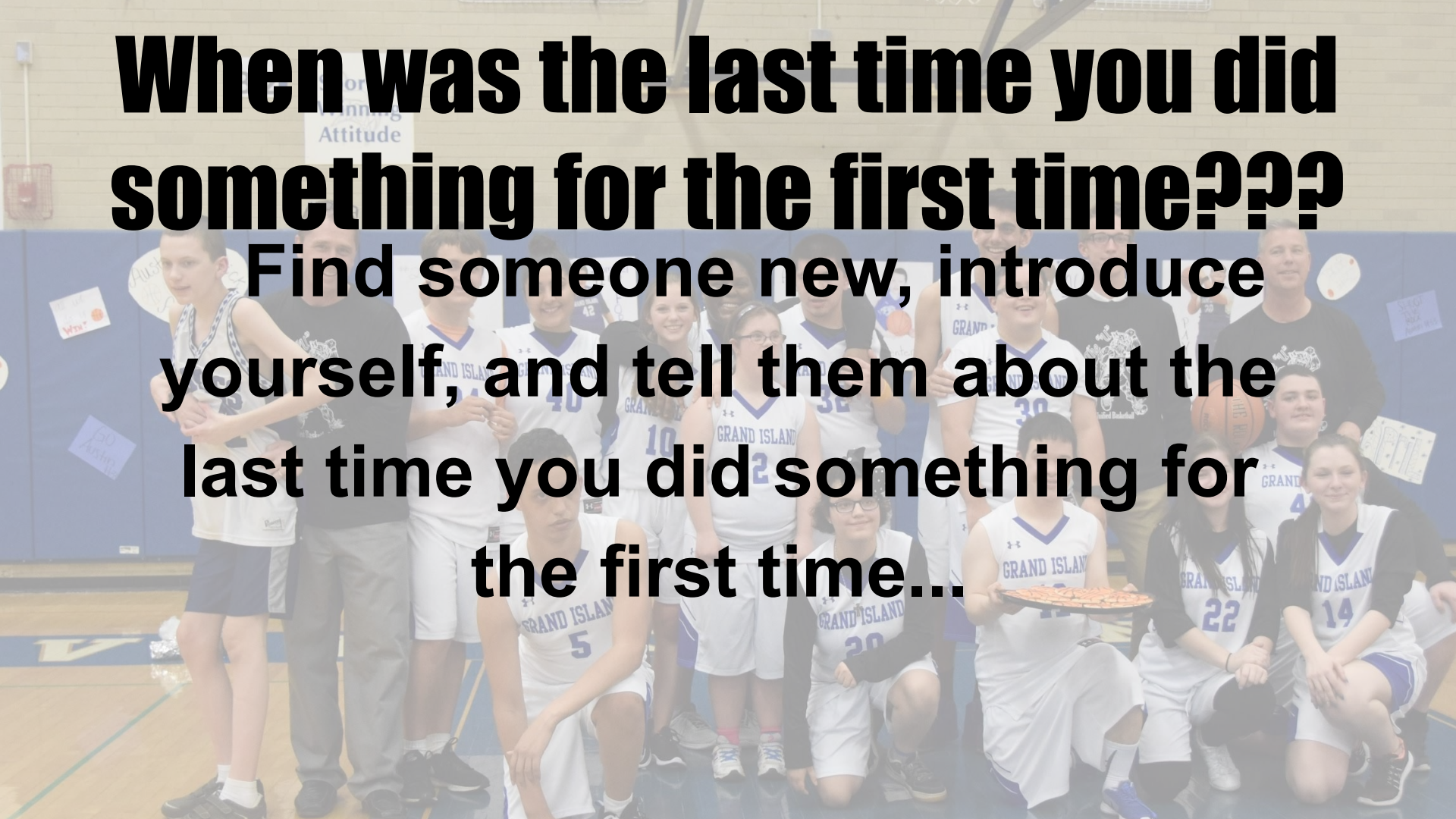


**When was the last time you did
something for the first time???**

**Find someone new, introduce
yourself, and tell them about the
last time you did something for
the first time...**





*You heard
your name
announced
for the
first time?*

**Chris Simpson
& Brian Albert**

Unified Basketball

Grand Island High School



ESPN

NFL

Panthers 21 | Steelers 52 | FINAL
PIT > 7 TD by 7 different players Roethlisberger: 5 Pass TD



MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL
Giants at 49ers 8:15 ET ESPN

Mr. Chris Simpson

Business Education (20 years) @Grand Island HS

-Yearbook Advisor

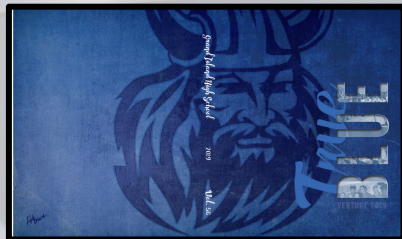
-DECA Co-Advisor

-Intramural Programs, Sporting Events

Internship Coordinator

Head Coach: V & JV Boys' Basketball (25 years)

Assistant Coach: Track & Softball



Mr. Brian Albert

**Special Education 17 years (9 @Grand Island)
Previous teaching experience in an agency for kids
with severe & profound disabilities, at an inner-city
school in a high-poverty area of Buffalo, NY**



We are here to talk about Unified Basketball and the experiences we have had in our community:

A Life-changing Experience

25 Years Coaching

Many more years playing...State Championships

22 Years Teaching/Teaching Assistant

There has not been an experience that I have had that can **even come close** to what we have experienced with this program!

Unified Basketball: A Life-changing Experience

17 years teaching

Never coached before

Sent an email saying I'd be "interested in learning more about the position"

6 months later, got a letter saying I was coaching



Why I Did It...many reasons!

I. As a kid...



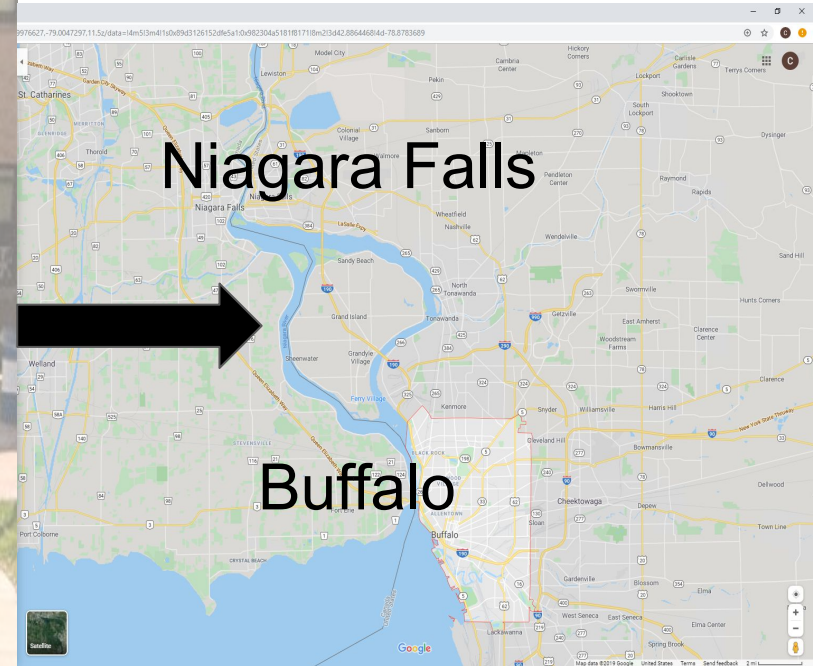
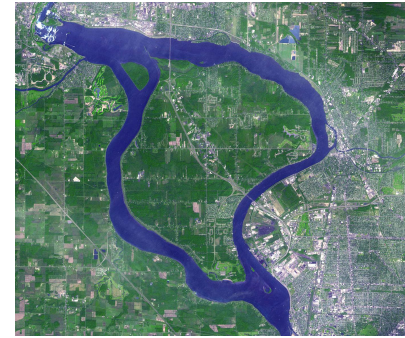
II. Big \$ Mike... "WWF"



III. Lunch Bunch/Yearbook...so excited!

Grand Island High School Grand Island, NY

Enrollment: 970 Students
District: 2400
Class "A" School
Mascot: Viking



Unified Sports

An inclusive sports program that unites students with and without intellectual differences as teammates for training and competition. About 1.4 million people worldwide participate in Unified sports, making it one of the fastest growing sports programs in the world.



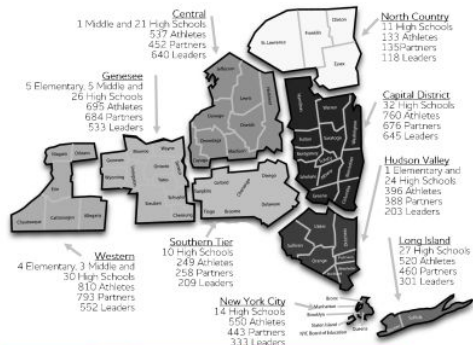
Unified Champion Schools

Schools that have incorporated a three-component model that combines Unified Sports, inclusive youth leadership, and whole-school engagement to create a climate of acceptance and inclusion across the entire school community.

"Before I started Unified, I would see my teammates in the hallway and we never said anything to each other, but now, I have been introduced to all sorts of people and I am so fortunate. Parents and students have told me how I was changing their lives, but honestly, they changed mine. This program needs to be spread throughout the world because it makes a difference."



STATEWIDE OVERVIEW



217

SCHOOLS ENGAGED

172

UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

147,067

SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

8,209

ATHLETES AND PARTNERS IN UNIFIED SPORTS

4,606 Competitive

4,113 Recreational

429 Player Development

3,534

YOUTH LEADERS

More than 3,000 athletes also #PlayUnified outside of school, across New York State in communities.



What is Unified Sports?

Definition: An inclusive sports program that includes both students with and without intellectual differences as teammates for training and competition.

***1, 400, 000 participated last school year

***Fastest growing sports program in the U.S.

What is Unified Basketball?

3 Students with Special Needs **"ATHLETES"**

2 Students without Special Needs **"PARTNERS"**

Playing together against other high school teams: Varsity Basketball Game

Grand Island's Inaugural Year: 2018



Our Team: Inaugural Season

Athletes:

CJ, Stephen, Jacob, Austin, Mary, April, Bryce, Nick, Jesus (CHUY), Krys

Partners:

Ally, Morgan, Katelyn, Ashley, Kaylee, Paul

Coaches:

Coach Simpson, Coach Albert, Coach Kool-Aid, Coach Simpson

It was a Sprint.....

- Practiced after school a few days per week: skill & drill, stretching, defense
- Motor Skills, cardio, races: competition
- End Practice with someone different making a free throw (JV, V, Unified)
- 8-team Scrimmage away to start the season
- 4 Road Games and 3 Home Games
- 1st Round Playoff game
- Final Culminating Event: every team plays
 - At the end of the game you recognize your team, awards are distributed, team pictures with the unified/special olympics signage
- Home Event(s) Included:
 - Ice Cream Social/Young Life Youth Group Night
 - Mrs. Kennedy Appreciation Night
 - Little League Night
 - ½ time dance
 - Karaoke between quarters



1st Season Continued.....

1st ever Varsity letters awarded to

students with special needs!



Awards



A Daunting Task?

What are some of the roadblocks standing between your students and a unified basketball program?

Some of ours:

- Funding
- Student Involvement
- Fielding an actual team
- Scheduling

How about you?



What did a home game look like?



FANS IN THE STANDS...**Mrs. Kennedy Appreciation Night**

*Long-time Grand Island Teacher

*Class Adviser, Club Adviser

*Attended many sports, clubs, music,
and theatrical events at GI

*****Wanted to honor her as she exudes the Unified Spirit of acceptance and inclusion for all!*****





Take a break....½ time if you will



1.

Make a beak shape
with each hand.
Open and close them
four times.



2.

Bend your arms
and flap them
like wings four
times.



3.

Wiggle your
hips and move
down to the



4.

Clap four times.
Repeat steps 1 to 4
four times. Hook

A mascot with a white and blue horned helmet, a long white beard, and a blue and white jacket is pointing towards the camera. Behind the mascot, a student is wearing a blue t-shirt with the Under Armour logo and the text "WEST SENEC" in yellow and blue. The background shows a gymnasium with blue bleachers and several school banners hanging on the wall.

Northern California Unified

A few Stories ... Paul

High functioning SWD's - common desire is to be "normal"

"Normal is a setting on the washing machine."

Paul:

"...they were willing to accept me with open arms. This made me think to myself how I should never let anyone feel like they are alone in this world..."

Treat them like every other kid



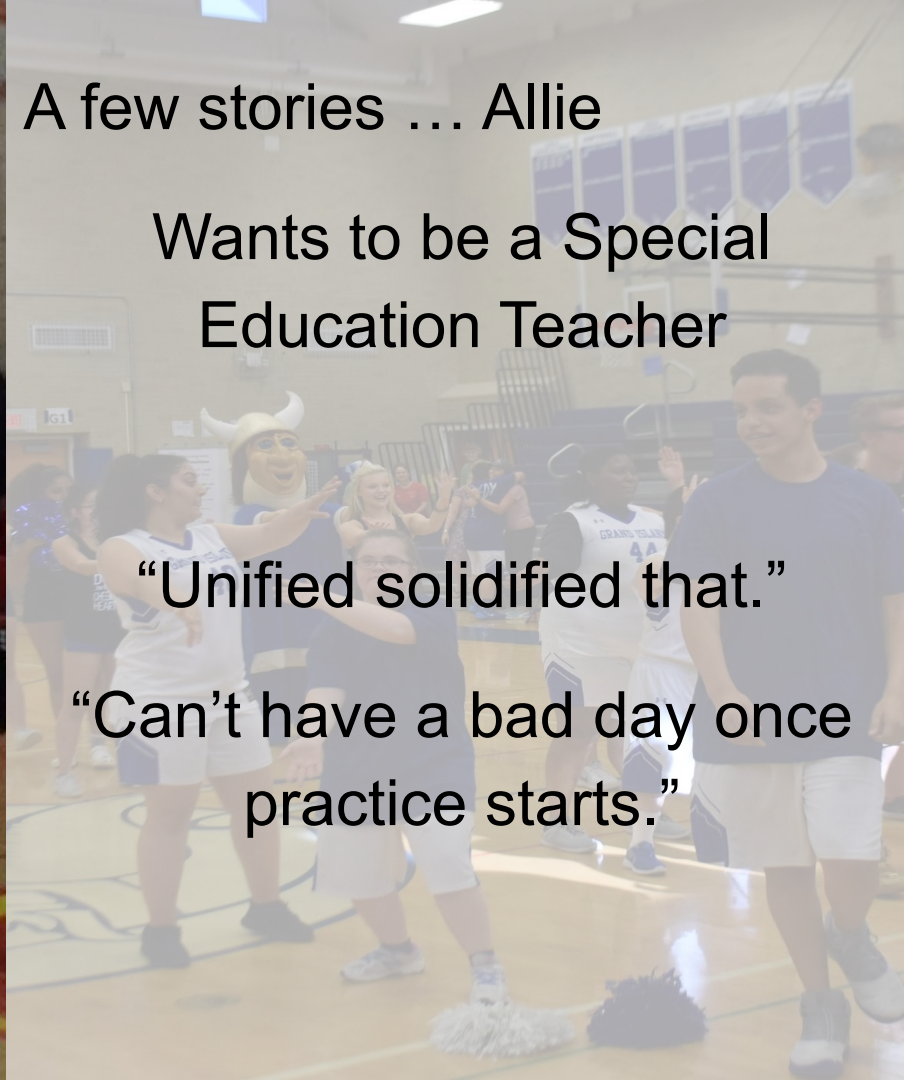


A few stories ... Allie

Wants to be a Special
Education Teacher

“Unified solidified that.”

“Can’t have a bad day once
practice starts.”



Friendship and Camaraderie....

“Bus Rides” Milkshakes, Player of the Game Awards, DJ
“Group Chats”

Chuy: “great win today!” after a loss...

The kids had so much fun, they didn’t realize we didn’t win.

Lacrosse Games: Lacrosse team came to a unified game, so some of the unified kids went to a lacrosse game!

Other Teams, Team Party



A Few Stories... "Queen Mary"

- *Has done it all!
 - *Played in the games
 - *Quiet in the Halls
 - *Different on the Court
 - *Star of ½ time: home or away
 - *Poses for pics
 - *Cheers teammates: Bench or Endline
- Gets better....



"There's More about Mary"

- *partner with a vocal group
- *want as many groups to attend>YES
- *Mary: back-up singer

- *"What so Proudly" Mary took over
- *Stole the Show!

- *Mary's latest accomplishment



WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

Whole-school Engagement and the Benefits! (video)

- *Benefits all students (with or without disabilities)**
- *Less bullying schoolwide**
- *Increased opportunities for all**
- *Opportunities for everyone to better themselves**
- *Student leadership (YAC: Youth Activation Committee)**
- *Special Olympics in many states offers seed money to get started**

How to become a unified champion school...

“Unified Champion Schools”

Schools who have Unified Programs in their district...

One of our goals...

More than just basketball!



Special Olympics
New York

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[Who We Are](#)

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Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®—based on Special Olympics' values, principles, practices, experiences and impacts to shape a generation that welcomes everyone.

[Get Started Today!](#)



INTERSCHOLASTIC UNIFIED SPORTS



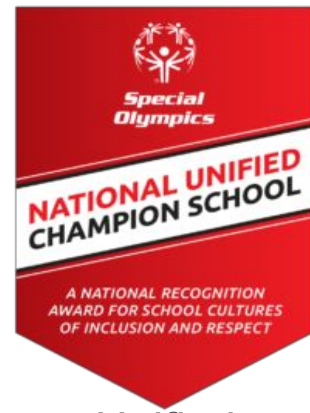
INCLUSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP



WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT



“Unified Champion Schools” More than just basketball!



Interscholastic Unified Sports having a team that competes in one of the many Unified Sports offered (basketball, bowling, baseball, XC)

Inclusive Youth Leadership (Youth Activation Committee or YAC): a group responsible for enhancing acceptance not only in the sport or sports offered but for the school and community as a whole and includes both students with and without disabilities

Whole School Engagement (2 Campaigns) The YAC or Youth Activation Committee should facilitate at least two events/campaigns directly aimed at creating a positive, accepting atmosphere in their school:

“SPREAD THE WORD TO END THE WORD” (R Word) & **“FANS IN THE STANDS”**

***Schools should be self-sustainable and have a plan to continue the program in place

A Daunting Task...continued

What are some of the ways your students, schools, and community could benefit from a unified basketball program?

Your responses...



Whole School Engagement...my classes.

Yearbook Advisor/Co-Advisor 20 Years(Club & Class: Perfect Fit)

Marketing Class: tickets, t-shirts (Player of the Game), posters, signs, logos, shirts, events (Young Life Youth Group, Mrs. Kennedy Appreciation Night, Little League Night: FANS IN THE STANDS)

Custodians and teachers and administrators OH MY!

(Lions and tigers and bears oh my!)


Teachers(past and present), families, custodians, cleaners, former principals/administrators, coaches, teams, clubs, town officials, law enforcement, firefighters, community organizations all attended or took part

**"THE U" UNIFIED
BASKETBALL GAME**

Monday, May 7th, 2018
5:00 PM
Vs. Akron Tigers

"THE U" #12

Unified Basketball




JESUS CISNEROS

"The U" #12

JESUS CISNEROS

Unified Basketball

"THE U" # 32



2018

JACOB MAZEN

"THE U" # 32

JACOB MAZEN

Unified Basketball

"THE U" # 40



2018

JASMIN DHILLON

"THE U" # 40

JASMIN DHILLON

Unified Basketball

"THE U" # 40



2018

JASON MESSING

"THE U" STUDENT COACH

JASON MESSING

Unified Basketball

"THE U" # 40



2018

JONATHAN SIMPSON

"THE U" STUDENT COACH

JONATHAN SIMPSON

Unified Basketball

COACH "THE U"



2018

MR. B. Albert

"THE U" COACH

MR. B. Albert

Unified Basketball

"THE U" # 34



2018

ALLISON FAY

"THE U" # 34

ALLISON FAY

Unified Basketball

"THE U" # 44



2018

APRIL BOOKER

"THE U" # 44

APRIL BOOKER

Unified Basketball

"THE U" # 22



2018

ASHLEY HOMA

"THE U" # 22

ASHLEY HOMA

Unified Basketball

"THE U" # 33



2018

AUSTIN HAAK

"THE U" # 33

AUSTIN HAAK

Home: Grand Island, NY

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:

This is Mr. Albert's first year working with a Unified Program. He has been a tremendous asset being both a Special Education teacher as well as working with most of the kids who play on the team. His classroom experience as a coach and teacher have really come in handy.



Home: Grand Island, NY

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:


Allison is in her first year with the Unified Basketball team. She will participate as a partner in both the games as well as the 1/2 time competitions. Allison is part of the Class of 2020 at Grand Island (sophomore).



Born: 3/18/1996 Home: Grand Island, NY

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:

April has done a super job playing the forward position. Justin Bieber is her favorite musical artist and loves the show Henry Danger. April is a 12th grader this year and is playing her first year with the Unified Team.



Home: Grand Island, NY

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:

Ashley is a senior at the high school and will be participating in both the games and the 1/2 time skills competitions. Ashley has been an Editor with the Venture Yearbook for three years and has been a part of the cheerleading program at the school.



Home: Grand Island, NY

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:

Austin is in his first year with the Unified Team. He is the team's Power Forward and may compete in the skills competition during Unified Games. He has a great shot around the basket.



Playing Cards Continued...

Unified Basketball

"THE U" # 2



2018

MARY SZUMLA




"THE U" # 2

MARY SZUMLA

Born: 10/12/2000 Home: Grand Island, NY

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:

Mary is playing her first Unified Basketball season. Her favorite song is Peter Pan. The food she loves to eat is Ribs and her favorite TV show is Full House.



Unified Basketball

"THE U" # 30



2018

NICK PAYAN



"THE U" # 30

NICK PAYAN

Home: Grand Island, NY

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:

Nick is starting his first season with the Unified Basketball team. Nick is currently a senior at the high school. Nick loves listening to any Bruno Mars songs and chowing down on Gluten-Free pizza. His favorite TV show to watch is Pair of Kings.



Unified Basketball

"THE U" 00



2018

PAUL SINGH



"THE U" 00

PAUL SINGH

Home: Grand Island, NY

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:

Paul is a sophomore at Grand Island High School and was a late comer to the program. He found his way to us and will be a great asset to the team, helping rebound when needed. He will also be involved in both games and the 1/2 time competitions.



Unified Basketball

TEAM PICTURE



"THE U"



2018

"The U"



"THE U"

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:

The Unified team had its inaugural season during the 2017-'18 school year. The team consisted of both male and female players and partners as well as students from each grade at the high school. Mr. Christopher Simpson and Mr. Brian Albert were coaches.



Unified Basketball

HEAD COACH

"THE U"



2018

Mr. C. Simpson




"THE U" HEAD COACH

MR. C. SIMPSON

Home: Grand Island, NY

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:

Mr. Simpson is in his first year as coach of the Unified Team. He is also the yearbook adviser as well as the boys' JV basketball coach and DECA co-advisor. He teaches Business Education classes in the high school and has been in the building since 1998-99.



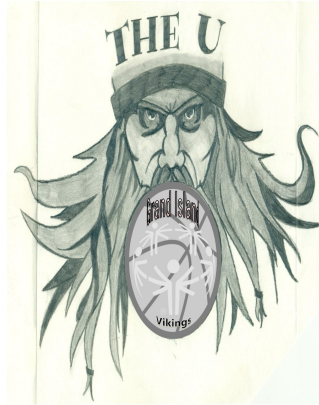
*Marketing Students>Logos

*Classes: print ads, social media, commercials

*Many Assignments: Unified Related

*Publicity for team/cement ideas class

*Chance to talk acceptance and being good people in class



Team Logo(s)

5:30

LTE

grand island high school un...

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**Grand Island High School Unified Basketball**

1 unread post · Member since May

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**Chris Simpson** ▶ **Grand Ideas for Grand Island**

May 4, 2018 · Unified Basketball game @Grand Island High School Monday, May 7th 5:00PM The Grand Island Unified basketball te...



59

7 Comments 8 Shares

**See All Seen Posts for 'grand island high school unified basketball'****Deanna Garvey Butcher** ▶ **Grand Ideas for Grand Island**

Jan 20 · ...spread the word for the Grand Island High School Varsity Unified Basketball team!! If you have been able to attend one...



Social Media:
Thank you
Kaylee Butcher(partner)
and
Tricia Palmeri(parent)

SIMPSON VIDEO



5:24

LTE



grandislandunified v

19
Posts233
Followers603
Following**GrandIsland Unified Basketball**
School Sports Team

One love... One heart... One team... Unified!!
2019 Basketball Season!!!!!! #choosetoinclude
www.specialolympics-ny.org/

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New



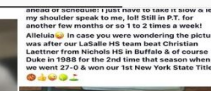
#UnifiedQueen #wholeschoolinclusion



words come
Down Syndrome Doesn't Stop Homecoming
Mary loves being homecoming queen

Maureen McCowan

Like Comment Share



APRIL BOOKER
ANTHONY PIRELLI
BRUCE WOLF
MARY KULAKA (will not be in attendance tonight but will still be announced)

We will be off on Friday (three home games in one week are a lot) and on the road for two games on Monday and Thursday.

Coach Simpson

Great Victory last night...even better was keeping our cool when things got a little choppy!

Tonight is a special night and we will be honoring and introducing our seniors after our normal team line-up to encourage 4 parents, friends, relatives, etc. would like to walk out with our seniors when they are announced please feel free to. We will have you come down to the hallway where our locker room is at about 5:00PM. We would love for parents to meet our seniors and when announced.

The seniors we are honoring include:
APRIL BOOKER
ANTHONY PIRELLI
BRUCE WOLF
MARY KULAKA (will not be in attendance tonight but will still be announced)

Coach Simpson



Uniforms/Shirts designed by players



Logo designed by marketing students

ALI vs FRAZIER LEBRON vs DURANT MACHINE GUN KELLY vs EMINEM
RED SOX vs. YANKEES BLUE vs. WHITE

Game Summaries

Epic battles we have known and experienced....As Jacob Mazeh entered the doors of the high school, we knew there was something different about him. He had a little more "Swagger" than usual. As Partner McKenna Prochaska tried to figure out what he was trying to communicate, the West Seneca team entered the gym. Turns out Steven, Jacob's best friend, played on the unified team at West Seneca. The plan was to have them go head to head in the 3rd quarter. *mano a mano, one on one, Jacob and Steven.*

Hard to do when you are hugging, smiling, and high-fiving Jacob! Instead the epic battle turned out on the court as the West Seneca combined team (West and East) and the Vikings traded baskets early like Frazier and Ali traded jabs, Durant and Lebron traded dunks, MGK and Eminem traded rhymes. After the final buzzer went off, the Vikings emerged as victors during this battle. Today, The G.I. Unified team would be the ones who would control the Seven Kingdoms of Unified, and to sit atop the Iron Throne of hoops!

CJ Law again led the team with a double-double, scoring 12 points and grabbing 11 big boards. Krys Colautto knotted a few more bucket as well as Anthony Pirinelli who started off the game with a big three from "Downton" (Abbey). Mazeh got himself into the scoring book as well knocking down a free throw line "J" and sending his team and friend Steven into a celebration frenzy!

Great Job to all of the players on both teams. They did a fantastic job competing as well as being great sports and showing the Viking Pride we are always hearing about in our district! Thank You also to Mr. Sweeney for taking part in the halftime shoot with Krys Colautto...the two made a great combo and knocked down too many shots to even count!

"The U" plays home again on Wednesday and Thursday. Please make it a point to get to one of the games as our players would love to see everyone from the school come and support them. These will be the last two home games this year unless the team is granted a home playoff game...we'll have to see how the rest of the schedule turns out.

Wednesday we are challenging all clubs, classes, and sports that take place in the high school to come out to the game. Wear your jersey, club shirt, musical attire, etc. I am torn between my yearbook long-sleeved dri-fit and unified shirt...maybe I will go one half yearbook and one half Unified...players may not be happy! Thursday is our SENIOR NIGHT as we will be honoring our 12th graders from this year. This may also be your last chance to see a shortened version of Mr. Murray's Blue and White Shoe Routine! You never know when it will take place!

Game Summaries

The Grand Island Unified basketball team most likely played its last home game of the year, falling just short of the offensive output of current North Division champions Akron 41-37. The end of this game puts **"The U"** into the toughest part of its schedule with two road league games and then playoffs, probably both at another gym.

Almost every Viking player found their way into the scorebook. Law, Wolf, Colautto, Palmeri, Pirinelli, Haak, and Booker all had marks in the scorebook for baskets. Law again led the team in rebounds and blocks while Palmeri grabbed his fair share of boards. Booker and Colautto played their signature defense while Jacob Mazeh(Sunset Shimmer) also improved on getting back to the paint to protect our hoop when the other team had the ball, earning him Player of the Game in the locker room.

The game was emotional as some of our seniors played what may be their last home game of their Unified careers! Honored before the game were senior Mary Szumla, Bryce Wolf, April Booker, Anthony Pirinelli, and McKenna Prochaska. These players will be missed next year but are always welcome back to OUR gym...**Once a Viking, Always a Viking!**

At halftime the crowd was treated to an incredible abbreviated rendition of the **Blue and White shoe routine** by Mr. Kevin Murray. The routine is a staple at Grand Island like the rock, the hill in the back of the school, Pep Rally, the volleyball tournament, Shadow Day/Job Search, and Clash of the Vikings. Everyone enjoyed the show put on and the Unified team is very grateful to have Mr. Murray make his routine part of their game experience!

Even though it will be tough, I think our team is up to the road challenge as they have pushed themselves everyday at games and practices. I also think they are ready for the challenge because the lyrics in the song (On the Road Again) represent the team this and last year...On the bus there is singing, dancing, and camaraderie...sometimes milkshakes! But the best part is our players know they are **"on the road with their**

friends, goin' places they've never been." They will compete for the entire game, be great teammates, and good sports to the fans, other players, and officials. **"Like a band of Gypsies goin' down the highway."** **"Insisting that the world keep turnin' our Way!"** Thank You again for all of the support this year and for all of the fans including parents, faculty, staff, and friends of **"The U"** who were at our senior night game or helped with something to prepare!
Coach Simpson

On the road again

I just can't wait to get on the road again

The life I love is makin' music with my friends

And I can't wait to get on the road again

On the road again

Goin' places that I've never been

Seein' things that I may never see again

And I can't wait to get on the road again

Here we go, on the road again

Like a band of Gypsies we go down the highway

We're the best of friends

Insisting that the world keep turnin' our way

And our way is on the road again

I just can't wait to get on the road again

The life I love is makin' music with my friends

And I can't wait to get on the road again, break free

And I can't wait to get on the road again

Game Summaries

"Threeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!" was heard throughout the school (maybe Grand Island) from Mark Gorton's booming voice as Bryce Wolf knocked down 5 treys to lead the Grand Island Unified team and their charge against the Cheektowaga Warriors. Three after three after three...the scoreboard was **"Lit!"**

Grand Island's Unified team battled back after another slow offensive start to take the lead for a good portion of the fourth quarter and from there it was back and forth the rest of the way. Aside from Bryce's triples, Krys Colautto "came back like a Boomerang," (JoJo Siwa) as she scored three back-to-back baskets to put the Vikings in the lead. Krys' defense is "Only Getting Better" (JoJo Siwa again) as she pressured the other team into a few turnovers to get the Vikings a shot to win near the end of the game.

CJ Law and Stephen Palmeri led the defensive charge helping rebound and contest shots. CJ finished with 12 rebounds and blocked 4 shots. Anthony Pirinelli also helped out on the defensive side of the court, pressuring the other team into tough shots.

At halftime, Mary Szumla threw down a couple of shots on the **"Tim Williamson Commemorative Hoop"** during the skills competition as well as Jillian Wadell knocking a couple of shots down herself. Mary also earned M.V.P. honors with her dance moves as Bryce earned Honorable Mention for his Cha Cha Slide. The team was joined by many parents, students, faculty, staff, and other fans for the halftime spectacular...Mr. Kevin Murray and Kathy Kemp were our dance winners from the show!

The second half turned out to be an up and down battle for both teams. The Vikings and Warriors traded baskets for a while and then both turned up the defense in the 3rd quarter. Grand Island got the ball back after a great inside shot by one of the Cheektowaga players and had a chance to tie the game. A shot by Bryce went in and out and Cheektowaga secured the rebound. As they advanced the ball past half court, CJ Law made a last effort for the steal and came up with it. He pushed up the court with seconds remaining and got off one last attempt that went a little high but close.

Again it was another great experience from all who attended. Even the Cheektowaga head coach sent me a message, thanking us for the fun time their whole team had. The officials after the game, who I normally don't talk to for some reason after JV games, approached me and said, **"You guys do it right here at Grand Island...Congratulations!"**

Special thanks to all of the members of the team who decorated the gym, members of the Accounting Stud class, Interns, and Marketing I students who volunteered to make signs and posters for our players, Mr. Gorton for the incredible emcee job he does, Olivia Ruiz and her young band of cheerleaders, the custodial staff for preparing the gym, and all of the people who attended the game!

The Unified team is thrilled to have all of the support from the students, faculty, staff, administrators, parents and sponsors. A few students in my Principles of Marketing-I class (Yearbook Production), Marissa Mistriner and Kaylin Frost, volunteered to put together a program for our team and did a fantastic job as well.

Thank You to our sponsors who are helping fund some of the things we are doing this year as well as making a donation to the Special Olympics Organization. They are included in our program. Sponsors so far include:

Rebecca Simpson: Hunt Real Estate Patrick Garvey Enchanting Birthdays Grand Island Fire Department Dick and Jenny's Unique Theatre Company
The Laurendi Home Selling Team: Howard Hannah Autism Support Group Ace Relocation Systems Momma De's Veronica Connor Grade 8 Entrepreneurs
Mike Madigan Live Love Buffalo Riverview Chiropractic

On Monday, the Unified team will take on West Seneca West at home with a 5:00PM start. The players would love to see as many people at the game as possible. It is a great experience and entertainment for all ages.

The game will see a halftime dance as well as a "PIE IN THE FACE" event which will include a handful of our teachers and coaching staff. The event will again raise money for both the Unified team as well as donation to Special Olympics at the end of the school year. If you would like to be included please feel free to come to the game. If you would like to donate anything without being "pied," please see me for more information.

Again THANK YOU for all of your support! Coach Simpson

Parents, Employees, and former teachers...

Thank you 2019UNIFIED x



Keller, Nannette <NannetteKeller@gicsd.org>

Thu, May 16, 1:09 PM



to me ▾

Dear Chris,

I attended the first Unified game last night and absolutely loved it! It was the best hour of my week, by far! Thanks for doing such an awesome job with the team- everyone should experience these games! And I met and sat with your mom, who is so sweet!

Congratulations and thanks for all you do for our students!

Blessings,
Nan

"Watching your game and reading your e-mails brought me to tears...in a good way!"

"Your team includes some of the most accepting people I have ever known."

"You guys do it right here at Grand Island!"

"How do all schools not have a Unified Program?"

"The most rewarding school event I have ever seen."



2019

Unified Varsity Basketball



Playoffs



New to G.I. as a freshman

Tough time making friends

Often said insulting things to his classmates



A few stories...Austin

Hates loud noises, crowds etc...

But comes to basketball every time

Wears his uniform around the house

Plays the same basketball song over and over again on youtube the day before practices start for the year

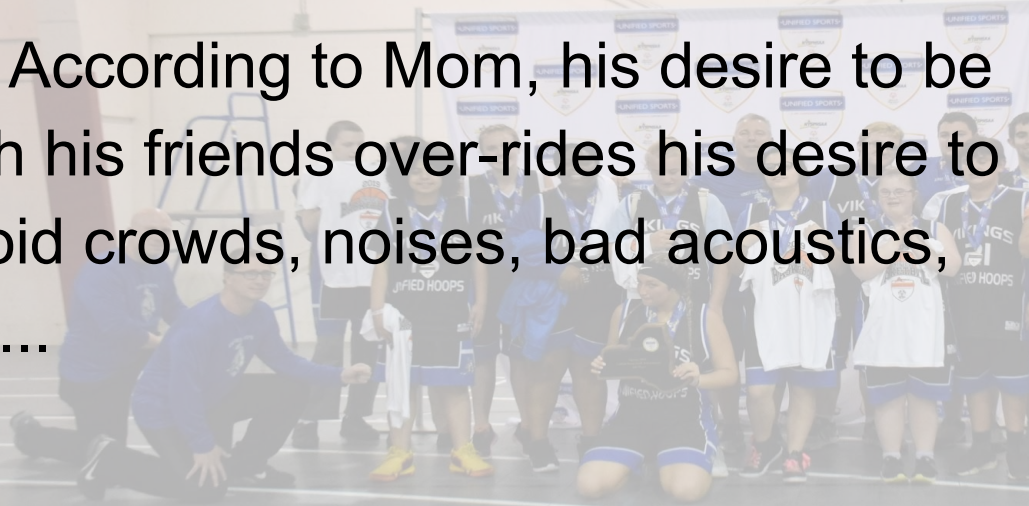
Why?



Why does he do it?

Kind of like Christopher...

According to Mom, his desire to be with his friends over-rides his desire to avoid crowds, noises, bad acoustics, etc...



national bestseller

the curious incident
of the dog
in the night-time



a novel by

mark haddon

"Gloriously eccentric and wonderfully intelligent,"

—The Boston Globe



A Few Stories...CJ

CJ - “King Creature”

Changes:

Posture

Confidence

Defender

Self-discovery

Cooking

Boxing



“...that is the one thing I looked forward to.”

“...literally brightens your day every time.”

Favorite part: the games - it is “packed out” every time, and he can get all of the kids involved.

"The Tornado"

***Name: Justin S.**

***Player with Special Needs**

***Quiet in class**

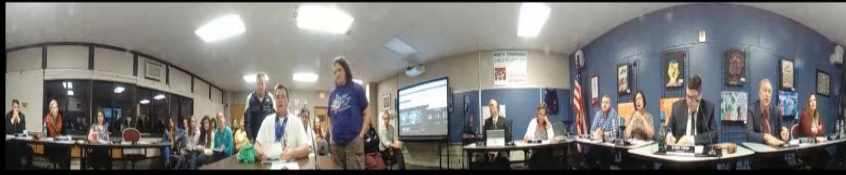
***Not many knew him**

***"TORNADO"**

*****Unified may have been the best thing to happen to him!**



2nd Year...Transferred to a different High School..."UPSET!"
They did not have Unified so what did he do?



Coach Tornado



GRAND
ISLAND



A few Stories ... Stephen

9th grade: glasses crusher!

Difficulty regulating emotions, especially failure

10th grade: came to support friends on the unified team

Eventually joined the team and played

Got frustrated (bad plays, fouls, missed shots, etc...)

Had to get back in the game







Many Big & Small Victories with our ATHLETES.....

Partner Benefits

Not just the Athletes that benefit...

- Partners Learn, Show, and Model Acceptance
- Face Challenges as we all do with Students with Special Needs (opportunities)
- Role Models for the rest of the school and adults as well
- Play a Varsity Sport
- Making Friends (Life-long/Tornado)
- Leadership: what events, what type of fundraisers, Decision-making

WHAT A LESSON? Opportunities for patience, caring, sharing, friendship

KATELYN/ALLY: Education Candidates: Students with Exceptional Needs

Unified/Special Olympics Links

[Unified Champion School Resources](#)

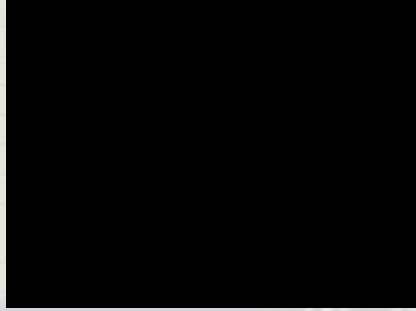
[Special Olympics Core Messaging Package](#)

[New York State Public High School Athletic Association Unified Information](#)

[State by State Special Olympics Websites](#)



Jacob



A word from our
players...

Stephen



Grandma DAD Aunt MOM Uncle Grandpa

How would a parent react to seeing their son/daughter scoring a basket in their first ever Varsity game when they probably thought they would not ever play on any high school sports team?

Tears of Joy Smiles from Ear to Ear HUGS



A word from our players...

Kaylee



A word from our Superintendent... Dr. Brian Graham



BEST PRACTICES: Things we have done...

- 
- Staff Appreciation Night: Get the faculty & staff involved
 - Team bonding activities
 - ½ time dances
 - Get both teams (and the crowd) dancing together
 - Practice Outline
 - Team Warm-up Shirts/Sweats
 - Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat
 - Game Summaries E-mailed after every game
 - End of the year Celebration
 - Award Varsity Letters
 - End Practice with someone different making a free throw
 - Club or Sports Team Night
 - Milkshakes, pizza, etc...
 - Fundraising Events
 - Program for Home Games
 - Tickets for Home Games
 - Snack Basket
 - YAC (Youth Activation Committee)
 - Club Challenge: who can get the most members to a game
 - Individual Awards/Certificates
 - Bring them to a Board meeting
 - Themed Home Games (Veterans, little league, politician)

In Closing...

A few pictures to emphasize what we feel are the biggest benefits of having a Unified Program (Basketball):



Things on our Horizon:

*Becoming a Unified Champion School

**Getting Bowling in place this year for our students

***Taking The Polar Plunge to raise funds for our team and Special Olympics



participation



**Jacob scoring
his first basket...**

**-Withdrawn &
uses Left Hand
exclusively**

**-Scored and
threw both hands
up in the air**

**Athlete and
Partner
celebrating with
him**



"Confidence"



Nick

Do you think
he gained
some
confidence
playing
Unified
?

Mary S. Athlete: 1st Hoop!

Coach Simpson

Coach Albert

Mark G. AV/Tech

Karen S. VP

Brian G. Superintendent

Jorge C. Autism Coach

Desiree A. (Daughter)

Justin S. Player from other school; helped coach

Sean R; Basketball

Team/Coach

Connor R. & Kaylee

Partners

April B., Anthony P.,

Jillian W. Mike S.,

Stephen P. Athletes



Any questions...

Thank you!

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