



## Sport of the Month



# December

This month's theme: **inclusion**

### Goals:

- Students will understand the meaning of *inclusiveness* and *acceptance*.
- Students will understand how including others positively impacts their community.
- Students will recognize how excluding others negatively impacts their community.
- Students will be able to identify ways in which they can promote inclusion and acceptance.

### Week 1:

Before students can participate in a discussion of inclusion and acceptance, they need to understand what these words mean. Lead a brainstorming session in which you ask students the questions listed below. During your discussion, make notes and record ideas and questions on the board.

- Have you heard the word *accept*? For example, what does someone mean when they say, "Will you accept my gift?" What are you doing when you accept something someone gives you?
- There's another meaning for *accept*, too. What might someone mean if they say, "Will you accept my friendship?" Is acceptance similar to welcoming?
- What does it mean to accept another person? Would you agree that accepting someone into your group is the same as including them? Give examples of times when you have included someone in a group or activity or when someone included you.
- Why is it important to include all kinds of people into your group of friends? Is a class or school better off when it includes lots of different types of people?

When you are finished asking these questions, take some time to more fully discuss ways in which it is a positive thing to include diverse people in a group.

—adapted from *Get Into It!*, grades 3–5



### Alpine Skiing in Special Olympics

Alpine skiing is a demanding sport, and athletes must be in good physical condition to compete successfully and safely. Also called downhill skiing, alpine skiing requires endurance, strength, and quickness. Special Olympics offers cross-country skiing as well.

How do Special Olympics activities impact students? Here's how one teacher answered:

*"Some of the most positive outcomes came through the students working together."*



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## Sport of the Month: alpine skiing

### Week 2:

## Take Action!

- Have a mix-it-up day at lunch! Randomly assign every student a table to sit at during lunch. This provides them with a great opportunity to meet new people, share ideas, and start friendships with students they might not otherwise get to know.



Begin by reminding your students about the Week 1 discussion during which you talked about inclusiveness and acceptance. Remind them what these terms mean, particularly when talking about people. Then read to your class Troy Daniels’ speech “Inclusion Is Not a Place, It Is a Feeling” below. When you have finished reading the speech, ask your class how it makes them feel about people they see as different from themselves.

### Inclusion Is Not a Place, It Is a Feeling

My name is Troy Daniels, but my friends call me TD. I have Down’s syndrome. Because my heart is bad I use a wheel chair, I do not speak very good.....

I am a person with disabilities and when I say “my friends” I mean friends, real friends just like everyone else, I have friends. Most of you think all people have friends but for people with disabilities friends are not always real. I want you to know why I have friends.

Not too long ago people with disabilities could not go to school with other kids, they had to go to “special schools”. They could not have real friends; they call people like me “retard”. That breaks my heart.

When I came to school there is a law that says all kids go to school in the place they live. I started school right here in Northfield with all of the senior class, we were little kids together. The law says that I can come to school but no law can make me have friends.

But then some kids started to think that I was ok, first it was just one or two kids who were nice to me. They found out that I cared about them and I loved my school. I told them I want to have real friends. Others started to hang out with me and they found out we could be friends. We started to learn together that in some ways we were different but in some ways we were the same. They called me *friend* and made sure that I was in everything at school. I cared about them and they cared about me.

I want all people to know and to see that these students I call my friends, are the real teachers of life. They are showing you how it should be. They are the teachers for all of you to follow their lead.

Yes, I am a person with a disability. The law says that I am included but it is my friends who say...“TD come sit by me.”

**December events:**

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alpine skiing

Week 3:



Gather your students and, after a brief reminder about the value of inclusion and acceptance, prepare them for a game of Frozen Bean Bag. Here's how it works: All players have a bean bag that they balance on their head. Students walk around the designated playing area trying not to drop their bean bags. If a student drops his bean bag, he is frozen. To be freed, another player must try to replace the bean bag on the frozen student's head without dropping her own bean bag. When the game is finished, discuss how this activity related to the ideas of inclusion and acceptance. Point out how students benefited when everyone helped each other, rather than just certain friends and classmates helping.

—adapted from *Get Into It!*, grades 3–5

## Program Spotlight: Movies That Move

The Movies That Move project, designed through a partnership between Special Olympics Project UNIFY® and Film Clips for Character Education, uses clips from popular films and TV shows to spark meaningful discussion in the classroom. The four themes explored on the Movies That Move DVD include

- different abilities
- the power of words
- acceptance
- youth leadership

To request a free DVD with the Movies That Move film clips, visit <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>.

Week 4:

After a brief discussion of inclusion and acceptance, and a reminder of previous weeks' activities, take your class to your school computer lab to explore Special Olympics' online games available at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>. Have students work in pairs or small groups to play the "Get in the Game! Scavenger Hunt." This game offers small groups a chance to work together and learn a bit more about Special Olympics sports in the process. Once students are familiar with how to play the game, shuffle the groups and challenge them to race against one another to see which group can find the items most quickly. Be sure to include students who might not otherwise work together in groups to give them an opportunity to see one another's strengths and reinforce the importance of inclusiveness.

