

Dan Herr '90



ALUMNI Spotlight

By Barry Stitz '87



restaurants. He estimates that he alone has raised \$50,000 for the Special Olympics during his 15-year relationship with the organization. The motivation for his continued support is simple. "I want to give these athletes the opportunity to have this special experience without spending a penny," he states. Proceeds are used to provide equipment, attire, and health supplies that can help transform an athlete's life.

Just raising money for his favorite cause isn't enough for the 1990 graduate. He often attends the different events including the Summer games to cheer on the athletes. "When you see them succeed- they are so genuine," Herr states. "They always remember that you were there helping out." He also felt it important to get his sons, Zachary '15 and Brandon '20 involved. Both have volunteered for events and have even brought friends along to lend a hand.

Herr plans on continuing to assist the 7,782 Special Olympics Maryland athletes and hopes that many more get involved. He wants to host a concert at a local establishment and aims to partner

with an athlete and do the fundraising together. The 5K race will remain on his calendar as he admits "it provides a little motivation to stay somewhat in shape." There's also the "Super Plunge" that has participants braving the cold waters every hour over a 24-hour period. It requires reaching a goal of \$10,000.

While Herr's efforts have positively affected so many of the Special Olympic athletes, he believes that he too has benefited. "I've met so many good people and have developed special relationships with a few of the athletes," he shares. And Herr expects these relationships to continue. "If they say you are a friend, you are a friend for life!"

Please visit www.somd.org or contact Dan Herr at herrsports@yahoo.com if you are interested in learning more about Special Olympics Maryland.

Dan Herr vividly remembers the conversation on the phone with his mom. Mrs. Herr had just watched a video her son had posted on Facebook and was irate. "She asked me what I was doing and if I was crazy," says Herr with a chuckle. "I told her my life insurance is paid and then she hung up on me." Imagine his mom's surprise seeing her only son rappelling down a 16-story building.

While he enjoys outdoor activities, Herr is not to be mistaken for an extreme athlete who gets his thrills living on the edge. His participation in rappelling and other activities is all a part of his efforts to raise money for Special Olympics Maryland, the state's largest sports organization for people with intellectual disabilities. "It is a really good cause and the more I got involved, the more I saw how much it meant to the athletes," he states. Herr adds, "The athletes never forget their experience. It's like the regular Olympics for them." Herr was first introduced to the Special Olympics as a member of Ravens Roost, the fan club of the Baltimore Ravens football team. The organization had

approached his council for support. Herr took on a leadership role for the fundraiser and was tasked with getting members of his group to participate in the Polar Bear Plunge, an annual January event which requires one to take a dip in the thirty degree Chesapeake Bay. "We set a goal of raising \$5,000 and ended up at \$17,000," he says proudly. Over the seven years that Herr led the charge for his council, the Roost donated over a half million dollars to the charity.

In addition to the "Plunge" and the "Over the Edge" rappelling event, Herr has also participated in 5K races and has hosted fundraisers at local

