



May 8, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to provide this letter of support to Empower Somerset in their application for an Impact 100 Garden State grant. Empower Somerset, and particularly the Somerset County Council for Young Children (SCCYC) coordinated by the organization, has become an invaluable partner in implementing the Young Athletes Program in Somerset County. Young Athletes, a program available through the Special Olympics of New Jersey, provides an inclusive sports play program for children ages 2 to 7. In this program, children improve gross motor skills, celebrate their abilities, improve social and language skills, play with purpose and develop skills for future participation in sports.

Special Olympics of New Jersey provides the infrastructure for Young Athletes, including screening and training of volunteer coaches, and online registration for volunteers and participants. Utilizing these available resources, Empower Somerset and the SCCYC have taken the initiative to mobilize the program in Somerville, making it available to children residing in Somerset County. Empower Somerset's SCCYC Coordinator, Jessica Dale, has dedicated significant time to securing a location, coordinating schedules of volunteer coaches, collaborating with local schools to advertise the program, spearheading community promotion through social media and agency contacts and overseeing the operations and overall success of the program. Special Olympics of New Jersey relies on the type of community support provided by Empower Somerset, SCCYC and Jessica Dale in order to create opportunities for children and families to experience this transformative program.

Empower Somerset's application for an Impact 100 Garden State grant will be a win-win for both organizations, allowing Empower Somerset to sustain and expand the level of support that they have already begun providing to help this program take root in Somerset County. Their leadership will in turn help our organization grow and fulfill our mission of giving children with special needs *continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.*

Special Olympics New Jersey looks forward to our continued partnership to serve even more Somerset County children and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Andersen".

Heather Andersen
President and CEO
Special Olympics New Jersey

Special Olympics New Jersey Sports Complex

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