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COMMUNITY

Kiwanis Club's Special Games take second in worldwide competition (/news/sections/community/177-features/58194-kiwanis-club-s-special-games-take-second-in-worldwide-competition)

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Courtesy of Derek Lubich

Kiwanis International recently honored the Kiwanis Club of Los Altos' Special Games. Pictured, from left, are Lance M. Incitti, Kiwanis International trustee; Rex Upp, Division 12 lieutenant governor; John Richter, Kiwanis Club of Palo Alto; Mike Lui, Kiwanis Club of De Anza; Brain Dahlquist, Kiwanis Club of Palo Alto; Patricia Emslie, Division 34 lieutenant governor; Derek Lubich, Kiwanis Club of Los Altos; and Jim Rochford, Kiwanis International president. Those wearing tie-dye shirts served on this year's Special Games planning committee.

The Kiwanis Club of Los Altos' Special Games earned second-place at a worldwide competition of service events selected by Kiwanis International.

The Silver Award announcement in the Signature Project Contest was made at the Kiwanis International Convention, held June 28 through July 1 in Las Vegas.

Held each May, the Special Games are an Olympics-inspired competition that aims to offer a big boost in self-esteem to the approximately 950 physically and developmentally disabled children in Santa Clara County.

The Special Games were first organized in 1979 by two adaptive physical education teachers and Los Altos Kiwanian Walter Chronert. Under Chronert's leadership, spanning more than 25 years, the Special Games have grown into a regional event featuring K-12 athletes from 60 schools and run by more than 400 Kiwanis members from 30 clubs. Also involved are approximately 1,500 friends, family, schoolmates, teachers and caregivers.

"We are so proud of this recognition from Kiwanis International," said Los Altos Kiwanis President Martha McClatchie. "Special Games has been a labor of love over the past 40 years. ... This recognition belongs to all of our Kiwanis Club members in the San Francisco Bay Area (divisions 12 and 34) and to the hundreds of SLP (Service Leadership Programs) high school and community

college members from Key Club and Circle K who assist with the games. There are 18 super-fun events that our student athletes get to participate in, all at their own pace, being supported and encouraged by wonderful volunteers."

McClatchie submitted the Signature Project application in January to the California/Hawaii/Nevada district, which in turn forwarded it to Kiwanis International.

Finishing first in the contest, in its second year, was the Malaysia District, Kiwanis Club of Kuala Lumpur, which launched the Kiwanis Down Syndrome Foundation-National Centre to treat babies born with Down syndrome.

The 2019 Special Games are scheduled May 17 at West Valley College in Saratoga.

For more information on the Kiwanis Club of Los Altos, visit losaltoskiwanis.org (<http://www.losaltoskiwanis.org>).

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