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Special Olympics turns 40

Athletes past and present gather at Soldier Field to celebrate landmark anniversary of event that



was the brainchild of Justice Anne Burke.

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Special Olympics marks 40 years of building hope

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Jimmy Moy wore so many shiny medals around his neck, he looked like a rap star.

"This is for long jump," he explained, holding up a gold disc on a red, white and blue ribbon. "That's for running. We have a lot more at home."

Moy, who has Down syndrome, has participated for more than 20 years in Special Olympics Chicago, through the public schools. The 28-year-old Chicago man was at Soldier Field with other past and present

Olympians to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the first Special Olympics on July 20, 1968.

"It's really a joy," Moy's sister Nancy Moy said of the Special Olympics. "It builds confidence."

Born in Chicago, the Special Olympics was the brainchild of Anne McGlone Burke, then a physical education teacher with the Chicago Park District. She started what was supposed to be a one-time athletic competition for kids with special needs. Burke is now an Illinois Supreme Court justice, and is married to Ald. Edward M. Burke (14th).

In 1968, Anne Burke approached Eunice Kennedy



Eunice Kennedy Shriver was on hand for the first Special Olympics at Soldier Field in July 1968.

Shriver, the sister of Robert Kennedy, to fund the event. The Kennedy Foundation granted \$25,000, and Shriver gathered 1,000 athletes from across the country to participate.

The event has since grown to involve 175 countries. Last year, the International Special Olympics Games were held in Shanghai and included 7,500 ath-

letes from around the world.

"I'd like to believe the Special Olympics helped ... to expand the possibility of hope throughout our planet," said Burke, speaking at Saturday's event. "No one has been more effective at creating global friendships than our special athletes. They have helped to turn all hearts around."

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