

PRESS RELEASE

Special games in Palaro expanding

The Special Games event for persons with disability (PWD) in the annual Palarong Pambansa has been expanding, indicating increased national awareness on the vast capabilities of PWDs.

From only 50-plus PWD participants when the Special Games was introduced in the Palarong Pambansa three years ago, participants increased to close to 100 in 2009 and further to 145 this year.

“We have been promoting the concept of inclusion in Palarong Pambansa and that means mainstreaming our special education students in our regular sports event,” said Education Secretary Mona Valisno.

Qualified to join the special games are students from Special Education (SPED) schools who are physically challenged, visually impaired, hearing impaired or in general, children with special needs (CSN). CSN also includes those who are autistic, gifted or talented, mentally retarded or those whose mental age are below their physical age.

Sports under the Special Games are 100 and 200-meter dash, relay-4x100-meter, long jump, shot put, swimming-100-meter (freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke), bocce team sport for the mentally-challenged, and Goalball (played with balls with bells) for the visually-impaired.

Athletes are classified as either belonging to the 15 and below age group or 16 and above bracket.

“It is unfair for us to say that sports is for all if we don’t include special education learners who are also capable of excelling in the event they choose,” said Valisno.

There was also a notable increase in the number of participating regions from only three in 2008 to five in 2009, and finally nine regions this year, according to Genevieve Ugay, special games officiating official.

The regions that are joining this year are Ilocos Region (Ilocos Norte and Sur, La Union, Pangasinan); Region III (Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales); Region 4 (Calabarzon--Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon); Region 6 (Aklan, Boracay, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Capiz, Antique, Guimaras); and Region 7 (Bohol, Cebu, Negros Oriental, Siquijor).

Region 8 (Biliran, Leyte provinces, Samar provinces; Region 10 (Bukidnon, Camiguin, Lanao del Norte, Misamis provinces); Region 11 (Compostela Valley, Davao provinces); and Caraga (Agusan and Surigao provinces, Butuan).

On the first year of the special games, only Calabarzon, Northern Mindanao region, and Region 7 participated.

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DepEd provides for the food, uniform, and transportation expense of participating special education students,

The special games are held with the regular Palarong Pambansa games in order to maximize the use of resources—athletic facilities and competition officials. While winners also receive medals, their scores are not included in the overall counting for the national winners.

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