

## **Jeremy Mincey named 2019 Special Olympics North Carolina Coordinator of the Year**

Local program coordinator extraordinaire Jeremy Mincey of Cumberland County is no stranger to the power of inclusive sports for both individuals with and without intellectual disabilities.

In his position as adaptive sports athletic coordinator for Fayetteville-Cumberland Parks and Recreation (FCPR), Mincey works to develop and maintain inclusive sports programming for Special Olympics North Carolina (SONC) and his local community. For the 2019-2020, Special Olympics North Carolina has selected Mincey as Coordinator of the Year, a well-deserved recognition.

For the past ten years, SONC and FCPR have partnered to support athletes in a variety of sports events. Mincey is overtly dedicated to his involvement in providing opportunities for athletes competing and training in 13 Olympic-type sports.

“I have been working in adaptive sports since 2013 and with Special Olympics as a part of my job since April of 2015,” said Mincey. “About half of my job responsibilities involve working with Special Olympics and that is a great benefit that many local program coordinators do not have.”

In assuming his current position, Mincey is grateful for the support his community has offered along the way.

“When I took over, we already had a good relationship with the EC (Exceptional Children) Division in the schools,” said Mincey. “The support from the local law enforcement is also important to us.”

Mincey has also dedicated his efforts to enhancing Unified Champion Schools programs with area schools, including Methodist University in Fayetteville.

“Through his hard work and dedication, the Special Olympics program in Cumberland County is flourishing,” said Cumberland County Schools Director of Student Activities Vernon Aldridge. “Because of his setting the foundation, it has really helped Cumberland County Schools Unified Sports blossom.”

To make these opportunities a possibility, Mincey relies heavily on local fundraising efforts. Every year, he assists in the coordination of fundraising events, both large and small, in support of Special Olympics North Carolina. During his four years as a local program coordinator, Mincey has raised over \$33,000 for SONC.

“We have a Family Fun Festival in December where we have a silent auction and different vendors come out to show their support,” said Mincey. “It’s our largest fundraiser of the year.”

Throughout the remainder of the year, Special Olympics Cumberland County hosts smaller fundraising events, such as dances at the Dorothy Gilmore Therapeutic Recreation Center, all in support of the nearly 300 athletes competing in Cumberland County.

“I think that most of the athletes that interact with Jeremy just think of him as a friend,” said Bunny Powers, local parent and Special Olympics Cumberland County committee member. “He is a peer and not someone who is just telling them what to do and where to go. They are comfortable just joking around together and yet he still gets the job done, but has fun doing it.”

While Mincey is an ever-supportive fan of SONC athletics, his pastimes are also in the realm of recreational sports. From working with his church, to fishing and golfing, Mincey is always searching for new ways to apply his talents and passions to the mission of Special Olympics North Carolina.

“We are very pleased to see Jeremy recognized in this way,” said FCPR Recreation Division Manager James McMillan. “Not only is it well deserved and speaks highly of his work, but it also speaks volumes for the program and partnerships. FCPR is fortunate to have such a genuine and professional individual on its team.”