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Center for Enriched Living Offers Special Olympics Program for Young Children

RIVERWOODS, IL – The Center for Enriched Living (CEL), a non-profit agency with 41 years of service, is offering a new Special Olympics program for children with developmental disabilities, ages 2-9.

Young Athletes, recently launched statewide in Illinois, is the perfect introduction to the world of athletics and competition for youth who have not yet reached eligibility age for Special Olympics or are looking for more opportunities to practice skills.

The Young Athletes program will be offered Tuesdays, January 27 - March 10 from 4-5 p.m. A fee of \$15 covers the entire 7 sessions. CEL will provide snacks for participants, and a coffee room for parents to relax in, during the program.

The program is designed to address two levels of play.

Level 1 includes physical activities focused on developing fundamental motor tracking and eye-hand coordination. Level 2 concentrates on applying these physical activities through a sports-skills activity program, and developing skills consistent with Special Olympics sports play. The sports-skills activities consist of exercises to develop and strengthen core foundation skills, walking and running, balance and jumping, trapping and catching, throwing, striking, kicking and advanced skills.

The benefits of the Young Athletes program have been proven worldwide.

Between 2005 and 2007, the program was tested at 12 pilot sites around the world, including School District 54 in Schaumburg. Data from the pilot program show these sports activities help children improve physically, cognitively and socially. It also prepares children to graduate to official Special Olympics training and competition when they turn 8 years old.

The Center for Enriched Living in Riverwoods is the only organization in Lake County that offers this innovative sports/play program.

For more information, contact CEL Outreach Managers, Mary Ellen Holt ext 217 or Vicki Caserno, ext 220 at 847-948-2001, or by email at marye@centerforenrichedliving.org.

Located at 280 Saunders Road in Riverwoods, IL, The Center for Enriched Living offers other Special Olympics programs, along with a wide range of recreational, educational and social programs for children, teens and adults with developmental disabilities. To view the complete fall/winter program guide, visit the website at <http://www.CenterForEnrichedLiving.org>.