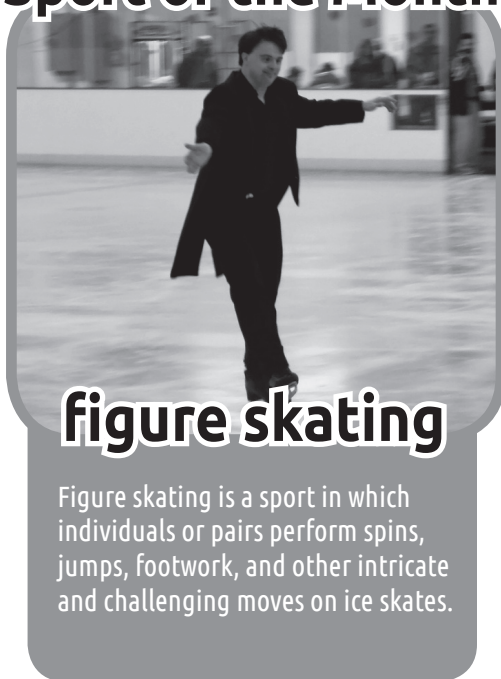


Grades 9–12 **January**

Sport of the Month



Dear Student,

We are all individuals. You are unique. Yet 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 you can maintain your 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 fellow 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 single binder that you can take home and share with your family.

Next, it will be time for you to become each other's coaches. You and your partner will each determine a goal you want to reach. Goals can be large or small, anything from being a standout soccer player to getting into a particular college. Then you 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:



Take action 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>.

Watch the video with younger siblings, friends, or club members. Take the lead in talking about Charles's talents, how he shows his individuality, and how Special Olympics has contributed to making him the person he is. Then brainstorm ways to support Special Olympics athletes, whether it's sharing the video with others, talking about the mission of Special Olympics, or attending an upcoming Special Olympics event. Then get the ball rolling to support athletes like Charles Howard!