

H6317 Volunteers are vital to Special Olympic program

Volunteers are the heart of the Special Olympics.

They provide the manpower for year-round sport training programs and special events — special events like the Zone 4 Special Olympics, scheduled for June 17-19 in the city.

During the three-day competition a variety of volunteers will help marshal supplies, athletes, information and other volunteers. For the most part the volunteers will be easily recognizable as they work at the track venue, information table, the swimming venue and the opening ceremonies.

Betty Cheavins, co-coordinator of the Zone 4 Games, said 22 main volunteers have already signed up for duty. These people will also help recruit other volunteers.

"They're sort of the key people," said Cheavins. "They get someone to work along with them. It's better that way because they can work with people they want to rather than me putting them with someone."

The Special Olympics volunteers attended a meeting Monday evening, where they signed up for particular events and duties. And their devotion to the Special Olympics showed through as several people signed up for two or more duties.

For many the link to the Special Olympics is a very personal one. Volunteer Marge Montain said she became involved in this year's Games because of her niece.

"I got involved because I have a handicapped niece," said Montain. "I've never been too involved outside of my job. These kids are really appreciative of anything you do for them."

While Montain's niece, who has cerebral palsy, has never competed in a Special Olympics, Montain recognizes the benefits for both athletes and volunteers. Working with the athletes provides a variety of rewards for the volunteers.

And that is something Justin Migneault can confirm. Migneault has worked with Special Olympians before.

"I was involved 15 years ago with a floor hockey team and a couple of individual athletes back in Swift Current," said Migneault. "I look forward to it. I really enjoy working with (the Special Olympians).

"It really improves my outlook on life."

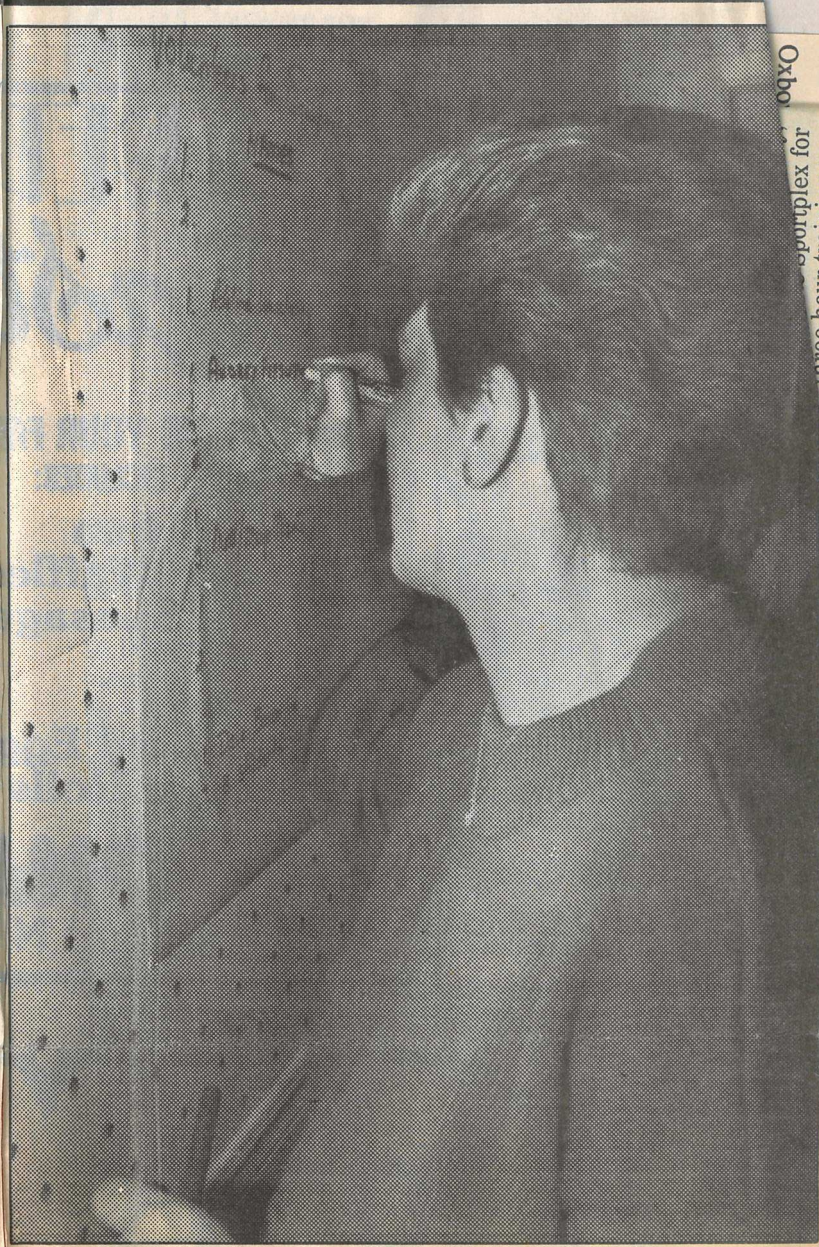
There is nothing that says volunteers for the Games have to be young either, and Marguerite Farbacher, a retired nurse, proves that point.

Farbacher said she decided to become involved in the Games because with 42 years of nursing experience she can help out with any first aid requirements. She can also provide support for the athletes.

A number of service clubs have also volunteered their time during the Games. Cheavins said the Optimists will be running the swimming venue, the Kinsmen are coordinating the barbecue, the Lions are responsible for security during the Games, Beta Sigma Phi are preparing athletes' lunches and the Optimists ladies are helping with registration.

Anyone who is still interested in volunteering to work at or before the Games can contact Cheavins or Games coordinator, Gerry Peppler before May 15. Some volunteers will still be accepted after that date, said Cheavins, but they would fill more of an auxiliary role.

"We want to have the key people for all of the sports in place by May 15. Any people volunteering after that date will work as assistants to the key people."



Audrey Peasley signs up for duty at the Special Olympics.

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