

Kiwanis Special Games

Presented by the Kiwanis Clubs of CalNevHa Divisions 34 & 12, managed by:
The Los Altos Kiwanis Club -- organization and operation
The DeAnza Kiwanis Club -- equipment and venue

June 7, 2016

Dear School Administrator:

I am writing to request absence authorization for all Kiwanis student volunteers able to attend the 39th annual Kiwanis Special Games, to be held Friday, May 12, 2017, at West Valley College in Saratoga.

Every year the Kiwanis clubs of our region sponsor and produce the Kiwanis Special Games. They were created to address the physical and emotional needs of the substantial number of very challenged children in the schools of our region. More broadly known programs like the *Special Olympics* presume a rather high level of function. The Special Games exclude no one.

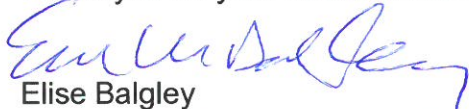
In 2016, 860 athletes from 60 schools enjoyed a day of victory, self-achievement, and positive attention. The force that spearheaded this uplifting event was the 320 Kiwanis student volunteers who came early, and stayed late, and made it happen. Without their bright, capable, compassionate, generous, creative energy at its core, there would be no Special Games.

For our student volunteers, it is impossible to imagine a more powerful community service project than attendance at this event. One cannot be a part of the Games without being moved. And there are not words to describe the joy that it brings to the hearts of the eight or nine hundred athletes for whom this is the best day of the year.

I'm taking the liberty of attaching a letter written by a Kiwanis Key Club student volunteer a few years ago, describing the impact of the Games on her.

It's also worth noting that discovering how positive the experience of working with severely handicapped children can be, is not lost on the student volunteers, and opens their eyes to a whole new field of career choices that might otherwise have been dismissed. As the penetration of autism into bay area births creeps toward one percent, the need for professional specialists in this area is growing fast.

Thank you for your consideration



Elise Balgley
Kiwanis Lieutenant Governor Elect, 2016-2017, Division 12