

Camp SOAR 2014

By Diana Ades

"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." That is what all Special Olympians strive for whether at individual games or at Camp Soar (Special Olympics Athletic Retreat).

For the last 14 summers, Camp Soar has offered a free camp program to special needs individuals, ages 10-70 years. The main purpose of camp is to transform lives, encourage leadership, and build athletic skills and sportsmanship.

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics was looking for a something to fill a void for lack of summer programming.

In 2001, Bob Bowler and Barry Schumer decided to start a camp to fill this void of summer programming. With their hard work and determination, Camp Soar was created and has been going strong ever since.

With the generosity of the Levine JCC, area businesses such as the Compass Group, individual donations, and 400 volunteers donating their time, 350+ campers

were able to participate in the camp this past June.

It takes these donations, an average of 380 volunteers, a dedicated steering committee, and the staff at the LJCC and Shalom Park Foundation to continue Bob's and Barry's dream.

Campers spend each day participating in sport activities such as, tennis, basketball, yoga, volleyball, fitness, and soccer. In addition, campers go bowling, play bingo and on the final day, they have a huge dance party that would put Studio54 to shame.

Bob Bowler is able to bring in many local sports celebrities from the Panthers and Hornets and even some retired athletes. Paul Silas, David Thompson, Mugsy Bogues, and Matt Carroll stopped by throughout the week to meet the campers, give some sport advice, and let the campers know how much they admire each and every one of them.

They even bring their team mascots to meet the campers and have some fun.

One of the camper's favorite parts of the Camp is the arts and crafts led by Eileen Schwartz. The campers always participate in art projects that incorporate commu-



Campers at Camp SOAR play games as well as sports.

nity outreach.

This year, the Camp Soar athletes participated in the wonderful LJCC Butterfly Project. The project is meant to memorialize the 1.5 million Jewish youth who perished during the Holocaust and to help combat anti-Semitism, indifference, and Holocaust denial through educational workshops that personalize the history for each participant. The goal of the project is to create 1.5 million ceramic butterflies, worldwide.

Soar campers participated in this amazing project and learned about the Holocaust. Each camper painted a beautiful butterfly which will be added to the sculpture.

Within the volunteer program of Camp Soar, there is a leadership program for the volunteers. Each year a stand-out volunteer is recognized for their hard work,

passion and enthusiasm and receives the Vickie Bowler Volunteer of the Year award. This award is named in honor of Vickie Bowler, Bob Bowler's beloved daughter. Vickie shared her father's passion for Camp Soar and participated each year. She was loved by all.

This year, Gracie Flanagan, received the award. Compass Food Group, which has donated lunches for Camp Soar since the beginning, sponsors this award and generously gives a \$100 gift certificate to the hard working volunteer.

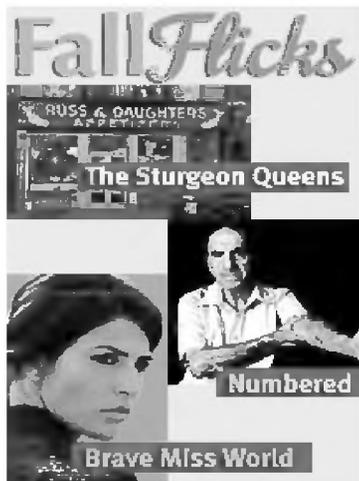
The Vickie Bowler Volunteer of the Year Award is proudly on display in the LJCC membership office.

Camp Soar relies on the Charlotte press and TV stations to let the community know about this wonderful program. Camp Soar has been featured in numerous print and broadcast press and news releases. According to Media Coordinator, Al Tinson, the press covers the "campers capabilities rather than their disabilities."

Camp Soar's 350+ campers are some of the bravest people you will ever meet. I believe each and every one of us can learn something from these brave athletes.

Next summers' camp will take place June 15-19, 2015. If you would like to be involved with Camp Soar in any capacity, please contact Bob Bowler 704-364-5032 or Stephanie Garner 704-944-6743. ✨

Value-Added Programming Highlights FallFlicks Series



nity for a heartwarming (and appetizing) brunch, special door prizes and a movie.

Film: The Sturgeon Queens

Date: November 2

Time: 11 AM

Locations: Regal Ballantyne Village Stadium 5

On a more serious note, the next film in the series, *Numbered*, traces the history of our darkest hour through the tattooed numbers Holocaust survivors bear on their forearms. This emotionally charged documentary redeems our hopes as we watch these incredible survivors come to grips what has now, for some, become a badge of courage.

After the film, Dr. Zev Harel, survivor of three concentration camps presents his personal story including memories of family members, liberation at age 15, signing up for the Hagana at age 16, and serving in the War for Independence for the establishment of the state of Israel and the Sinai War of 1956. Dr. Harel's appearance is being sponsored by the Levine-Sklut Judaic Library.

Film: Numbered

Date: November 9

Time: 4 PM

Location: LJCC Sam Lerner Center at Shalom Park

Brave Miss World, a timely, deeply emotional film of personal success, tragedy and triumph rounds out the FallFlicks slate for

2014. Linor Aborgil, then Miss Israel, was raped shortly before winning the Miss World pageant. She now shares her story with others through this powerful film. A talented panel of speakers has been put together to discuss domestic violence, including (scheduled to appear) Marsha Stickler from Shalom Bayit, Caroline Biber from Jewish Family Services, Rabbi Jonathan Freirich from Temple Beth El, Pat Kelly from Victim Assistance and Melissa Sigel Barrios from the Women's Commission.

Film: Brave Miss World

Date: November 16

Time: 7 PM

Location: LJCC Sam Lerner Center at Shalom Park

For tickets and information, log on to charlottejewishfilm.com. If you need additional help, call us at 704-554-2059.

We look forward to seeing you at the movies. ✨

The last few years, the Charlotte Jewish Film Festival (CJFF) has been increasing its value-added programming to go along with its outstanding film presentations. And this year, for its inaugural FallFlicks event that it's co-presenting with The Levine Sklut Judaic Library (LSJL), there are a number of attractive value-adds scheduled to enhance the film-going experience.

The first film of the series, *The Sturgeon Queens*, serves up some good, old fashioned Jewish values...and mouth-watering memories. Before the film, brunch is being offered including all the traditional Jewish fare. While noshing, Viva Klezmer will entertain with some live Jewish Klezmer music. Don't miss this opportu-

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GIFTS!

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