



Special Olympics
Massachusetts

Someone You Should Know...

Volunteer Profile: Dara and Sara Colleary



Dara and Sara Colleary

For Dara and Sara Colleary, volunteering started years ago with a Boston College Young Alumni Association event in which they helped with the Special Olympics Massachusetts Summer Games. After that, volunteering with Special Olympics became a regular and important part of both of their lives.

Sara currently coordinates the evaluations committee while Dara helps with logistics for the Summer Games and the August Tournament. They also both oversee the Nordic Skiing event at the Winter Games. Together they have been helping out Special Olympics Massachusetts for over four years.

“One of the things I have found is there seems to be a common thread between the volunteers,” Dara said. “They just tend to be more genuine people and that is one of the things that intrigued me. It is not the most

glamorous thing, but the people who do it are very sincere and dedicated and there is something to be said about that.”

What may make the two of them most unique is their ability to have volunteering be something they share with each other. Though they do not do the same thing at the events, they have both been able to bring their talents to the organization.

“It’s great,” Sara said. “After a weekend of events we always talk about the little things that happened throughout the weekend that caught our attention.”

With the evaluations committee Sara walks around the Summer Games and speaks with different participants such as coaches, volunteers, athletes, spectators or parents. The committee members ask them about their experience with the current event or venue. They then take the responses and put a report together to present to the Special Olympics Staff. The committee helps report on what needs to be improved and what has worked well.

Though Sara has a job that allows her to interact with almost everyone there, Dara works a bit more behind the scenes, helping with the logistics at the Summer Games. Though he may be behind the scenes at the Summer Games, they both get hands on work at the Winter Games as they oversee the Nordic Skiing event. This could be the biggest job they have together as they must work with the volunteers at the venue, set everything up, set up the track, organize the athletes and then run all of the races and put together the results.

--contributed by Lauren Ebstein



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“One of the things that I like about it is the meetings leading up to the events,” Dara said. “You probably go through three months of meetings before the event. I think you really get to know people pretty well in those situations.”

With the meetings and the all the experiences of the events combined, Dara’s favorite memory is of a fun and competitive snow ball fight between various athletes and volunteers at the Winter Games.

“We had been together all weekend with the athletes competing and us working,” Dara said. “It was the one time when we were all on the same playing field. We were all interacting one snow ball fighter against another, not athlete against volunteer.”

Sara’s fondest memory is a bit different, but also comes at the Winter Games. After lunch one day a troop of girl scouts who had been volunteering got up onto the stage and began dancing to a song the DJ was playing. Before she knew it, the stage was full of athletes and volunteers all dancing along to the organized dance the girl scouts had started.

Regardless of whether or not these are experiences Dara and Sara have together, they are definitely moments they share with each other.

“I definitely share with him my magical moments that I’ve had,” Sara said. “And we always talk about how meaningful we think it is and how we know that we are helping to make the events better for the athletes.”

Dara currently works for Consigli, a construction company based in Milford. Sara is currently working on a graduate degree in nutrition at Framingham State and hopes to go into pediatric clinical nutrition. Yet they still both find the time to include Special Olympics into their lives, because it is something important to both of them.

“It’s just a change from your daily life,” Dara said. “You kind of get into a rhythm and you do your own thing. It’s a break from the norm and in turn you are doing something positive for other people. It gives you an opportunity to step back and take things into perspective.”