

# The ALPENHORN News

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## Working with the athletes, a personal view

Thursday, Jul 16, 2015

By **C.F. Lapinel**

Next week, on July 21, the Special Olympics Switzerland is due to arrive. Their coming to Lake Arrowhead will be the result of months of planning and donations by a small army of individuals throughout the mountain area. For three days the Swiss team for the World Games Special Olympics 2015 will be treated to the best we have to provide with parades, concerts, and tours. After the Host Town events, the athletes will compete in one of the most important sporting events in the world. The Special Olympics might sometimes get overshadowed in the press by other international sporting events, but the fact is that this is a genuinely international affair of tremendous significance, not just for the athletes and their families, but also for the communities that embrace them.

The Alpenhorn News recently had the pleasure of speaking with one of the Host Town Managers, Bridgette Olson, who has helped our mountain prepare for the honor of hosting Team Switzerland. She coordinates the accommodations, food services, and sports training. In short, she will work hard behind the scenes to ensure that everything during the athletes' stay in Lake Arrowhead goes smooth. Team Switzerland will be lodged at the Forest Lawn Scout Reservation Conference Center and the place the athletes will briefly call home.

Olson has a great deal of experience working with athletes that have intellectual disabilities. She holds advanced degrees in Physiological Psychology and Kinesiology from University of California, Santa Barbara and University of Texas, Austin, respectively. Moreover, not only has she worked with the Special Olympics Summer Games before, she has worked extensively with physically challenged and chronically ill athletes. Yet, Olsen described her work as a passion project. "This was not a career," she said. "This was more about volunteerism." Olson is a great believer in that. In fact, she cannot say enough about the community building power of volunteerism. For this reason she was quick to deflect attention from herself. In our conversation, she repeatedly expressed how deeply impressed she is with individuals working hard to make the Host Town event a success. "If I could have people take any one thing away from this," Olson said, "is that to host three days of events there's large numbers of people and businesses that have come together pooling resources, time, and energy to make all this possible...This is how we begin to change the world."

Bridgette Olson expressed her excitement at the prospect of sharing this unique experience of the Special Olympics with the athletes from Switzerland, "I can't wait to meet them!" she declared with enthusiasm.

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### Useful Links

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- Board of Supervisors
- 2nd District Janice Rutherford
- 3rd District James Ramos
- Animal Care & Control
- Code Enforcement
- Assessor
- Auditor / Controller-Recorder
- Registrar of Voters
- County Parks
- Treasurer-Tax Collector
- Public Works
- Superior Court

### This Week's Highlights

- Front Page**
- Crestline leaders share views on park for Crestline
  - Blue Star Moms invite public to celebrate Armed Forces Day
  - Boys & Girls Club Bids For Kids Tickets now on sale
- Top Stories**
- Cal Fire crews train for wildfire season
  - Great news regarding job growth in the Inland Empire
- My Town**
- Annual Rose Memorial Ceremony
  - LACSD negotiating real estate deals
  - Olivia Baldwin garners Girl Scout Gold Award
  - LAE students win statewide Odyssey of the Mind competition
  - Rim student art featured at Mountain Arts Gallery
  - Soroptimists honor 'Women of Distinction'
  - Eagle Scout Ethan Morales: Honoring the history of Switzer Park

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