



**Special Olympics**  
*Massachusetts*

## Someone You Should Know...

*Athlete Profile: Tyler Lagasse*



*Dr. Tim Shriver and Tyler Lagasse at the 2008 Hall of Fame Gala celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Special Olympics movement.*

Tyler Lagasse prepares for days. He practices for hours. There is a huge crowd present, all there to see him perform. He takes a breath, and begins, and before he knows it some of the members of the crowd are in tears. Lagasse, 21, is a Global Messenger for Special Olympics Massachusetts and a phenomenal one at that.

In addition to his wonderful speaking abilities, Lagasse is a three-sport athlete competing in golf, basketball and track and field. Golf may be his best sport, however, as he is a Special Olympics August Tournament gold medalist in the sport.

“He is pretty intense,” Ron Lagasse, Tyler’s father said. “As far as golf goes, he can get really focused, and at least related to golf, focus is really important. I think intensity and focus make him a pretty good athlete.”

Golf is actually where Lagasse’s speaking abilities were discovered. Lagasse attended a golf tournament fundraiser benefiting Special Olympics Massachusetts. At the tournament, Lagasse’s gold medal accomplishment was honored, and he was asked to read an entry from his journal about the Summer Games. A Special Olympics staff member was present, and after speaking at a Special Olympics event, Lagasse trained to be a Global Messenger.

“We don’t know what its going to lead it, but we see the benefits of it,” Ron said. “Its like a hidden talent, we had no idea Tyler could write the way he does.”

Lagasse writes all of his own speeches with little help from his mother and father. An occasional questioning of a certain word or sentence might prompt Lagasse to change that certain word or sentence, but other than that he is on his own. He practices the speech with his parents, and is able to deliver it marvelously. Nervousness isn’t even an issue for Lagasse.

“I may be a little nervous,” Tyler said. “But I don’t let it bother me.”

In addition to the golf and Global Messenger accomplishments, Lagasse has been able to participate in basketball and track and field through Special Olympics Massachusetts. Lagasse got involved in Special Olympics through an organization called Kids in Disability Sports based out of Lowell, Ma. The biggest benefit of his involvement has been the ability to interact with children his age.



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“It’s nice because he is a part of a team,” Ron said. “He is interacting with his teammates, and with other teams, coaches, and referees. There are benefits to that too. When you are talking about autism, it’s the social piece that’s hard for him, to interact with other individuals. So being on a team in basketball or track and field, it puts him with his teammates and with other teams, and that interaction is really good for him. Being on a team is a huge benefit for him.”

Though Lagasse loves sports in general, golf is his favorite sport, and Tiger Woods his favorite golfer.

“It’s quiet and I am at my best when everything is quiet,” Tyler said. “I just like the green grass and getting to hit the ball into the hole. Golf is a natural game, just like baseball, golf is a natural game.”

Lagasse will continue to serve as a Global Messenger for Special Olympics and is avidly awaiting the golf season.