

Athletes celebrate 2023 Special Olympics seasons

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COURTESY IMAGE

Basketball team skills athletes include, from left, Coach Maddie Carlson, Danny McClure, Tammy Howery, Craig Carritt, Brandon Baack, Shawn Strole, Adrian Cudmore and Coach Cassidy Sloup.



COURTESY IMAGE

Basketball 3-on-3 Gold Team athletes include, from left, (front row) John Eiting, Craig Jirovsky and Catalina Cox; and (back row) Jennifer Schmidt and Coach Tony Newlun.

Athletes celebrate 2023 Special Olympics seasons

BY DOUG CARROLL
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Approximately 80 people filled a basement room at the Seward Civic Center Sept. 17 as the Seward County Special Olympics organization held its annual banquet and handed out awards.

Jamie Opfer, a physical education teacher at Seward High School and the head football and boys' soccer coach, was the featured speaker.

"It's my privilege to speak with you all today about the dedication, commitment and perseverance of these outstanding athletes and coaches," Opfer said.

"I was an athlete growing up and now have had the opportunity to be a coach for the last 26 years at Seward High School."

Opfer spoke about the value athletics can play in a person's life, and how they can teach life skills and increase self-esteem. He also talked about how

dedication, commitment and perseverance in athletics can help people achieve their goals in sports and life.

"With the teams I coach, we talk about the one percent rule - we need to get one percent better each day," he said. "We equate success to climbing a ladder - each day we strive to take one step up the ladder."

"We know that if we continue to take one step up each day, we will reach the top of the ladder and become the best versions of ourselves in the classroom, athletic field and in the community."

Opfer said he enjoys seeing to groups such Special Olympic participants, and he enjoyed seeing some of the people that he taught in PE at Seward High.

"When I look at the athletes at this banquet tonight," he said. "I see individuals who embody these qualities, not just in sports but in their daily lives. They're an inspiration to everyone."



DOUG CARROLL/MT

Seward High School physical education teacher and coach Jamie Opfer speaks to participants of the Special Olympics banquet held Sept. 17 in Seward.



COURTESY IMAGE

Basketball 3-on-3 Blue Team athletes include, from left, (front row) Tom Kouma, Jeremy Jones and Jill Schmidt; and (back row) Coach Mitch Carlson and Abby Flowerday.

See more special olympics on page 3.