

Once in a lifetime

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Courtesy

Anne Hermann, an Adams Central grad and Juniata native, (left) during a visit to the Tribune office May 31 with Special Olympics Nebraska's Amanda Gubbels-Svendsen. Hermann is representing Team USA at the World Games in Berlin, Germany.

Once in a lifetime

JUNIATA NATIVE COMPETING
IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS
WORLD GAMES

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Anne Hermann's career in Special Olympics has taken her plenty of places. Never before this week, though, had her 20-year competitive stint with the organization carried her overseas. The 33-year-old Juniata woman was selected to represent Nebraska at the Special Olympics World Games, which begin Saturday in Berlin, Germany, and run through June 25. "We're super excited for Anne to represent Nebraska as a state," said Dylan Sendgraff, a

regional manager for Special Olympics Nebraska who accompanied Anne on a media tour through central Nebraska on May 31. "She's going to shine there."

Hermann, who lives with a cerebral palsy diagnosis, is the only athlete from Nebraska making the trip and representing Team USA. There are 96 athletes in total donning the stars and stripes.

It will be an experience that almost certainly only comes once in a lifetime.

Except this will be the third time she was selected from a pool of nearly 1,600 Special Olympians in the state of Nebraska to participate in the World Games.

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Agresti
Brewer pick up 3rd straight win, Southwestern lose again

Williams, Baker and the Chiefs again

Plumlee

Williams

USA



Courtesy

Anne Hermann, an Adams Central grad and Juniata native, was recently elected into the Special Olympics Nebraska Hall of Fame after 20 years of competition.

Lifetime: Juniata native competing in Special Olympics World Games

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The first two opportunities, however, were washed away by global events.

First the pandemic in 2020, which spoiled a trip to Australia, and then the war in Ukraine, which canceled the games in Kazan, Russia.

"It was winter games first, now it's summer," said Anne's father, Russell, who will travel to Berlin with her.

That's perfectly fine with Anne, who is multi-talented, seemingly adding sports to her repertoire left and right.

Recently she picked up a new sport, golf. Other summer sports Hermann has taken on: basketball, bocce, bowling, cross country and volleyball.

During the winter it has been various types of skiing, including alpine, downhill, slalom and snowshoe.

In Berlin, she will participate in "athletics," which is the overarching Special Olympics name for track and field.

Hermann plans to compete in four events, including the 200-meter dash, 400, 4x100 relay and shot put.

She flew from South Dakota to New York City last week before catching a bird about eight hours across the Atlantic Ocean.

During a visit to the Tribune office two weeks ago, Hermann could hardly contain

her excitement, sporting her new USA track suit. There's a lot to look forward to.

"Cheering my teammates on and seeing different sights, meeting new friends, representing USA," Hermann listed.

This is something that's been years in the making.

The selection process requires applications years in advance of the World Games, said Amanda Gubels-Svensden, who works in program support with Special Olympics Nebraska.

Each Special Olympics state office nominates its athletes and bids on spots on the national roster. The national syndicate then chooses from that pool of athletes to fill its quota based on a number of factors, including venues in the host town and sports offered at the Games.

Hermann's journey to Germany with her father alongside is sure to be memorable. It comes after she was selected to the Special Olympics Nebraska Hall of Fame earlier this year.

She's now entering more rarified air as she competes in her first world event.

Whether she leaves Germany a champion or not, that's not the point or mission of Special Olympics, as its motto suggests:

"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."