

# SPECIAL OLYMPICS STEP BY STEP

By C.L. Harmon



**S**tep by Step. Three little words that speak volumes about three other words, Special Olympics volunteer.

There is no way to describe the experience of Special Olympics to someone, who has never been, in enough detail for that person to actually comprehend what volunteers take with them after their involvement.

There are simply some experiences that cannot be transmitted to others regardless of how many words or pictures one uses to describe it. It is that experience which keeps IEC volunteers coming back year after year and step by step.

When working with these Special Olympics athletes, encouragement becomes key to their success. IEC volunteers provided this support in abundance at this year's olympics held in Stillwater.

IEC volunteers work the track and field events every year. Sometimes they help the athletes prepare for the event,

while other times they may be the open arms receiving athletes at the finish line.

Encouragement, however, is present regardless of the position of the volunteer. It comes in many forms such as high fives, pep talks and athletic tips among others.

However, they are not allowed to help the athletes once the event has begun. This is where the step by step

comes into play.

One particular incident this year during a foot race describes these three little words best, I think. An athlete using a walker began to stumble while attempting to keep up with her competition. That stumble then led to a fall.

Within seconds IEC volunteers were there to help her up. But further physical

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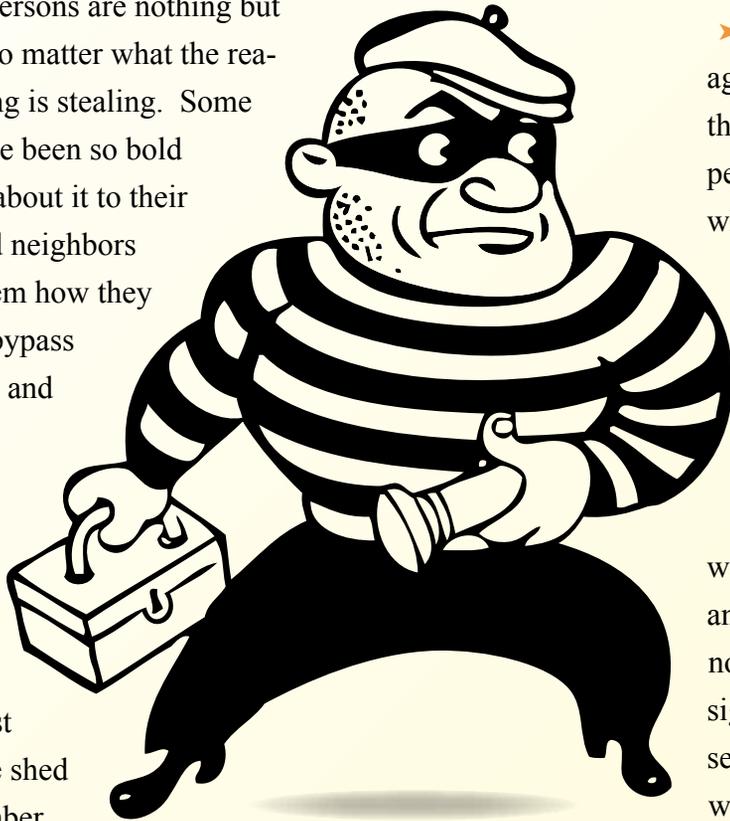
*James Wilcox and Shane Stiger cheering an athlete on.*

## HELPING YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

I don't know if it is the tough economic times or other factors, but theft is up at IEC. We have had a rash of tampering with meters for the purpose of stealing electricity. I probably should be more politically correct but these persons are nothing but thieves. No matter what the reason, stealing is stealing. Some people have been so bold as to brag about it to their friends and neighbors and tell them how they too could bypass their meter and get free electricity. Granted, they are not always the sharpest tools in the shed and remember that when people steal electricity from IEC they are not stealing from some faceless corporation with deep pockets who would probably not miss a little bit of electricity, they are stealing from YOU. As a member of a cooperative, you own IEC. The cost of these thefts of electricity must be passed on to you, the honest member who pays your bill regularly. If you ever notice anything that looks suspicious, give us a call and we will be happy to check it out. The person you are helping will be you!

Another way IEC needs your help is with Right-of-Way.

With the arrival of summer, IEC's Right-of-Way program is in full swing. Our primary goals for the R-O-W program is to keep the outages and blinks to



a minimum, keep the lines up and the lights on. If we trim trees in your area please keep in mind the following things:

- We are not “picking” on you personally.
- We can't cut off a foot or so and come back again next year, the year after that and the year after that. We simply do not have the resources or the personnel to do this. We aim to cycle through the whole system once every five years and most trees can grow back into the line within a year if not trimmed properly.
- We try diligently to notify any members before we trim trees on their property. However, it is not always possible to reach every member or landowner. It may be an emergency situation or we cannot locate the property owner. While we try and will continue to try to always notify you, it may not always happen. The membership agreement you signed to receive service, the terms and conditions of service which apply to all members, and the easement we have for the electric line to be located on your property all state that you will allow us access to your property to maintain the lines and right-of-way.
- Please, please, pretty please do no plant trees under our lines. They will eventually grow and become a problem.
- Always realize that we have one goal and that is to provide our members with quality, reliable and reasonable priced electric power. We do not hate trees; we actually like trees, just not the ones that threaten the reliability of service to you our members.

I hope you will keep these things in mind. The more theft we can stop and the better we can maintain our Right-Of-Way, the better we can serve you and keep costs down. ♦

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS STEP BY STEP

assistance was not allowed. It once again became up to the athlete to finish the race on her own merits. She seemed stunned, almost heart-broken and would not move forward.

For those few minutes, it seemed the entire world focused on her and a few volunteers, two IEC employees among them. These two men walked beside her step by step encouraging her to keep taking the next step toward the finish line. The other volunteers clapped and yelled words of encouragement from all directions.

As she slowly crept forward, the volunteers moved with her. She then began to increase speed as reinforcement of her determination continued from not only the volunteers, but the spectators as well. They stayed with her, step by step until reaching the finish line. This athlete is only one reason, IEC volunteers keep stepping on the field year after year. There are literally thousands more.

This year marks the 43rd Annual Summer Games held in Oklahoma for athletes numbering in the thousands. They met on the field in Stillwater May 9-11 to test their skills against the more than 4,400 athletes registered to attend.

In all there were 24 volunteers from IEC employees and their families donating their time to help these athletes reach

their goals of attaining the medals that each have given so much to earn.

Sadly however, there are always those who don't finish first. It is the actions of the volunteers during these somber moments which also make a difference.

"It was a very humbling experience," volunteer Tracy Shipman said about her involvement.

"We are very committed to

it's easy to see why they keep coming back. The experience of watching these athletes smile after winning an event, receiving a medal or even crossing the finish line is something that becomes a part of you.

In addition, the experience is more than just rewarding, it's fun. This was the general sentiment from those volunteers asked to describe why they become involved.



being involved in the community and Special Olympics is just one more way we can achieve this goal", IEC General Manager Jack Clinkscale said.

IEC has been involved in the Special Olympics since at least 2001 and every year it has no problem in finding volunteers. As one volunteer put it, "once you go, you're hooked."

For those who have gone,

"I participate because it is fun and rewarding," Volunteer Britany Overstreet said.

Special Olympics Oklahoma staff, along with hundreds of volunteers, work each year to give these athletes a few days to step up and show the world what placing one foot in front of the other can accomplish...with hard work, determination and a little encouragement. ♦

# RECIPE



## Old Fashioned Vanilla Ice Cream

(Safe from salmonella because the eggs are cooked)

- 2 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar
- 1 tbsp. vanilla
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. salt
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream

Separate the eggs and make a soft custard of the milk, egg yolks and sugar. Beat the egg whites until stiff. Pour hot custard over egg whites and mix thoroughly. Add vanilla and salt. Cool, add whip cream and freeze.

## SECURING YOUR DATA

**G**rowing up in a rural area, we never locked our doors—everyone looked after each other. But times have changed.

It seems every day we hear about another security breach, and today's thieves aren't targeting traditional goods like electronics or the family safe. Instead, they want your (and our) data. Cyber thieves keep testing digital doorknobs and looking for open software windows to find a way to crack personal and business databases.

We take this threat seriously. After all, Indian Electric Cooperative (IEC) is owned and governed by you, our members. You've placed your trust in us, and we're committed to protecting your data while delivering reliable, safe, and affordable power.

Unlike the old neighborhood, we don't have a digital open door policy at IEC. As a cooperative, we're part of a national network of member-controlled electricity providers working together to constantly evaluate and bolster cyber security measures. While there's no sure-fire way to keep determined computer hackers out, we're making it a lot harder, raising our level of protection.

Collaborating with electric cooperatives across America, we are working hard to minimize cyber security risks. Of course cyber security isn't a one-time thing—we're constantly improving and reinforcing our defenses with new technologies and best practices to protect your data and our operations.

No matter what security challenges rear their heads in the future, we are striving to be ready to meet them. As always, IEC will be looking out for you. ♦

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