

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The Archway Schools Kickoff Special Olympics Inspired Event**

*The 2018 Archway Games held its Opening Ceremony today*

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**ATCO, NEW JERSEY** (August 10, 2018) – This morning the Archway Schools kicked off the 10th Annual Archway Games, inspired by the Special Olympics, to gear up for next week's festivities. Today's Opening Ceremony consisted of a parade, introduction and procession of teams, the National Anthem was beautifully sung by former Archway student, the (cardboard) torch was 'lit', there was even a special guest speaker. Before closing remarks, an oath was sworn by athletes and judges in the name of sportsmanship, fairness and fun. This year's games will take place Monday, August 13<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, August 16<sup>th</sup> with a Closing Ceremony on Friday, August 17<sup>th</sup>.

The Archway Games is a fun annual event that gives students an opportunity to compete in activities, work on skills including fine and gross motor, team building and sportsmanship. All of the students at the Archway Schools have an opportunity to interact with each other on different levels while cheering each other on. Thanks to a collaborative effort between staff members, the Archway Games is celebrating its 10 year anniversary this year.

Susan Lafferty, Executive Director, the Archway Schools, gave the opening remarks, "This event is all about team spirit, comradery and working together, as well as addressing goals and objectives in their Individualized Education Plans. Between related services, staff and students they really put a lot of thought, creativity and hard work into this event. Each year participation grows and we couldn't be happier to see everyone coming together to support each other."

Former student Peri Boone did a wonderful job singing the National Anthem and current student Sebastian Lewandowski gave an excellent introduction to special guest speaker, Heather Fernandez Schafer. Heather is a former Archway School Teacher and former Special Olympics Coach. After spending time with children she taught at the Archway Schools, she was inspired to create something similar for the students. Along with help and support of colleagues, The Archway Games began in 2008.

Classrooms from both schools come up with their own 'country' names and as usual, they got very creative. The team names include: The Mighty Popsicles from Freezerland, The Little Kahunas from The Island of Dave, The Doodlebops from Dong City, The Connect 4 from Hasbro, The Hot Shots from USA, The Rainbow 9 from Burger King Yes, The Olympians from Camp Halfbloods, The Goofy Goobers from Goober



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Town, The Tsunamis from Atlantis, The Chillin' Villians from The Isle of the Lost, The Coco Locos from the Riviera Marigold, The Minute Men from The Boston Harbor, The MARVEL-ous 16 from Capes-N-Masks, The Superkids from Krypton, The Sparkle Specialists from The Mystery Gem Island, The Omegas from the Omega Town, The 20's Sunny's from Sunny Island, The Bug Patrol from Skeeterville, The Leen's Jellybeans from Candyland, The Gryffindor Gand from Hogwarts, The Scrabble World from Scrabble Babble Island, Team Dino-myte! From Pangoea.

In addition to creating their own team names, the students also got to choose the activities they play and compete in. Some of these games are classics and others are games the students came up with themselves. School staff members do their best to bring these games to life during the Archway Games the following week. Some of the activities include: The Web Shooters, Sugar Skull Bowling, Triceratops Ring Toss, Surf Board Races, The Jelly Bean Jump, Hot Shots, Tidal Wave, Hula Groove, Giant Angry Birds, Color Connect, Flag Football, Capture the Flag, Goober Balls, Holy Bucket, Music Games, X-Ray Vision Memory Game, Bumble Bee Toss, an Inflatable Obstacle Course, Giant Hungry Hippos, Derby Race, Diving and Bull Ride competitions.

Next week, The Archway Games will take place on Monday, August 13<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, August 16<sup>th</sup>. Students will participate in morning and afternoon games followed by a Closing Ceremony in which medals will be distributed to the winning teams, individuals as well as to each student for their participation. The event will conclude with an ice cream party.



*Staff and students enter during the processional of teams at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Archway Games.*



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*Special guest speaker, Heather Fernandez Schafer, former Archway teacher, who helped start the event.*



*Let the (Archway) games begin!*



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*Archway students and staff members are ready for next week's games.*

The Archway Schools are located around a lake at Archway Programs' (nonprofit) headquarters in Atco. Since the early 1960s, the schools have been providing numerous educational programs and services, serving special needs children, teens and young adults throughout New Jersey, between the ages of three and twenty-one. The Archway Schools use a successful model unique to each program, providing children and young adults with a safe, structured and compassionate atmosphere as staff discovers and builds on each student's strengths to overcome barriers, teaching coping and social skills. The Archway Schools offer a diversified approach to public school districts seeking out-of-district placement for students experiencing multiple, behavioral and autistic disabilities. This includes providing students with the skills needed to successfully transition from school to adult life. Students at the Archway Schools participate in the Career Education Program which provides opportunities to learn in the classroom and on-the-job skills necessary to transition from school-to-work, with a number of vocational and career training experiences. This includes on-campus and off-campus job samplings, cooperative education, sheltered workshop phrases, classroom instruction and job placement. For students who cannot be placed into a vocational or trade school, it gives them an option, as the program also provides work-readiness skills, increased social and independent skills gained in a work environment. The schools serve students from preschool throughout twelfth grade (up to 21 years of age) with close to 240 students currently enrolled.

**For more information on Archway Programs, visit [www.archwayprograms.org](http://www.archwayprograms.org).**

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### **About Archway Programs**

*Since 1965, Archway Programs has been meeting the individualized needs of thousands of families throughout the state of New Jersey. Archway Programs is a diverse, non-profit, human services organization which includes approved private schools for students with disabilities in addition to several model programs providing unmatched services. Built on a solid foundation of core values, providing safety, possessing compassion and promoting individuality, Archway Programs strives to improve the life of every individual served. Our goal is to ensure that each individual's needs are met and customized services are provided and partnered with passionate, committed and talented professionals in a safe environment. Over 440 individuals are currently employed by Archway Programs and this dedicated and talented staff provides services to over 1,800 children and adults requiring individualized care. Please visit [www.archwayprograms.org](http://www.archwayprograms.org) for more information.*



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