



**2010 Overall Volunteer of the Year Award – Group Category Los Cerros Middle School – East Bay Region (Contra Costa County)**

Special Olympics Northern California is proud to present the 2010 Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award to Los Cerros Middle School – chosen from the Group Category.

The students of Los Cerros Middle School began a partnership with Special Olympics and in 2010 the amount of students who choose to be involved has doubled in size and the fundraising dollars they have raised have more than doubled.

The partnership began with a Youth Summit. The students who were involved choose to stay after school and the topics that were covered were things such as the R Word, inclusion and accepting everyone's differences. The basics of Special Olympics were also discussed and the impact it has on the lives of athletes and their families and how they can get involved.

The students then choose to participate in an early volunteer opportunity. A group of students volunteered at a Special Olympics bowling competition and the sports manager in charge spoke nothing but praise about this group of students' work ethics and enthusiasm while they were there.

The students also embrace the Spread the Word to End of the Word campaign. The students involved in this partnership wear their shirts for the campaign and pledge to not only not use the "R Word" but also pledge to inform others of its harm when they hear of them doing so. Students all through the middle school sign up to take the pledge.

The partnership culminates in the students who have been involved throughout the year being the lead volunteers at the Special Olympics Schools Basketball Competition at their school. Once again these students show a commitment, professionalism and work ethic beyond their years as they work throughout the day with the Special Olympics athletes and teachers and make them feel welcome at their school.

As if their amazing volunteerism isn't enough, these students also participate in the 2011 Polar Plunge. This involves team recruitment, fundraising, organizing theme/costumes and of course plunging. Starting in 2010, in preparation for the 2011 Polar Plunge held in February the plunge team of 51 members raised \$11,295.67!!!

Special Olympics Northern California is extremely proud of the students of Los Cerros for going above and beyond in their commitment to making a difference in the lives of Special Olympics athletes. In a time where many feel the youth can become disillusioned and not as engaged in their community around them, this group of kids proves that when given an opportunity, many kids will jump at the chance to make a difference and exceed all expectations.

We also must mention the amazing mentors the students have in this partnership with Special Olympics Northern California. Their teachers Mrs. Margaret Batesole and Mrs. Sue O'Reilly go above and beyond in their commitment to the students and this partnership. The Los Cerros Middle School Principal, Phyllis Roach, has also embraced this partnership from its inception.