

Grades 6–8

January

Sport of the Month

Special Olympics

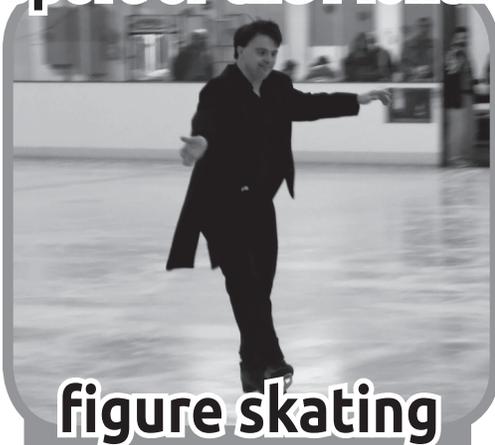


figure skating

Figure skating is a sport in which individuals or pairs perform spins, jumps, footwork, and other intricate and challenging moves on ice skates.

Dear Family,

We are all individuals. Your child is a unique individual. Together, we make up communities whose integrity and outlook is determined by the quality and strength of its individual parts. This month in our continuing work with Special Olympics, we focus on the individual.

Using Special Olympics' sport of figure skating as our starting point, we'll examine exactly what it is that makes each of us unique. Furthermore, we'll look at the characteristics of individuals and what brings value to every one of us. And finally, just as a figure skater's coach plays an important role in maintaining the skater's self-esteem and confidence, we'll look at ways in which your child can maintain his or her own sense of self-worth.

teacher signature

This month's theme: **individuality**

This month, we'll be working quite a bit in pairs to become mentor/coaches to our classmates. Each pair of students will interview one another in order to find a narrative thread, or common theme, to the partner's biography. When all of the biographies are completed, we will assemble them in a binder that students can take home and share with you.

Next, it will be time for students to become each other's coaches. First, each student in the pair will determine a goal he or she wants to reach. Goals can be large or small. Then students will create a goal statement. Finally, each student will be given the opportunity to create a motivational mini-poster to encourage his or her partner to succeed in the goal.



What you can do:



This month we will view the Special Olympics video *Be a Fan of Confidence*, which introduces Charles Howard, a medal-winning snowboarder and someone who shows his individuality with pride. You'll find the video at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>.

When the video is finished, we'll spend some time talking about Charles's talents, how he shows his individuality, and how Special Olympics has contributed to making him the person he is. Take a minute to watch the video with your child. Talk about ways that sports and other activities shape who you are and the individual you become. Then talk about ways we can support one another (parents can support children and children can support parents too!). Most importantly, of course, demonstrate to your child how you are, and will always be, his or her number one fan!