

# The Charlotte JEWISH news

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*An Affiliate of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte*

## Soaring for the Ninth Year Camp SOAR Did Not Disappoint

By Diana Ades

For the ninth year in a row, the Levine Jewish Community Center hosted the Special Olympics Athletic Retreat (Camp SOAR), June 15-19.

Special Olympics is an international non-profit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition. Special Olympics offer children and adults with intellectual disabilities, year-round training and competition in various type programs.

For those who volunteered during the camp, from being buddies to the campers or assisting with registration, to being coaches and feeding the campers, this camp would never have come to fruition.

The staff at the Levine Jewish Community Center allowed Special Olympics to take over the entire building. The LJCC staff could not have been more helpful

and a special thank you to the Foundation for their assistance as well.

Special Olympic athletes from all over the North Carolina area come to the LJCC to participate in sports such as tennis, soccer, bowling, basketball, and swimming and for those five days the campers also get to enjoy arts and crafts and social activities such as bingo.

And for this ninth year, the LJCC and Special Olympics was prominently featured on radio, TV and newspapers. Some of the members may have seen Fox 18 and News Channel 14 around during this special week. For the first year ever, Camp SOAR and the LJCC were featured for over two hours in various segments of "Wilson's World" on Fox News Rising. Our own Barry Schumer played a cameo.

Although the campers are young and old, all the various disabilities did not stop them from participating in Camp SOAR. If you could experience what all the volunteers and steering committee experienced during these five days, you would have been amazed. The campers improved in their physical fitness, motor skills, self-confidence and campers and volunteers alike enjoyed



*Dancing at the disco on the last day of Camp SOAR.*



*Everyone had a chance to go swimming.*

a more positive self-image. Through all the programs that Special Olympics offers, these athletes grow mentally, socially and spiritually and through their activities, exhibit boundless courage and enthusiasm, enjoy the rewards of friendship and ultimately discover not only new abil-

ities and talents but "their voices" as well.

Bob Bowler has been leading this camp for the last nine years with Barry Schumer and it is truly amazing what they can do with all the logistics. How many times can you feed 400 people while an indoor carnival is being held simultaneously, to be immediately followed by a huge dance? Well, Bob and Barry did just that and the entire Steering Committee loves watching them in action.

As a member of the Steering Committee and a volunteer I must say that this year's Camp SOAR was the best yet. It will be difficult to surpass it but rest assured we will since next year we will be celebrating "A Decade of Camp SOAR" and it is certain to be even bigger and better. If you ask most of the volunteers, they would all say the same thing - they find that volunteering for Camp SOAR rewards them more than the athletes. Some of the comments heard over the week-long camp were, "I have learned so much about life through these wonderful people"; "I certainly

appreciate every aspect of my life and realize how blessed I am"; "This was so much fun."

Volunteer with Special Olympics and make a difference in the lives of all these athletes, their families, our community and yourself. To learn more about volunteering, offering your services or to make a financial contribution, please contact Bob Bowler at 704-364-5032 or Barry Schumer at 704-944-6744.

And to put the final touches of another great year, Kim Jones, a Special Olympian who comes to camp every year wrote a poem and read it to the entire camp. She dedicated the poem to Bob because "he spends his time dedicated to us, his special friends and goes out of his way to find all kinds of programs to fit out needs."

*Bob, you are here, you are there, you are everywhere  
You are even at dances!  
Sometimes I want to shout to the world  
Bob Bowler makes some wonderful changes for me and you  
He started this camp so we can have fun,  
Bob you did a job well done!!  
There are so many things he has to do  
But the best thing of all  
Is that he shares his grace with me and you! ☆*



*Action on the tennis courts.*

## Solo Exhibition Features Florence Jaffa's Prints

Florence Jaffa will be having a solo exhibition of her art, "My Life in Print" at the Ross Gallery at Central Piedmont Community College September 8 through October 26. A reception is planned for Wednesday, September 23, from 4-6 PM and is open to the community. The Ross Gallery is located in the Overcash Building on the Main Campus. Gallery hours are: Monday - Thursday, 11 AM-3 PM. ☆



## Also inside ...

**Thank you to Sandra and Leon Levine for their lead gift to the 2009 Jewish Federation Annual Campaign.**

*See complete donor list on pages 5-7*



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