

Meet the Champions...

Meet some of the bravest cyclists you will ever see - the Champions of Special Olympics Massachusetts!

Special Olympics Champions



Laura Zimmerman (*pictured, middle*)

Laura is the third of the Zimmerman triplets. Laura, now 30 has competed in Special Olympics since she was 8 years old. Her sports include track and field, speedskating, cycling, swimming and lastly rollerskating (rollerblading). In addition to winning many medals in local, state and regional competitions, her Special Olympics World Games achievements are as follows:

- Bronze (2), Fourth Place Ribbon* in Cycling, 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games (Dublin, Ireland)
- Silver (2), Bronze Medals awarded in Speedskating, 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games (Anchorage, AK)
- Gold, Silver (2) Medals awarded in Cycling, 1995 Special Olympics World Summer Games (New Haven, CT)
- Gold, Bronze Medals awarded in Speedskating, 1989 Special Olympics World Winter Games (Reno, NV)

**Laura crashed in the 25K event, but was able to recover and finish the race. She was awarded a 4th place ribbon.*

Laura is part of the SAEC team (Stoughton Association for Exceptional Citizens) and competes at local and state events in Massachusetts. Laura has skated for the Bay State Speedskating club and was a member of NECSA cycling team. Laura is a 1997 graduate of Stoughton High School and has been employed by Shaws supermarkets for 12 years.



Jennifer Burke

A 24 year old athlete from Middleton, MA has been competing in Special Olympics since 1990, first as a swimmer and later a cyclist. With more than 10 years of swimming experience, Jen's Special Olympics training led her to be able to train with her high school swim team for three years where she earned the team's "athlete of the year" award. But it is as a cycling athlete that Jen was invited to represent Team USA in the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Ireland. Her international awards are as follows:

- Gold Medal, 10K Time Trial, 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games (Dublin, Ireland)
- Silver Medal, 5K Road Race, 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games (Dublin, Ireland)
- 5th Place finish, 5K Time Trial, 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games (Dublin, Ireland)

When she's not training Jen is out speaking to groups as a Best Buddies Ambassador. Jen is grateful for the support she has received from all of her family, friends and coaches.



John Barton

An active 15 year old from Stoughton. He has competed with the Special Olympics for the past 5 years. He has participated in Speed skating, Track and Field and Cycling. John has been awarded several medals in these events over the years, but cycling is his favorite sport. In 2003, John was fortunate enough to be selected to represent the United States in the World Games in Ireland. His international achievements are as follows:

- Gold Medal in cycling, 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games (Dublin, Ireland)
- Silver Medal in cycling, 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games (Dublin, Ireland)
- 4th Place Ribbon in cycling, 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games (Dublin, Ireland)

John has completed the 20 mile portion of the Best Buddies ride for 2 years now and wants to ride the 90 mile route some day. He also wants to ride in the Pan Mass Challenge with his uncle when he gets older. John also is a member of the S.A.E.C. and has bowled with them for several years. When not competing, John works at McDonalds in Canton. John is also active in the Black Stone Valley Young Marines Corps as a PFC. He is currently working on his Lance Corporal rank and is looking forward to the summer encampment.



Bill Byers

At 49, Bill has been competing in Special Olympics since 1988. He started competing on the SAEC Cycling team then joined the track and field team. In 1995 Bill represented Massachusetts as part of Team USA at the World Special Olympic Games in New Haven, CT. In the attached picture Bill is on the left with David O'Brien and Dan Lundin.



Paul Andrews

Competed in 1989 in speed skating in Reno taking 3 silver medals (just could not beat the Canadian!) In 1995 he competed in New Haven in cycling. Paul also travelled to the winter games in Austria where he served as a speed skating official. In 2003 he competed in Ireland.



Rebecca Zimmerman

#1 of the Zimmerman triplets now 30, has competed in Special Olympics since she was 8 years old. Her sports include track and field, speedskating, cycling, swimming and lastly rollerskating (rollerblading). In addition to winning many medals in local, state and regional competitions, she competed in the 1995 World Games in New Haven, Connecticut winning one gold medal and 2 bronze medals in cycling.

Rebecca is part of the SAEC team (Stoughton Association for Exceptional Citizens) and competes at local and state events in Massachusetts. She has also competed in RI and CT Special Olympic events in cycling and speedskating. She has skated for the Bay State Speedskating club and was a member of NECSA cycling team. Rebecca is a 1997 graduate of Stoughton High School and has been employed by Stop and Shop supermarkets for 10 years.



Heather Hines

Heather has been a participant in Special Olympics Cycling for (8) years. She is now 27 years old. Her weekdays are spent at the Michael Lisnow Respite Center in Hopkington where she works in the day care center and participates in a wide range developmental activities with her peers.

The three gold medals she won at the 2003 Special Olympic World Games in Dublin were unexpected. It was the support of fellow team members, direction of her coaches, and the Special Olympic atmosphere that opened her up to new level of personal achievement and confidence. She has a new goal. To ride and finish the metric century at the Ride With The Champions Fundraiser.