

SIBLING SURVEY AND THE SPECIAL CHRONICLES PODCAST

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The Initiative

My community engagement initiative had two components. First, Ben Haack (Special Olympics International Board Member and Athlete Leader) and I administered a survey to Special Olympics athlete leaders to understand athletes' sibling relationships. This survey was also a component of our research project. After compiling the results, Ben and I joined the [Special Chronicles](#) podcast, hosted by Daniel Smrokowski (Special Olympics International Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger) to communicate our results to Special Olympics athletes and their families.

The goal of this community engagement initiative project was to gather insights directly from Special Olympics athletes and then communicate the findings back to them in an accessible and engaging format. As such, this community engagement initiative specifically targeted Special Olympics athletes. We chose the survey format because it was accessible to Special Olympics athlete leaders. Despite this, due to COVID-19 physical distancing restrictions, some athletes could not receive in-person assistance completing the survey like they would during typical Special Olympics programming. Despite this, some athletes did receive assistance virtually. We chose the Special Chronicles podcast to communicate the results of our sibling research because it is an established podcast hosted by a Special Olympics athlete leader that has a viewer base which includes many Special Olympics athletes. We also thought this format would be the most engaging way of communicating our research findings while simultaneously being educational and informative.

Our survey was launched on July 20, 2020 and concluded on August 7, 2020. The podcast was [livestreamed](#) on September 3, 2020 and was posted on podcast platforms including Apple Podcasts and Spotify on September 13, 2020.



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Benefit to Research and the Community

Most research on this topic includes the perspectives of siblings without ID, parents, or teachers. The perspectives of individuals with ID are notably missing. Our survey contributed to the ID and sibling literature by highlighting the perspectives of individuals with ID. Additionally, most research on this topic is conducted in Western, English-speaking countries. Our survey contributed to the literature by including more diverse perspectives. The survey was also conducted across four regions (North America, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and Africa) and was distributed in three languages (English, French, and Spanish). Despite our small sample size of 27 responses (70% of which were complete), this survey contributes to diversifying the research on ID and sibling experiences. Our survey was particularly successful in gathering statements on how Special Olympics has positively impacted sibling relationships. An athlete leader reports that Special Olympics has encouraged their sibling to “talk about inclusion and spread it to everyone around.” Another athlete leader highlights that Special Olympics has given their sibling the opportunity to “see [them] more confident” and this has “brought [them] closer to each other.” Statements like these highlight the ways in which Special Olympics contributes to sibling relationships and indicate the potential impact that more sibling programming could have on sibling relationships.

Joining the Special Chronicles podcast to communicate our results and recommendations provided us with an opportunity to benefit the community. The Special Chronicles podcast is an established podcast in which many Special Olympics athletes are regular listeners. The livestream of the podcast recording received 52 views on YouTube, 28 views on Twitter Periscope, and 205 views on Facebook Live, totaling 285 live viewers. The podcast livestream received positive comments across social media platforms. One viewer commented “Outstanding podcast video. Siblings do accept us and give us encouragement. Thank you very much for sharing this positive message.”

Overall, our community engagement initiative benefits both research and the community by collecting the perspectives of Special Olympics athletes then communicating those findings and recommendations back to the population it pertains to.

