



## **Special Olympics** *Massachusetts*

# Someone You Should Know...

*Athlete Profile: Peter Johnson*



*Peter Johnson, SOMA athlete and Global Messenger, is also the star of the new film, The Child King.*

Peter Johnson is just like most Special Olympics Massachusetts athletes. He competes in various different sports, always strives for as many gold medals as possible and is a die hard New England sports fan. But what makes him just a bit different, is the fact that he is also the star of a recently released holiday movie.

*The Child King*, a story about two brothers who go on an adventure to find Santa Claus. The profits of the movie benefit the Child King foundation, which awards grants to organizations, charities, and people that assist those with intellectual disabilities.

Johnson plays Jeremy, a teenager with Down Syndrome who must take his younger brother Jarret on a journey to the North Pole to find Santa Claus because Jarret does not believe in Santa Claus. For Johnson, who is from Scituate, this was his first movie, but not

his first time in the spotlight. In addition to winning various medals, Johnson writes a column for his high school newspaper and has been involved in school drama productions.

Johnson is part of an educational and vocational training program at Scituate High School. He has been a part of the program since he was 14 and will remain in the program until he is 22. Through the program Johnson has had his separate training but also been integrated into the school, taking an English class, participating in the school's drama production and playing on the tennis team.

"That [the program] has been wonderful," Jane Johnson, Peter's mother said. "He has been integrated into the school in many different ways outside of just that day to day classroom experience and that vocational training that he gets outside of school."

For Johnson, this experience of being able to be integrated into the high school in addition to his separate vocational training program has been extremely important because of his personality and abilities.

"Pete very much identifies with all kids his age, and so he wants to be a part of what all kids his age are doing," his mother said. "So for social reasons I think it's good. And also academically he reads well and he is curious about the world. I think allowing him to go into some of these other classes and have these opportunities outside his class satisfies his curiosity, broadens his horizons, and helps him develop new skills."

With Special Olympics, Johnson has been involved in various different sports for nearly eight years. With Special Olympics Massachusetts Johnson has participated in swimming, softball, track and field, and tennis. He is also currently serving as a global messenger for Special Olympics Massachusetts. The job of a global messenger is perfect for Johnson, who according to his mother, is an incredibly social and outgoing young man.

"He has the most wonderful, outgoing, friendly, warm, funny personality," Jane Johnson said. "He is very much a people person, he is extremely outgoing and very friendly. He wants to meet everybody and he can talk to anybody about anything."

*--contributed by Lauren Ebstein*