



AMANDA CAYTON

From the CEO **IT'S ALL ABOUT DOING YOUR BEST**

Once every four years, just like the Olympics, Special Olympics athletes, families, and volunteers from around the world gather for the World Summer Games. In 2015, we all met in Los Angeles for one week of amazement.

There are a number of elements that make "our Olympics" special, but for me, the best thing about us is that there is no difference between Special Olympics at the world level and Special Olympics at the local level. This year's living example of this is Benton County – Indiana's own Amanda Cayton.

Amanda is like thousands of athletes in Indiana. She had some interest in Track and Field, but really didn't enjoy running all that much. And then, something magical took place – she found the right sport and the right coach. Former Benton Central football coach Dave Black recognized her interest and agreed to become her coach. He knew the sport of Powerlifting, and dedicated his time to Amanda on the condition that she matched his level of commitment.

Spoiler alert... Two years later Amanda is a 4-time gold medal winner in Powerlifting at the 2015 Los Angeles Special Olympics World Games.

Just like almost every Special Olympics athlete I know, when a well-qualified coach makes a commitment and expects the best from his or her athletes, amazing things happen. Since July, many people have seen Amanda's four gold medals and appreciated that she is the best in world. But if that's all they think, they are missing the point. **Special Olympics is not about being the best – it's about doing your best.**

It's the same for Amanda as it is for each of the 11,000+ Special Olympics athletes in Indiana. Whether you volunteer, donate, coach, or cheer – you can be the person who helps a hidden champion realize their personal best.

- Michael Furnish

