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Make Decisions.....Change Lives

Developing Decision Makers in Sport



From Then to Now

1978

- 200 athletes, 2 sports, residential services

2008

- 11,000 athletes, 12 sports, 410 clubs



Those 30 Years

- Introduced new sports
- Developed outside the Agencies
- Increased athlete and volunteer numbers
- Hosted the first European Games
- Changed from a total volunteer led organisation
- Hosted the first World Summer Games outside the USA
- Became much more than a Sports organisation
- Built on the Legacy of those Games



How Did We Get There?

Vision

Structures

Training

Empowerment

Support



Decision Maker

**Anne Foley,
Athlete
Actress
Equestrian
Ambassador**



In the beginning

- School in Blackrock
- Trainee in St Michaels House
- Lived in a Group home
- Small number of friends



29 January 2003, Rita Lawlor, Board Member, 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games, 2003SOWG. Picture credit: Brendan Moran / SPORTSTILE *EDI*

Life Change

- Julian Davis visits workshop in Templeogue
- New world opened up for me 1978
- St. Michael's House Gymnastic's club is formed
- Mary Davis becomes coach



Moving On

- Started to participate in competition
- Leinster 1978
- Ireland Games
- European Games 1985
- World Games 1987



My first competitions

- Break down Barriers
- Become independent
- Took a long time, but I had a Vision and didn't give up



Naas winners welcomed home

Continued from page 1
the Naas branch were also present.

Many present immediately fell to partaking the excellent repast laid out on tables in the assembly room courtesy of Superquinn. Mrs. Annie Burke and Mrs. Rita Lawlor were shedding tears of joy as they too were presented with bouquets. The girls were accompanied by the manager of KARE industries (based in the industrial estate in Newbridge), Mr. Paul McCullough.

According to KARE, the only other Kildare success in the Special Olympics was that of Ann-Marie McDermott of Monasterevin in the Games which were held four years ago.

He said Rita and Fidelma were the only two lady competitors from Kildare in the Special Olympics, in which there were over 60 taking part from all over Ireland. Like the main Olympics, the Games are held every four years, a year before the major event. Mr. McCullough thought the girls had performed remarkably well against very tough opposition in their disciplines. There had been competitors from Kildare taking part in the Games before but they had never been as successful as Rita and Fidelma had been.

A very nice gesture on Thursday last was the presentation of microwave ovens at the ESB office in Naas to Fidelma and Rita. They were presented on behalf of the ESB and the manufacturers Samsung, a South Korean company. The Special Olympics are due to be held next year in Korea. Mr. Raymond D'Arcy (manager of the Naas office), said it was their way of saying "thank you" to the girls.

Introducing the formalities, Mr. Larry Long, welcomed the girls home on behalf of the people of Naas. The people and parents were proud of the marvellous achievements of the girls.

could not be present for the celebrations. He paid tribute to Fidelma and Rita for their achievements. They had brought very great distinction to their families and to the people of Naas and Kildare and to their teachers. They were wonderful ambassadors for the county in Indiana. The Manager said the medals the girls so proudly wore was testimony to their very great success in the Special Olympics and a tribute to their skill and perseverance in training. He could only say "well done" to them both.

As a token of appreciation he presented Fidelma and Rita with a special hand-written scroll in honour of the occasion and to mark their marvellous achievements.

Mrs. Antoinette Buggle (Kill), Vice-Chairperson of KARE in Kildare, said the girls' success was the greatest honour ever bestowed on the organisation. In Fidelma's case (she works with KARE industries) her medals had brought great pleasure to all the staff of KARE. The parents of both

Fidelma and Rita were rightly proud of their great showing. Their success was "the crowning glory" of KARE's work over the years.

Mrs. Maureen Patterson, Chairperson, Naas Branch of KARE, said great honour had been brought by both girls to Naas. The efforts of the local branch had been amply rewarded by their great achievements and she added her congratulations to Fidelma and Rita.

Mr. Long thanked the manager and staff of Superquinn for providing the buffet and Mrs. Josephine Hardiman who drew up the scrolls.

He called for three cheers for Rita and Fidelma and the rafters of the hall resounded to the loud cheers of adults and children alike.

Mrs. Annie Burke told the *Leinster Leader* Fidelma was very happy in her job as a machinist in the KARE factory in Newbridge. Up to the age of ten Fidelma could not be let out on her own but through KARE she had come on wonderfully and had a full-time job.

Rita Lawlor is attached to St. Michael's House in Dublin where she

also works as a machinist. She has been there since she left the local primary school. She won gold medals for her prowess in the floor event, gymnastics and was adjudged best all-rounder in gymnastics at the Games. She won silver medals in vaulting, working on the beam and on the bars.

Both girls took part in 20 Ireland events and were picked for the Irish team for the Olympics in January. They have been training daily and attending residential training courses at the weekends. Over 60 countries were represented at the Games. In Indiana they stayed in the Irish-run St. Mary's College and Notre Dame. They were looked after during the Games by two teachers at the KARE special school, St. Anne's, on the Curragh: Mary Fleming and Angela Newham, and also by Katherine Power, a voluntary social worker at the school. Great credit must also go to Fidelma's trainer, Mary Mooney.

There were two other Kildare representatives on the Irish team: Eddie Lawlor and Hubert Monaghan who were on the soccer team. They attend St. Raphael's in Celbridge.



With Larry Long, Town Clerk, Rita and Fidelma proudly display the illuminated scrolls presented to them at the civic reception at the Town Hall by Naas UDC.

My first World Games 1987



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Tribute

After the 1987 World Games

- Invited to train as a coach
- Started to coach Gymnastics
- Worked with Special Olympics and main stream athletes
- Started a part time job, still there to-day
- Involved in Athlete Leadership programme
- Became a Global Messenger

Global Messenger



- Wrote a book – Moving On
- Board of Directors 2003 World Summer Games
- Real opportunity to Influence Decision making
- Council of Patrons
- Member of Eastern region Athlete Leadership
- Key Volunteer in the programme
- Coach in Bayside Gymnastics Club



My Job Now

- To spread the Good News of Special Olympics
- To encourage more athletes to join
- To promote the ALPs programme
- To encourage more volunteers to get involved in mentoring

The Future looks good!

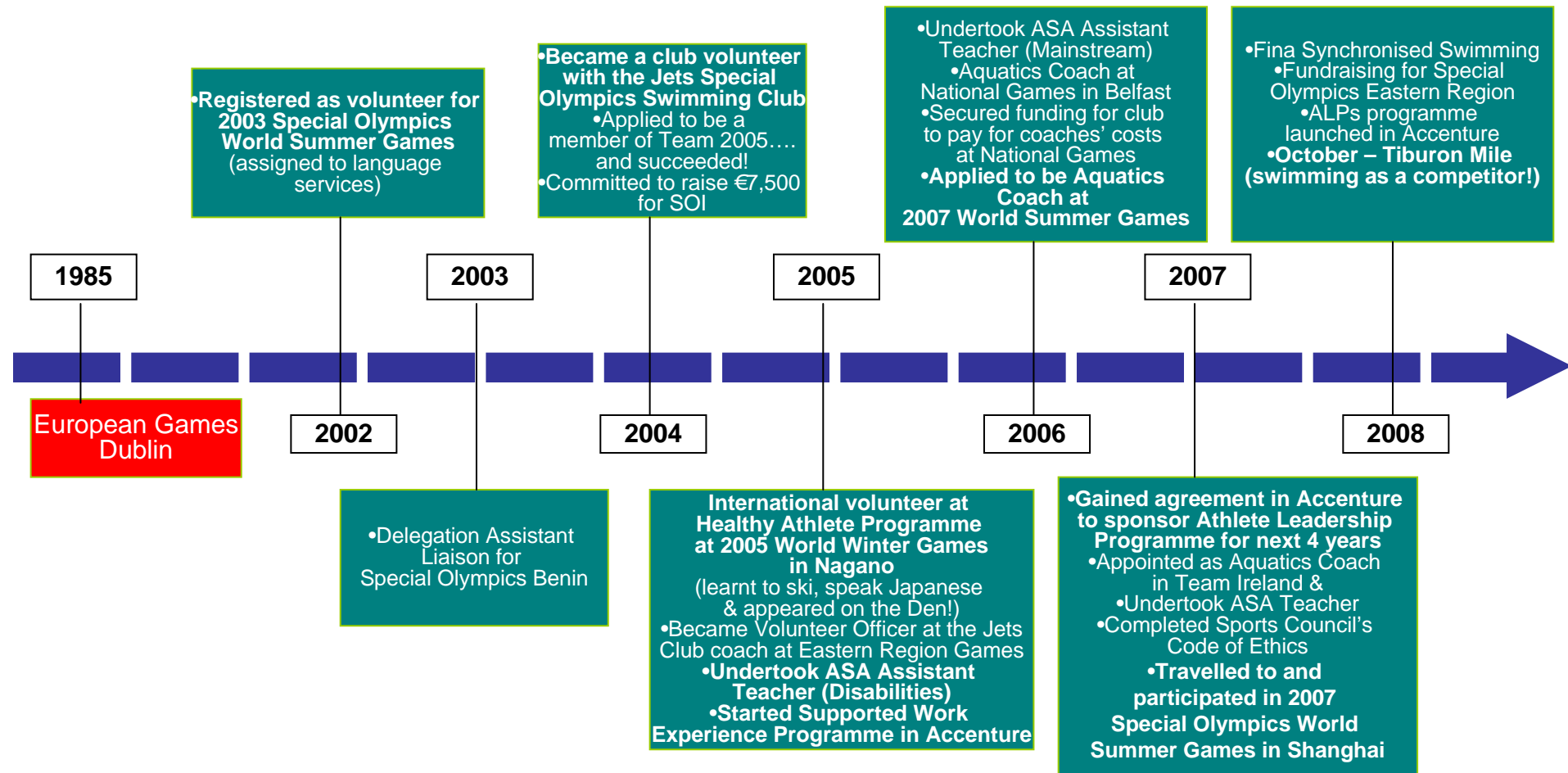


**Decision
Makers**

**Joe Fehily,
Chairperson
Fundraiser**

**John Madden
Mentor
Friend**

Volunteer Perspective



Decision Makers

Dick and Colette
Sweetnam
Retired Baker
Housewife
International
Volunteers



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• What have I learnt?

- “Small” decisions can be life-changing
- Every individual can impact
- decision-making in
- organisations (sport, work)
- Don't assume you can't make things happen!





You

“People will rise to a challenge if it is their challenge”

Wayne Smith, International Rugby

An opportunity to become a decision maker
in **your** sport and to **effect** the decisions of
others through your sport.....



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