

Special Olympics Kansas

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NEWS RELEASE

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HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES ANNOUNCED SPECIAL OLYMPICS KANSAS RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING ATHLETES

MISSION, Kan.—At the 46th Annual Special Olympics Kansas Summer Games, four exceptional athletes were recognized and inducted into the Special Olympics Kansas Hall of Fame.

Chevi Peters, a SOKS athlete for 10 years and a member of the New Hope Pittsburg Bulldogs, has competed in 16 total sports including power-lifting, basketball, skiing, golf, flag football and softball. While competing in powerlifting at the World Summer Games in Los Angeles in 2015, the three-time gold medal champion was featured on ESPN. Through his accomplishments, Chevi has become a Global Messenger and truly promotes SOKS on the world stage. Chevi has become the first athlete to become a certified coach for SOKS. His experiences in Special Olympics have given him confidence, and allowed him to set new goals to achieve.

James Franklin has been a Special Olympics Kansas athlete since he was 8 years old. As a member of Topeka Shawnee, James competes in many area and state competitions in basketball, track, aquatics, softball, volleyball, bowling and bocce; however, he is always willing to try new sports as they are offered. James' family also shares his enthusiasm for Special Olympics. His Mom, Dad and brother have attended SO events for many years, and even volunteer as coaches or chaperones. James is known, on and off the field, for his positive attitude and eagerness to learn. His compassion for others is demonstrated through his desire to teach athletes how to play the sports. Special Olympics has allowed James to succeed, stay active and enjoy the competition while being with lifelong friends.

Michael "Mikey" Algaier is a member of Garden City Tigers. He has participated in Special Olympics since it started in Kansas in 1970. In the 1995 World Summer Games, Mikey traveled to Connecticut where he received a medal in cycling. By competing in almost all sports, he has earned 84 gold medals. One day, he hopes to reach 100 gold medals. Mikey maintains a positive attitude at all times, and shows unwavering support for other athletes by encouraging them to do their best. In addition to his support for other athletes, he also promotes Special Olympics events to attract more sponsors and involvement. As a Special Olympics athlete, Mikey has been able to achieve his goals, meet friends and stay healthy.

Aaron Gudenkauf has competed in Special Olympics for over 25 years. He is a member of Topeka Shawnee, and participates in basketball, aquatics, track, softball, bowling, volleyball and golf. Out of all the events he competes in, aquatics is his favorite. In 1999, Aaron was chosen to travel and compete in the World Summer Games in North Carolina. Whenever Aaron competes, it is a family affair. His Mom, Aunt and cousins are always there cheering him on. Aaron is known for his light-hearted attitude, and his infectious enthusiasm. When he does well, it is not uncommon to see him giving out high fives, dancing or flashing a big grin. Special Olympics has given Aaron a platform to shine, and allows him to be a part of a bigger family.

An induction into the Special Olympics Hall of Fame takes more than a gold medal. The Hall of Fame is a way to recognize longevity and achievement of athletes and volunteers within the organization. To be inducted, a nominee must portray exceptional sportsmanship, as well as a positive attitude on and off the field. These very important athletes deserve to be recognized for their personal and athletic accomplishments. Nomination forms are available online at www.kssso.org and may be submitted any time. Awards are given annually at the Summer Games.

Chris Hahn, President and CEO of Special Olympics Kansas presented the awards as part of the Opening Ceremony of the 2016 Summer Games.

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