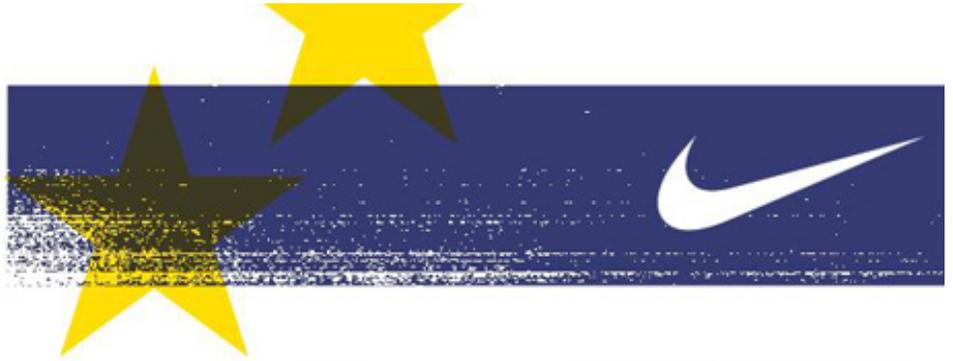


youth 
GAMES
special olympics oregon



Thank you to Nike, Subway,
and Special Olympics Oregon
for sponsoring the Youth
Games at Nike today. My son
T.J. is eleven years old and he
loves basketball. He loves to



shoot the ball at the hoop from his wheelchair. T.J. was in group 18, led by some great Nike volunteers. I have to single out Ryan of the Nike downtown Portland store for special thanks.



Ryan worked with T.J. in a way that was professional, not afraid to work with T.J. due to his disabilities. Ryan was tireless in running after the ball when T.J. would throw it all over the court.

Ryan challenged T.J. to stretch his arms and really push himself. Ryan was fantastic. Nike is lucky to have such a great employee with a great heart.

We also met Paralympic gold-medalist Will Groulx. Will noticed right away that T.J. has a love for basketball and was great in his interactions with T.J. Will

spoke with me afterwards and I appreciate his big heart. The University of Portland Pilots sent some great young men to work the Special Olympic athletes. The coach and the players led the basketball clinic with humor and fun. They adapted their drills to T.J.'s abilities.

T.J. has a severe seizure disorder and was born with a brain issue that required brain surgery at age 2. The seizures have robbed his ability to walk, talk clearly, and think beyond the level of a toddler. He weighs just over 100 pounds and he requires a lot of hands-on care. But he is happy and he loves basketball. He is not in pain too often. He has seizures daily ... dozens of them. Some are greater than others. So life with T.J. can be a challenge.



It was great to have a few hours of respite as I watched all the wonderful people work with T.J. on a volunteer basis. I am thankful ... thankful beyond words for the kindness, fun and joy shown to my son today. He had a great time!

T.J.s' dad, David Grand