



Towers Expand their Reach at the 2013 World Dwarf Games
By Clinton Brown – NYSILC Council Member

The Towers entered the 2013 World Games primarily as a basketball team, but with some last minute roster changes, the metamorphosis to a true athletic program was about to take place. East Lansing, Michigan on the campus of Michigan State University, the Towers gathered along with over 400 athletes from 23 Countries to participate in what can be equated to the Olympics for Little People. Over the 8 days of competition from August 3rd – 10th, 2013, the Towers would expand their horizons outside of the basketball court and compete strong in field, swimming, soccer, volleyball, badminton, table tennis, and team boccia. On the first weekend of the games, Justin Rickert, would start the week off with an outstanding performance in the Javelin, winning gold and edging out the reigning gold medalist. In Swimming, Nic Novicki took medals in the 25 and 50 meter race. Monday the 5th would set the competitive stage for most of the team events during the week, with a full day of soccer.



Far Right front: Clinton Brown with Towers Team Members

A consolation bracket of 12 teams would mean that with one loss, a team could potentially play 5 games in one day, more than any other DAAA national ever put on. A random draw set the Towers up against the reigning silver medalists from Belfast four years prior and boy, did they ever take them to the brink of elimination! After starting off to a 2-0 lead, exciting the crowd and stunning the favorites for a bit, the Towers hit half time with a 2-1 lead. The Towers had never medaled in prior DAAA national events for soccer, so this would be a big win for the team to pull off. The Towers could not light the lamp in the second half and gave up the lead shortly into the second half. A tight next ten minutes would see the Towers relinquish their lead with three minutes to go in the game and lose their opening match 3-2. Despite the loss, the Towers knew that this year they had some serious game on the soccer field and immediately set their sights on the bronze medal. Well, when a champion puts their mind to something guess what happens?

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You got it, the Towers reeled off four straight wins over the next five hours, against 2 USA teams, a Great Britain team, and team Australia, scoring a combined 23 goals and allowing only 3 goals. A huge victory for the team, and a sign of things to come as newcomers Zach Shattuck, Stephen Olesik, and Danh Trang helped change the face of Towers soccer. The Towers would go on to grab a Bronze medal in soccer and helped to reinvigorate the teams' enthusiasm to medal in as many sports as possible.

After essentially a day of rest on Tuesday, Wednesday would bring the first half of basketball. The Towers would make quick work of a USA squad to set the stage for a battle versus an Australian team that had been practicing weekly over the last few years for this. The Towers through the three point shooting of Justin Rickert and their lock down defense would hold Australia to just 17 points while scoring 24 to edge the Aussies. Setting up a memorable gold medal game versus the team they had beat the last three consecutive years at DAAA nationals.

Thursday would be a day to remember for the Towers. Volleyball captain John Horton would lead the charge organizing his troops to run through a round robin tournament like Mike Tyson in the 80's knocking opponents out with one big punch at a time. Like Soccer, Volleyball is a sport the Towers as a team have never medaled in all, all of a sudden now a medal didn't seem that far out of reach. As they beat opponents, they came up against the current reigning USA National Champs, like Ali v Frazier, a heavyweight bout was about to take place. In the first set, the Towers lost barely, going down 1 set to none. The second set saw the Towers go down 13-8, but a comeback for the ages was about to transpire. The Towers would come back to win 23-21 and the crowd in favor of the Towers would soon come alive. In the rubber match set 3 the Towers would exchange right hooks with the former champs and come out victorious, sending them out of the medal bracket.

Within a few hours of that game, the Towers Volleyball team would be accept the Gold medal and become the new world champions in Volleyball.

Friday would be an extremely significant day for the World Games as they would bring Floor Hockey to the open division for the first time ever. Kids from the ages of 4 years old through adults would come away with smiles from ear to ear as they would get to play for the first time in the United States a great sport with competitors of like size. What an incredible site to see and I was so proud to lead the charge and bring this sport to the forefront of DAAA. Hopefully we will see this in San Diego and future DAAA National competitions. The Towers would not come away with a medal in floor hockey but would go 1-1 in their two early games.

The final day of competition would bring the last event of the week and probably the most anticipated one of them for this team. That would be the gold medal game for open basketball. A title that the Towers have held for the last three years. With a re-worked roster and an opponent with a full squad, the Towers knew it would be a slug fest. Shots were exchanged and no lead ever went over five points, however, going into the half the Towers were up three points. Both sides were playing a bit tight knowing mistakes were at a premium. Despite going into the fourth quarter up by two, foul trouble and some offensive woes would lead to a three point defeat as the Towers would ultimately lose the game 29-26. The Towers would come away with a silver medal in basketball nonetheless and their heads held high as they received a showering of compliments from spectators for a hard fought game. The crowd sure as heck got what they paid for, as the bronze medal game was decided by three points as well.

The team came away with a week of terrific memories that will last a life time and a renewed interest in Volleyball, Soccer, and Floor Hockey. It's safe to say that practice weekends this coming year will consist of more than just free throws and layup lines, they'll be some corner kicks and volleyball sprinkled in there for sure. One major take away from this week is the tremendous respect and admiration we gained for all our opponents and competitors, the hard work that everyone put in was seen out there on the field of play every day. For more information about how the games faired check out: <http://www.worldwarfgames.org/>

New Models of Health for New York: Medicaid Health Homes

By Patty Black

At the present time, New York State's Medicaid program serves over 5 million people. Roughly 975,000 individuals within this group require more complex medical and long term care due to chronic health care needs. Due to their health care requirements, they meet the federal requirements for being part of a Medicaid sponsored mode of service that builds upon the Medical Home model.

A significant amount of the Medicaid dollars were being spent on the health needs of this part of the Medicaid population. A new model of care management was needed to not only rein in costs but to improve long term health outcomes for these people facing chronic health care needs.

This care management service model is known as a *Medicaid Health Home*. Using this service model, a person with a chronic condition would have a "team" that would work to communicate comprehensively with each other so that all of their diverse health care needs are met effectively. A "care manager" would lead the team for each individual enrolled in a Health Home, and would make sure a person would receive the timely and proper care they need in order to keep them away from unnecessary emergency room visits and also out of the hospital. Actually, individual health plans are written up and agreed upon and signed by all members of the individual's team ahead of time. When a crisis occurs, a plan would be in place for coping with it in a more effective way. For example, suppose a young adult with several chronic conditions like Diabetes, Mental Health needs like chronic anxiety, and hypertension has a panic attack. They may assume a need for ER care – in the past they may have made many visits that turned out to be related to the chronic anxiety. With the assistance of the network of helpers on the health home team, this person could call one of these folks *first* and explain their feelings and symptoms and steps could be determined that would likely save an unnecessary visit to the ER.

All of the health records from each separate provider a person might access would be shared electronically amongst them all so that there are no excess appointments or neglect of the person. Hence comes the term "health home" – the person would have a virtual health home when all of the services are tied together in order to keep them at an optimum level of health. These services come from networks including the primary health providers, health plans and community-based organizations.



The main entity for providing and directing all this patient-focused care is the *Health Home Provider*. The providers are the ones who are responsible for bringing down preventable health care prices, reducing ER visits that can be avoided and preventing unnecessary hospital admissions. They would also be directly responsible for improving health outcomes by providing for primary medical, specialty and behavioral health care. They would do this through providing services directly or through contracting with selected service providers for select, integrated care for all of the patients in their plans.

The Social Security Act (Section 1945 (h) (4)) defines the mandates that designated health home service providers must offer. Several of these include comprehensive care management, transitional care from inpatient to other settings, appropriate follow-up care, and referrals to additional community and social supports services if deemed necessary.

Health Homes have been implemented in a phased in approach since 2011. Phase I began by starting the procedure for 10 counties, Phase II included 13 counties and Phase III included 39 counties in New York State. Also, the Health Homes are not being implemented only in NY but also throughout the country and it is hopeful that they will be a great help in assisting those with long term health care needs to meet more ideal outcomes.

For more information about Health Homes and an application for health care providers to apply:

http://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/medicaid_health_homes/