

Special Olympians get a holiday treat

City Club hosts breakfast party for athletes

By ANN MORRISON
The Post staff writer

STRONGSVILLE – A new location added to the classic moments of the past to make this year's Special Olympics Christmas one to remember.

The annual holiday party has been taking place for 18 years, but was held for the first time at Michaud's Dec. 7. A last-minute conflict necessitated the change of venue, but the end product gave the athletes a festive and exciting experience.

For the morning event, over 75 Special Olympics athletes and their families enjoyed breakfast and entertainment provided by their sponsor, the Strongsville City Club. In total, nearly 300 people joined together to celebrate the season and the athletes that have accomplished so much during the year.

"The families really appreciate this. But as much as they appreciate it, I think we do even more. We really enjoy doing



City Club members and their families volunteered to make breakfast and host the Special Olympians for a holiday breakfast.

this for them," said Terry Toth, City Club president.

Over 40 City Club members and volunteers started making breakfast bright and early and then stayed to serve the guests. The Orendi's provided music, dancing and entertainment, and there was even a balloon artist. Someone who has become a regular guest at the event – Slider, the Cleveland Indians mascot –



Photos by ANN MORRISON

Members of Strongsville Special Olympics and their families enjoyed breakfast, dancing and balloon hats made just for them. Pictured are Sidney, David, Grace and Christian.

greeted the children on the dance floor. Then, they saw Santa Claus and had the chance to tell him their wishes.

Dana Martin is the director of Strongsville Special Olympics. She thanked the families for their dedication and the City Club for its support.

"Because of them, our reputation in the Ohio Special Olympics is huge. We are so good because we have so much support," Martin said.

At the end of the event, the Olympians went home with a gift bag of donated treats from the City Club, Mayor Thomas

Perciak and Councilman Joe DeMio, as well as a poinsettia from Maria Gardens.

Over the weekend of Dec. 14-15, a group of the Olympians were headed to Columbus to compete in the state swim meet. In January they will begin their basketball season. The City Club's support extends into the competitive seasons, as members raise money for travel, uniforms, competition and more. The funds come from a large portion of the earnings from the annual Rib Burnoff and Breakfast on the Covered Bridge.



Slider, the Indians mascot, made a special appearance at the Special Olympics Christmas party and danced with the children.

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