

Camp Shriver at UMass Boston: An Inclusive Summer Camp for Boston Area Youth



Kay Seale, Director of Special Education for the Brockton Public Schools, spoke in the opening ceremony for Camp Shriver, at UMass Boston. She was joined by Sen. Edward Kennedy and Tim Shriver. Brockton has 20 students attending the program; 10 special education students and

10 regular education students.

Below is the press release from UMass Boston.

U.S. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, Special Olympics Chairman Tim Shriver, and the University of Massachusetts Boston campus today opened Camp Shriver, an inclusive summer camp for children with and without intellectual disabilities that will feature sports and activities hosted by the university from July 17 to 28.



“It’s about having fun, making friends,” said Sen. Kennedy, who spoke to campers, counselors, and guests at a barbecue held on the Campus Center lawn. Praising the work of sister Eunice Shriver, Sen. Kennedy also talked about the importance of friendship and teamwork in helping to better the lives of children. “It’s caring about your fellow swimmer and soccer player... We’re all going to move along together.”

"Everyone deserves a chance, a chance in sports, in life, to say 'I count. I am a valuable citizen of my community and country,'" said Tim Shriver, chairman of Special Olympics, Inc., who called Camp Shriver and its participants ambassadors for change.



Swimming, basketball, soccer, and many other camp activities will be offered to 65 children, ages 9-12, from Boston, Cambridge and Brockton who will participate in this unique summer program, which is one of six camps established around the country in celebration of the 85th birthday of Eunice Kennedy Shriver. Mrs. Shriver is

the founder of the Special Olympics, which serves 2 million athletes and their families in more than 150 countries.

The camp is designed to use sports as a vehicle for improving not only campers' sports skills, but also their self-esteem, and confidence in building relationships with peers. Funding for the camp has been provided by Mrs. Shriver, Gillette, and AT&T.

"UMass Boston is proud to make Camp Shriver possible to enhance the summer experience for these boys and girls and to honor the groundbreaking work of Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Special Olympics for the past four decades," UMass Boston Chancellor Michael F. Collins, MD, said. "For these boys and girls from Boston, Cambridge and Brockton, Camp Shriver will show there are no limits to what we can all achieve."

Camp Shriver at UMass Boston is modeled in part on Special Olympics' Unified Sports program, in which children and youth with and without disabilities are paired together on sports teams. UMass Boston's Center for Social Development & Education (CSDE) will closely monitor the camp experience as part of a project to create a model for inclusive camping that links the experiences of students with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities.

"We're about bringing kids together," said Gary N. Siperstein, Ph.D., director of CSDE, a leading international research center on children with intellectual disabilities. "In our Center's recent national study of public school students, less than 10 percent said they had a friend with intellectual disabilities. This camp will serve as a model of inclusion for schools and communities, and teach children that when it comes to their peers with disabilities, they share more similarities than differences."

During the two-week session, campers, counselors and staff will

participate in sports-oriented activities and make occasional off-campus field trips, including a private tour of Fenway Park and a harbor cruise aboard the UMass Boston research vessel Columbia Point. The camp will conclude with an awards presentation hosted by WBZ radio's Gil Santos on Friday, July 28.

In 1962, Eunice Kennedy Shriver invited 35 children with disabilities to her Maryland home to explore their capabilities in a variety of sports and physical activities and participate in the first ever "Camp Shriver." The camp became an annual event and was the precursor to the development of Special Olympics. Mrs. Shriver has now established several Camp Shriver sites around the country as a living tribute to her work on behalf of people with disabilities.

For thirty years, the Center for Social Development & Education has been a leader in the study of attitudes toward persons with disabilities. Members of the CSDE staff have conducted studies on the attitudes of youth and adults across the U.S. and internationally. Camp Shriver at UMass Boston will undergo a rigorous evaluation to document the successes and challenges of its implementation. The evaluation will focus on the development and implementation of the camp and on the impact of Camp Shriver on campers, volunteers, and staff. CSDE will oversee the evaluation of all of the other Camp Shriver sites across the country.

In 2003, Director Gary Siperstein presented the findings of the Multinational Study of Attitudes Toward Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, a landmark study on people's attitudes about individuals with disabilities, as part of the 2003 Scientific Symposium, held in association with the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Dublin, Ireland.

In 2004-2005, CSDE carried out two simultaneous studies on youth attitudes, one in the United States and one in Japan. The Youth Attitude Studies in the U.S. and Japan provided important information as to the current state of attitudes among youth in these two different countries. Specifically, youth in the U.S. and Japan underestimate the capabilities of peers with intellectual disabilities and are unwilling to interact with them socially. However, the studies also found that youth in both countries are open to the possibility of greater inclusion in schools. Building upon this cross-cultural research base, CSDE will expand this research to China in 2006.

UMass Boston prides itself on academic excellence, diversity, and its commitment to serving students and the greater Boston community. Through its six colleges—Liberal Arts, Science and Mathematics, Management, Nursing and Health Sciences, Public and Community Service and Graduate College of Education –the McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies, and the Division of Continuing, Corporate

and Distance Education, UMass Boston offers undergraduate and graduate study in more than 150 fields. More information about UMass Boston can be found at: www.umb.edu.

