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Daniel Anderman receives Special Olympic Award

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Special Olympics Washington athlete from Leavenworth Daniel Anderman who is on the Icicle Trackers Team is an inspiration for the Upper Valley Connection - Enriching the lives of our special needs community. Daniel has participated in Special Olympics Cross Country Skiing since 2004, but persistent back issues kept him out of the 2023 Special Olympics State Games.

Daniel has won more than 25 medals, many of them Gold, he proudly wears his medals when strolling around Leavenworth. Daniel says what he likes best about the Special Olympics are the Cross Country Team, and State Games, big tents at the venue, all the activities at Opening Ceremonies music and food.

He likes to go fast and win medals, especially when the Seahawk Cheerleaders help with the medal presentations. He likes interacting with friends, and the warmup circle before Cross Country practices with the other Icicle Trackers. He exercises to get ready to ski, sings the team song, written by a local Songwriter, which the words were adapted to become "Great Day to Be a Tracker". Daniel was the inspiration to start the Upper Valley Connection. Paul (dad) and Terry (mom) gathered partners and volunteers in the Leavenworth area and sponsored a baseball team modeled after Little League's "Challenger" program.

They added Cross Country Skiing and Snow Shoeing. Upper Valley Connection has grown significantly over the years to the organization it is now. Daniel's other interests and talents are building bird houses that are sold locally, and some were also sent to buyers around the country and around the world. He loves tools, music and enjoys riding a tandem bike around town with his dad Paul. He performs every summer in a musical produced by the Upper Valley Connection. Volunteers team up with scores of our community's folks living with developmental disabilities and pull off something utterly amazing. In a single week, they rehearse and stage a full musical production. Daniel's brother, Nick serves as the Musical Director.

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in

a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community. The 2023 Special Olympics Winter State Games were in Wenatchee and Leavenworth on March 3-5 and the Opening Ceremonies were held on Friday, March 3 at The Town Toyota Center. Race Days for Cross Country Ski and Snowshoeing were held on Saturday, March 4 and Sunday, March 5 at the Leavenworth Hatchery. Other sports

at State Games at various venues in the area were Alpine Skiing, Snow Boarding, Figure Skating and Speed Skating, Basketball, and Cheerleading.

Upper Valley Connection is a non-profit organization that envisions communities that embrace and provide life-long support for specially abled individuals and their families by providing an environment that cultivates compassion, in which all people are seen, heard, and loved for their unique gifts.

Upper Valley Connection is a recreation program for youth and adults with special needs. We believe that everyone ought to have the chance to have meaningful

interactions with his or her peers, whether while playing baseball, putting on a play, or simply hanging out with a movie and popcorn. People with special needs, whether physical or mental, often do not have the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers, lacking social, intellectual, or physical abilities. This does not mean; however, they lack the desire to have those same opportunities. The benefits of participating in recreational activities are every bit as valuable for these individuals as for any others.

During the Special Olympics Cross Country Skiing competition on March 4, 2023, Daniel was presented a special Olympic award.



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY CHAD WANDERPOEL, SPECIAL OLYMPICS WASHINGTON

Daniel Anderman received a special award, surrounded by volunteers from the Sheriff's Department and the Nile Shriners during the Leavenworth Olympics.



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY TIM TOON

Daniel Anderman on his skis during a previous special Olympic games.



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