

# Special Olympics Utah is more than sports **IT CHANGES LIVES.**



**ATHLETE: Amber Gertsch**  
Participating since 1997

Because of complications at birth including water on the brain and oxygen deprivation, Amber Gertsch's parents knew that she would have physical and intellectual disabilities. Her mother, Kaylana, said, "I knew my job as her mother had an additional dimension...how to help Amber reach her full potential despite her disabilities."

Amber, age 34, had always loved athletics so Special Olympics was a perfect fit for her. "Through Special Olympics, Amber has had the opportunity to be #1," said Kaylana. Amber's involvement has given her the chance to foster new friendships and socialize. It's also helped her improve and develop her athletic abilities. "Special Olympics Utah has made it possible for Amber to compete even when she was in a wheelchair or on crutches or in a cast," said Kaylana. "What other sports organization would do that?" Amber loves competing in softball, bocce and basketball skills but her all-time favorite sport is swimming.

"I love Special Olympics Utah because it gives me the chance to stand out in a crowd in a good way," said Amber. "I have the opportunity to be a leader for my fellow athletes." She is currently serving on the Board of Directors for Special Olympics Utah. She is a powerful public speaker and advocate of Special Olympics. She enjoys educating the community about respect and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities.

"Special Olympics has brought out the best in me and helped me succeed in many goals," said Amber. She worked very hard to earn her EMT certification and assists the medical team at Special Olympics Utah state games. Amber is also a falconer and works as a bird handler at the Ogden Nature Center. She is actively involved in her church and community, volunteering at the Red Cross and Safe Harbor domestic violence shelter. Her hobbies include art and she loves to draw her falcon, Nayteri.

You can support athletes like AMBER GERTSCH  
by making a donation to Special Olympics Utah.  
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