

Our Back Yard

by Elliott Auerbach, *Village Manager, Ellenville*

Once again, the seas of service and support begin to swell as the Ellenville community anxiously awaits the February 20th return of the *Special Olympics Winter Games*. Along with the hundreds of athletes, coaches, and families, comes an army of local volunteers that lubricate this well-oiled, one-of-a-kind event. We have embraced this display of personal bests with our own enthusiasm, one that mirrors the efforts of those challenged champions on the playing fields. We, the good people of the Town and the Village trade in the capital of volunteerism and ask nothing in return.

It is not just the *Special Olympics* that rallies our helping spirit. We rise to those exceptional occasions like *Run Like The Wind*, *The Harvest Festival*, and the *July 4th Celebration*. We commit our time and resources to serving the needs of others, serving the brotherhood and sisterhood of our fraternal organizations, playing active roles in our houses of worship, or simply just being there for our neighbors and friends. It is not our job, but a labor of love. We are a community of "doers" and, often times, need not be asked.

We have saved hospitals and nursery schools and theaters. We have asked not for ourselves, but for others who needed a present for Christmas, a coat for the cold weather, or a warm meal for an empty stomach.

Sometimes we do not realize how good we are. Sometimes it takes a distant pair of eyes to see the genuine pureness of our hearts. It may be a hug from the *Special Olympics* athlete, a smile from a relative as they watch a family member strive for his own personal best, or maybe a simple thank you from one of the coaches or officials. If it were not for the efforts of all of you that come out and help, the *Special Olympics* would not be so special. ✨

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