

# THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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Tuesday March 25, 2008

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## Wilmington woman, father lobby Congress for Special Olympics funds

**By Antonio M. Prado**  
Staff Reporter

**Posted Friday, March 14, 2008**

Elizabeth Nolan, of Wilmington, has participated in Special Olympics Delaware for 12 years, and now she feels it is time to give back.

She plays volleyball in the Fall, basketball in the Winter and her favorite sport, tennis, in the Summer.

Nolan also has three jobs. She is a clerk for Neurology Associates, a clerk at the University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies and is vice president of marketing for Waggies by Maggie and Friends, a local dog biscuit business.

Elizabeth, 20, and her father, Dick, left for Washington, D.C. on March 12 to lobby for continued and additional support for Special Olympics. They plan to meet with U.S. Sen. Joe Biden (D), U.S. Sen. Tom Carper (D) and Congressman Mike Castle (R).

"Special Olympics needs money because it is open to everyone who has a cognitive disability and it wouldn't be as good if it only included people who could pay for it," said Elizabeth, who has Down syndrome.

The funds are for, among other things, Special Olympics events and "Healthy Athletes," she said.

"I always go to the 'healthy athletes' screening at the competitions," she said. "It helped me get the right inserts for my shoes and it helps me learn about healthy eating."

Also, this program enabled Elizabeth to correct a slight hearing problem, Dick Nolan said.

He and his daughter want to share with Delaware's congressional contingent the growth Special Olympics has experienced. Also, they will mention that Special Olympics is hosting the World Summer Games in Nebraska in 2010, and that is going to cost money.

President Bush signed into law the Sport & Empowerment Act in 2004, and that authorized \$15 million per year in federal funding for Special Olympics in the areas of education, health and worldwide expansion.

The majority of the funding goes to education and healthy athletes, said Ann Grunert,



PHOTO BY ANTONIO PRADO

**Caitlin Coughlan of Waggies by Maggie and Friends (right), sell dog biscuits to Paige Thommes during the third annual 3-on-3 basketball tournament hosted by St. Mary Magdalen School to benefit Special Olympics Delaware March 8. Both Nolan and Coughlan participate in Special Olympics. Thommes, Stephanie Defeo and Rachael Molitor participated in the charity basketball tournament.**

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Hockessin, DE



10:51 AM EST  
Clear  
43°F  
VRB 7 MPH

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executive director of Special Olympics Delaware. A small piece of it goes to support worldwide expansion of the program.

"Both Elizabeth and Dick wear multiple hats for us," she said. "Dick has been a senior level executive in the banking industry (retired from Chase Manhattan). He also wears the hat of a parent and volunteer. Elizabeth is a wonderful example of an athlete. She also has wonderful employment.

"It helps to underscore how a program like Special Olympics is part of what helps an individual reach her full potential," Grunert said.

More than 40 Special Olympics athletes from around the country will also meet with their representatives March 12, said Jon Buzby, director of media relations for Special Olympics Delaware. They will also lobby for funding and demonstrate that "Special Olympics can help people with intellectual disabilities contribute to their communities."



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