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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Naval Chaplaincy School and Center assists Special Olympics**

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Staff, students and recent graduates from the Naval Chaplaincy School and Center (NCSC) volunteered their time May 10 to support disabled athletes participating in the Special Olympics on board Fort Jackson, S.C.

More than 1,400 Special Olympians and 250 coaches participated in the 46th annual South Carolina Special Olympics summer games. The athletes competed at various levels in six sports: Aquatics, badminton, bocce, bowling, gymnastics, powerlifting, track and field and softball. NCSC staff and students volunteered to take charge of officiating the bocce tournament.

“The Special Olympics were very rewarding,” said Religious Program Specialist 1st class Harriett Seats, NCSC Instructor. “The smiles and enthusiastic participation from the athletes were priceless.”

“It was very uplifting to help out. I was also excited to see them compete,” said Religious Program Specialist Seaman Apprentice Chad Welke, recent RP ‘A’ School graduate. “I would definitely volunteer to do it again -- the athletes were an inspiration.”

Event organizers, including Personnel Specialist First Class Natasha Ayton, an NCSC instructor, were just as moved by the athletes' enthusiasm as their volunteers.

"I had a great experience with the athletes and volunteering," said Ayton. "The interaction with the athletes was very rewarding; the expressions on their faces when they competed and won was an overwhelming sense of happiness."

The Special Olympics ceremony concluded with a Victory Dance for the volunteers and athletes at the Solomon Center on Fort Jackson.

For more news from the Chaplain Corps, visit

<http://www.navy.mil/local/crb/> .

For information about the Naval Chaplaincy School and Center, visit

<https://www.netc.navy.mil/centers/chaplain/> .

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Story by Chaplain Cmdr. Carla Barry, Naval Chaplaincy School and Center, Public Affairs