

# Special Kids Give Their All, Find Life's Not All Losing

BY SARA JANE GOODYEAR

*(Pictures on back page)*

The kids out in Grant Park yesterday aren't used to being winners. Too often they're the ones who come in last.

Yesterday it didn't make any difference that those 1,200 young people, in town for the Illinois Special Olympics, are mentally retarded. They felt the thrill of running the fastest and jumping the highest.

## Give Their All

They competed in regular track and field events—the 50-yard dash, 300-yard run, standing broad jump, high jump, and one-mile run. They gave their all and went home with memories of cheers and congratulations.

Sixteen-year-old Rose Alvarez' face told the story when she won the 300-yard run.

"For a minute there, I

thought I was going to lose because I got really tired, but now I just feel happy," she said, her dark eyes still sparkling.

## Had Won in Regionals

The Olympics, co-sponsored by the Chicago Park District and the Mentally Retarded Olympian Program, drew children who had won first and second places at two regional competitions.

Many who came from southern Illinois were nearly as excited about Chicago's big buildings and busy streets as they were about the competition they had been looking forward to for weeks.

In the true spirit of the Olympics, a part of the day included a torch-lighting ceremony.

As the orchestra played "Pomp and Circumstance,"

Larry Robinson, 17, of Cahokia, winner of the mile run, carried a flaming torch past the crowds in front of the Grant Park bandshell. He handed the torch to Melvin Gregory, 18, who was lifted in a fire department snorkel to light a Flame of Hope, which burned thruout the day.

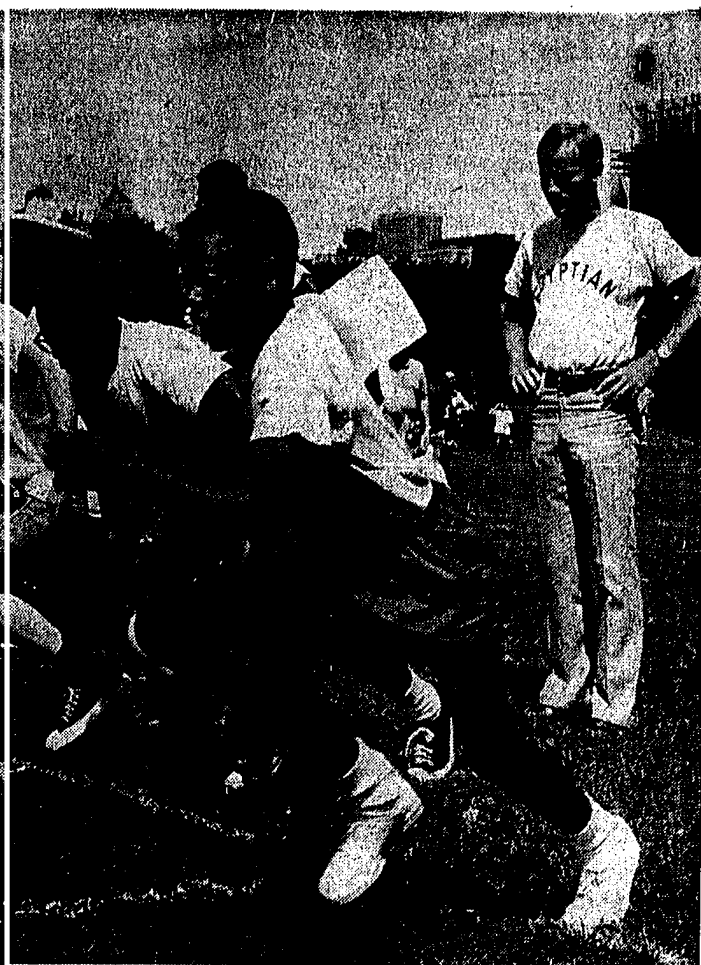
David Condon, TRIBUNE sports columnist, welcomed Chicago officialdom, headed by Mayor Daley, to "a gathering of God's special children."

There were many introductions and some speech-making, but nothing the officials said could quite match what 12-year-old Alice Klesert's grin conveyed when she was told she'd won second place with a long jump of four feet, six inches.

"One of my teachers told me I was really improving," Alice said proudly. "Next time, I'll win first."



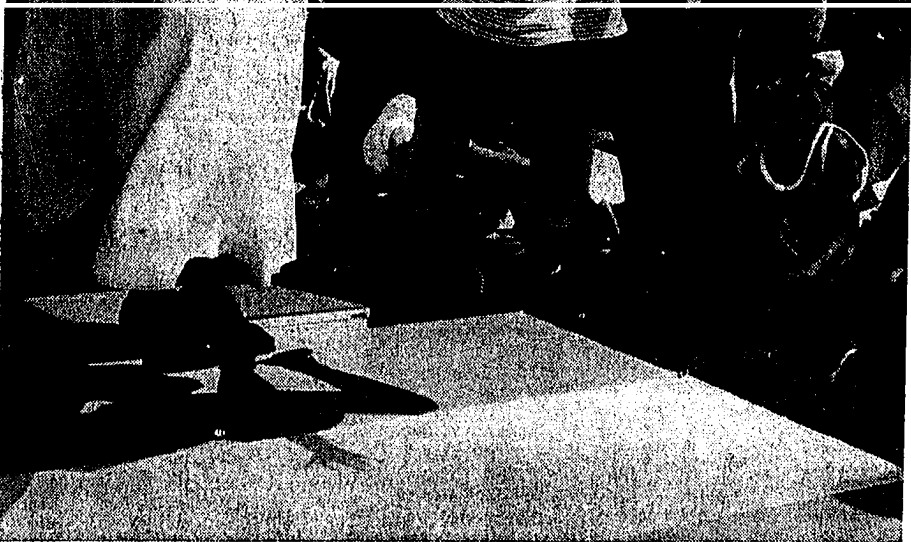
Larry Robinson of Cahokia, Ill., winner in the mile run, carries torch for ceremonies opening the Olympics.



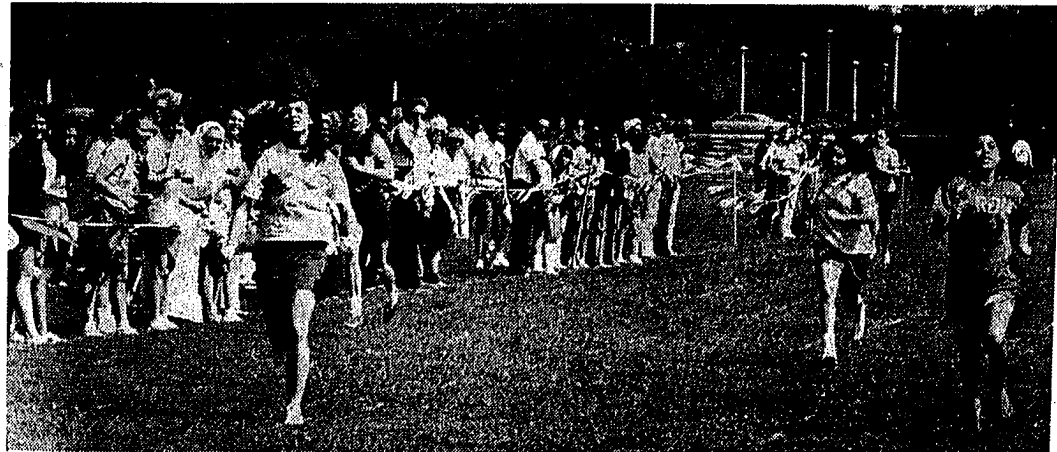
They're off in the 50-yard dash, won by 12-year-old Calvin Huddleson of Lincoln [far right].

# Special Olympics—All Win

There were no losers yesterday as Grant Park was the scene of Illinois Special Olympics. Some 1,200 mentally-retarded young people competed in regular track and field events to the applause of spectators, and all went home savoring cheers of the crowd.



Alice Klesert, 12, outdistances Sister Bernadine of St. Mary of Providence School, who joined in just for the fun of it. Alice won second place in the long jump.



Cheers of spectators urge runners on in 300-yard run won by girl at right.



Flashing a victory smile, Rose Alvarez, 16, of St. Rose School accepts congratulations. She was the winner in 300-yard run.



Part of large crowd that witnessed the Special Olympics in Grant Park.

TRIBUNE Staff Photos: By Jack Mulcahy