

Special Olympics Kansas

www.kssso.org



DATE: June 10, 2014
CONTACT: Donna Zimmerman
PHONE: 913.236.9290 ext. 112
E-MAIL: pr@kssso.org

SHAWN BENGSTON, MOST INSPIRATIONAL ATHLETE SELECTED AT SPECIAL OLYMPICS KANSAS 2014 SUMMER GAMES

MISSION, Kan. –. Every year Special Olympics Kansas recognizes a Most Inspirational Athlete at Summer Games in Wichita, KS. The Most Inspirational Athlete Award is not just about competing well in events, but it is about being positive and encouraging to others, both on and off the field. Last week, Shawn Bengston, a member of Topeka Jr. Blues received the award. He was selected from over 1400 athletes at the games.

“Selecting the individual, who shines throughout the day, and every day, is never easy – this year is certainly no different. Inspiration shines through when you hear a coach say, “I wish I could be more **like** him”, stated Debbie Ringle, Volunteer and Chairman of the Selection Committee.

Bengston listens attentively to his coaches, asks good questions and tries to do his best to use the coaching advice to improve his skills in whatever sport he is participating in.

“He not only does what you ask him, but willingly volunteers to do more.....whether that is gathering athletes for the next event or helping others with a stretching technique” said Mike Molter, Program Coordinator for the Jr. Blues. “We have watched Shawn grow from that awkward youthful athlete to one that uses the many years of training to help others.”

Special Olympics and his faith have provided steady guidance, and both are very important to Bengston. He overcame his fear of public speaking in his church, by reading Bible verses to the youth. His growth through Special Olympics has created a desire to mentor and inspire a new generation of athletes. He loves the games so much, the hardest part for him is the wait...waiting for the day to begin and waiting for each event.

At the Summer Games of 2015, Bengston will have the honor of lighting the torch to kick off the games, along with officers of the Law Enforcement Torch Run.

Special Olympics Kansas is dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive, respected members of society through sports, health and nutrition programs and leadership development. Young Athletes programs are now offered for ages 3-7.

###