'Dramatic Impact'

Lacrosse Team Continues Community Service Legacy of its Fallen Captain

WORCESTER, MA – "John Price was such a special guy," said Mike McCaffrey, Lacrosse Coach of NCAS member school, Holy Cross. So special, his teammates voted him team captain after his junior year. He never lived to claim the title. Tragically, Price died in the Spring of 2000, just 5 days before his 21st birthday.

"After John passed away, the lacrosse team got together during our grieving period and decided as a group that John deserved more than just his initials on our jerseys or helmets," said Coach McCaffrey. "As a freshman, he tried to organize his teammates to commit to some community service. We knew how important it was to him. So we created, *John's Brothers*, named by his teammates, and we partnered with the *Big Brothers, Big Sisters* program at the Canterbury Street School, ironically, not too far from where John lost his life."

Coach McCaffrey and the *John's Brothers* volunteers spend about an hour each week with their specifically-matched *Little Brother*, ranging in age from a first to a fifth grader. In its first year, all 42 members of the lacrosse team and coaches participated in the program. This year, all 34 team members are combined with the members who are no longer with the team but continue their personal relationship with their *Little Brothers*. A total of 90 volunteers at currently at the Canterbury site.

Photo by Christopher Navin (www.christophernavin.com)



Holy Cross Lacrosse Coach Mike McCaffrey (back, right) and members of "John's Brothers", a team of lacrosse student-athletes who volunteer with the local *Big Brothers, Big Sisters* program. The community service effort is named after the late John Price, a lacrosse player at Holy Cross, who passed away in early 2000.

"It is hard to put into words the dramatic impact that *John's Brothers* have had on the kids," said Ben Ticho, Executive Director of the *Big Brothers, Big Sisters* program. "This is the third year of the program, and as of now, not one student has missed a class that was scheduled with one of their *Big Brothers* or *Big Sisters*."

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Message from the Regional Office Director



KEVIN J. MATTHEWS

Welcome to the latest issue of the NCAS *IMPACT*. We are proud to continue to promote and celebrate the community service and outreach accomplishments of our member schools and universities.

2003 marks the 7th-Annual Massachusetts Student-Athlete Citizenship Awards. The awards are part of National Student-Athlete Day (NSAD). The event, co-presented by the Mass. Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), honors high school student-athletes from across the Commonwealth. This year, we are holding two events: on April 8 at Northeastern University, in Boston, and on April 10 at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield. The theme this year is "Leadership Through Sportsmanship". In addition, each year the NU Athletic Department holds its annual NSAD Luncheon to celebrate the accomplishments of our student-athletes athletically and academically.

We are also working with the University of Massachusetts-Boston to assist in the coordination of their own NSAD event. UMass-Boston is aiming to hold the kick-off event to a subsequent year-round service project in an area middle school. Working closely with Ed Suglia, the UMass Academic Advisor for Student-Athletes, we hope to make this collaboration a model for partnership with our other regional member schools.

The NCAS Regional Office would like to lend our expertise to assist other regional members in maximizing their impact in their communities. Whether it be through NSAD events in the Spring or community service campaigns through the year, we want to be a resource to you to help you make a difference through the power and influence of your talented student-athletes. Please let us know how we can better serve you...

Best Regards,

Big Brothers of Holy Cross



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To assess the efficacy of the program, each volunteer-child match goes through a program outcome evaluation at the end of the year. According to Mr. Ticho, 80% of children showed an increase in self confidence, 55% showed increased classroom participation, 61% showed increased academic performance, 61% showed improvement with peer relationships, and 56% showed improved relationships with the parent(s) or guardian.

Said Coach McCaffrey; "We have made participation mandatory for all the incoming freshman lacrosse players. Even the younger ones coming up now who didn't know John - they realize how passionate myself and the senior teammates are to this program."

In addition to the male student-athletes, many of the female student-athletes have assumed *Little Sisters* at the Canterbury site through Holy Cross' *Student Programs for Urban Development* program. Holy Cross student-athlete volunteers have also expanded their coverage to the Worcester Boys and Girls Club.

This very-personalized effort by Holy Cross is a fine example of the commitment to community service that our members exemplify. The NCAS Northeast Regional Office and Northeastern University salute the dedicated young men of *John's Brothers*, and all of the Holy Cross student-athletes, who continue to make a positive impact on the lives of youth. Keep up the good work!

Special Olympics at Bridgewater

CONTINUED FROM BACK COVER ...

Under the leadership of Athletics and Recreation Director John C. Harper and Assistant Director Susan Crosby-Tangen, the entire Bridgewater State Swim Team is joined by various other student-athlete volunteers during the 9.5-hour Olympic event. Behind the scenes, select student-athletes sit on a committee, which meets twice a month, year-round, to coordinate the event and activities.

"One only needs to see the looks on the faces of the participants and their families to know that all the hard work and planning that goes into this event is worth it," said Harper. "It affords our student-athletes with life lessons about 'giving back' to a very talented and important part of our community."

This volunteer experience often creates a bond between the student-athletes and Special Olympians through their mutual affinity for sport.

"As an athlete, the *Special Olympics* were very inspirational for me," said Doug Currier, a senior captain of the Wrestling Team, Physical Education major, and member of the Student-Athlete Advisory Council. "These kids wait all year for this. (They) have every element



that comes along with being a child – a desire for friends, fun and competition. They put a lot of time into their training and to see them walk up from the pool with their medals is just wonderful. It makes me feel proud to call myself an athlete because I know that I share this title with these kids."

Bridgewater State ensures that the torch of the *Special Olympic* spirit – lit almost a decade ago – will continue to spark volunteerism.

Said Currier; "Volunteering for the *Special Olympics* last spring was by far one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. It definitely made me a better person and more compassionate and comfortable to be around people with any disability. I intend to volunteer again this year."

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