

# 1,000 Retarded Kids Compete in Chicago Special Olympics

SARA JANE GOODYEAR

Chicago Tribune (1963-Current file); Jul 21, 1968;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers Chicago Tribune (1849 - 1989)

pg. A4



(TRIBUNE Staff Photos)

Youngsters from Kennedy school for retarded children in Palos Park parade past reviewing stand at Chicago Special Olympics.

## 1,000 Retarded Kids Compete in Chicago Special Olympics

BY SARA JANE GOODYEAR

With pageantry, a parade, and bugles, the Chicago Special Olympics opened yesterday in Soldiers' field.

The Olympic torch blazed while runners dashed for the finish line, but it was the smiles and looks of pride by the children that told the story.

The participants were nearly 1,000 retarded children who had come from 23 states and Canada to compete in 200 sports events and to spend a day in the spotlight.

Gov. Shapiro and Mayor Daley welcomed the children, and William McFetridge, president of the park board, called the Olympics a beginning. Mrs. Eunice Kennedy Shriver, wife of the United States ambassador to France, flew in from Paris to represent the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation, which co-sponsored the event with the park district.

### Amazed at Abilities

Many of the park district officials were amazed at the physical ability shown by the young competitors, whose ages ranged from 8 to 18 and whose I. Q.'s were from 30 to 75.

"Ninety per cent of them seem to run normally," said Ray McDonald, a park district supervisor who was timing the running events. "Their times are almost comparable to the times of normal kids, and they seem to have much more enthusiasm. They don't pick favorites, they cheer everyone."

McDonald said the children didn't get upset by losing. "They just seem to enjoy being here and participating," he said.



Mrs. Eunice Kennedy Shriver at reviewing stand with youngsters who participated in sporting events.

The children, well chaperoned by teachers and aunts, participated in the 50-yard dash, 300-yard run, high jump, broad jump, baseball throw a field hockey game, and swimming races. They were grouped by age and skill levels.

Those who finished first thru third were awarded a total of 600 gold, silver, and bronze medallions. All others received sesquicentennial medallions.

They started the events with a parade by states, marching to the music of the Great Lakes Naval Training center band and waving to spectators as they passed the reviewing stand.

They also worked with Stan Mikita, Paul Hornung, Rafer Johnson, George Connor, Bob Mathias, and other famous athletes in sports clinics.

At a press conference before

the Olympics began, Mrs. Shriver pledged \$75,000 from the Kennedy Foundation for regional Olympics for the retarded during 1969. In 1970, and every two years thereafter, international special Olympics will be held, she said.

### "Can Realize Potential"

"The Chicago Special Olympics proves retarded children can be exceptional athletes; that thru sports they can realize their potential for growth," said Mrs. Shriver.

"But they [the children participating yesterday] are only 1,000 out of 1.5 million mentally retarded children who should be given a chance to compete in games like this all over America. Our purpose here today is to secure a pledge that all retarded children will be given this chance in the future."