

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

The Pickaway County Special Olympics track and field season has just started and, in partnership with the Circleville Kiwanis and Logan Elm High School, the group will host a fun track meet tomorrow at Logan Elm High School.



Heather Foll with the Pickaway County Board of Developmental Disabilities said opening ceremonies will begin with a parade of athletes and a torch run at 9:30 am.

"Our coaches have been busy with training athletes with the goal of competing at a regional qualifying track meet in Columbus on May 13th at Whetstone High School. And we will have five athletes competing at the Ohio State Track & Field events the weekend of June 23."

The county's Special Olympics team has about 100 athletes – ranging from 8 to 60 years old – who compete in track and field, softball, basketball and bowling at the local and state levels, Heather said.

"Pickaway County Special Olympics

focuses on all of the strengths of our athletes, showcasing what they can do rather than what they cannot.

"Our unified softball team has played together for 18 years and won the state championship title in 2014 and 2005," she said.

These athletes work hard and deserve our support as much as their fellow Tigers, Braves, Vikings and Mustangs.

Michelle Fraley, Kim Martin and Jane Osborne coach the track team.

Jane, an occupational therapist assistant with the ESC, has been a volunteer with Special Olympics for three years.

"Working with these athletes is so rewarding.

"I enjoy working with the athletes and families outside the classroom. I feel it's very important to build those relationships," she said.



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"It takes a community to have success with raising a child with special needs. I like to be a part of that achievement."

Heather said volunteers and supporters are crucial to Special Olympics' success.

"We depend on local donations and fundraisers to pay for uniforms, sports equipment, tournament fees, lodging and medals," Heather said.

"I am proud of the athletes and coaches. Their dedication is impressive."

For more information on how to volunteer or donate, contact Heather at (740) 477-3353, Ext. 39 or hfoll@pickawaydd.org.

Ty Ankrom is the superintendent of the Pickaway County Educational Service Center. He can be reached at ty.ankrom@pickawayesc.org.