Eunice Kennedy Shriver:
The Backyard Vision and a Global Legacy

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496 words
How and why we chose this topic:

In a category we thought might be dominated by stories of powerful men, we found a woman whose leadership left behind an undeniable legacy. Eunice Kennedy Shriver quickly rose to the top as the embodiment of this year’s theme, “Leadership and Legacy”. Eunice was a leader in the worldwide struggle to improve the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. Because we each know or are related to someone with an intellectual disability, Eunice’s belief that sports could be a common ground to unite people from all walks of life truly resonated with us.

How we conducted our research:

We researched primary and secondary sources, including historical newspaper articles and pictures obtained from the National Library of Congress, historical and modern video footage of Eunice and the Special Olympics, and information from books and the Internet. Our interviews with people who knew and worked with Eunice – Janet Froetscher, the CEO of Special Olympics, Georgia Sheets, CEO of Georgia Special Olympics, and Timothy Shriver, son of Eunice (and nephew of JFK), provided us with critical information. In addition, we volunteered with the Georgia Special Olympics where we interviewed athletes and videotaped events. This experience gave us a personal connection to the athletes and a better idea of Eunice’s impact.
How we selected a presentation category and created our project:

We felt the compelling images we found in videos and pictures would provide the perfect backdrop for telling Eunice’s story through a documentary. Clips from the first Special Olympics were added to enhance the historical aspect of the documentary. The documentary was produced through the use of Adobe Premier Pro CC.

How our project relates to the theme:

Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s leadership and relentless determination were the catalysts for a lasting legacy, which includes the following amazing accomplishments:

- Special Olympics
- Multiple acts of legislation (the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975)
- The closing of hundreds of inhumane institutions
- The end of desegregation in schools for the intellectually disabled
- Job opportunities for the intellectually disabled
- The overall positive shift in attitudes toward the intellectually disabled
- Countless personal honors and awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor

Because of Eunice’s leadership, what began as a summer camp in her back
yard evolved into the Special Olympics International – a global movement that today serves almost five million athletes in more than 190 countries.

As the largest healthcare and sporting program in the world dedicated to the intellectually disabled, the Special Olympics continues to bring a colossal economic boon to the hosting cities around the world. It also is responsible for changing policy. As a direct result of hosting the 2003 Special Olympics world games, Ireland rewrote its anti-discrimination statutes regarding treatment of people with intellectual disabilities.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver left a profound and lasting legacy in the world, enabling an important segment of our population to feel valued and celebrated.
Primary Sources

Books:


The book Fully Alive by Timothy Shriver gave us an idea of what it was like to grow up with Eunice as a mother. Timothy Shriver is now the chairman of Special Olympics. Information from this book was used in the documentary for the section about Eunice’s motherhood.

Interviews:


We met with Georgia Milton-Sheets, the CEO of Georgia Special Olympics. Georgia told us about Eunice and the times she had met Eunice. She also told us about what Special Olympics was currently hoping to accomplish and let us volunteer at the Georgia Winter Special Olympics. We didn’t use our interview from Georgia in our documentary, but our interview with her helped us better understand Eunice and her impact, as well as the current status of the Special Olympics. This source is primary because Georgia met and spent time with Eunice. She shared with us her experiences with Eunice as well.


We met with Timothy Shriver, the son of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, and asked him questions about Eunice and the Special Olympics. Timothy Shriver is the chairman of the Special Olympics. He was very useful in our documentary and gave us a lot of insight about how Eunice changed the views of the world on people with intellectual disabilities. We put a section of his interview in our documentary.
Newspaper and Magazine Articles:


This newspaper article from the Chicago Tribune was published July of 1968, one day after the first international Special Olympics was held in Chicago. It describes the happenings of the event, including a description of the opening ceremony, the various events, and the athletes’ reactions. This article gave us great primary information, and gave us an idea of how big of a deal the opening of the Special Olympics was in 1968.


This article in The Saturday Evening Post, a popular magazine in the late 1900s, was actually written by Eunice Kennedy Shriver. This article was extremely important because it was the first public announcement regarding Eunice’s sister’s intellectual disability. Eunice covers a number of topics, but especially focuses on the treatment of people with intellectual disabilities in institutions. She also lists ways intellectual disabilities can be avoided. The Joseph P. Kennedy foundation (of which Eunice was an executive) was largely behind the research for the reason and prevention of intellectual disabilities. We used this article to learn more about Eunice’s work before the Special Olympics, and what prompted her to start it.

Legislation:


The Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act was created to provide assistance to Special Olympics to support expansion of Special Olympics and development of education programs and a Healthy Athletes Program. This information was used in the section of the documentary discussing the legislation directly impacted by Eunice Kennedy Shriver.


The Maternal and Child Health and Mental Retardation Planning Amendment to the Social Security Act increased funding and programing opportunities. We used
this act in the section of our documentary describing the various acts of legislation Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Special Olympics directly influenced.


The Education for All Handicapped Children act was created as an effort to give equal education to children with disabilities. It required that all children with disabilities received a free public education and one free meal a day. We used this act in the section of our documentary describing the various acts of legislation Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Special Olympics directly influenced.

Digital Images:


This photograph of Eunice Kennedy Shriver awarding a Special Olympics athlete shows how personal Eunice’s connection to the athletes really was. We used this photograph to demonstrate how closely Eunice worked with the athletes. She lead through example by not just watching from the sidelines.


This picture is a photograph of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Americans with Act of 1990 banned the discrimination of people with disabilities. We used this photograph in our documentary while describing this act. Eunice Kennedy Shriver was an indispensable asset in getting this act passed.


This is a picture of ancient Egyptian papyrus, supposedly relating to intellectual disabilities. We used this photo in our historical timeline describing how the acknowledgment of the existence of intellectual disabilities was found in ancient Egyptian papyrus.


This source is a picture of the first asylum, established in 1829. Intellectually disabled people in asylums were often abused and neglected. This source was used
in our documentary to show the way intellectually disabled people were treated before the Special Olympics. We used this picture in our historical timeline.

**Online Image Collections:**


This image collection portrays Eunice’s various stages in her personal life and her time in Special Olympics. We used these images throughout the documentary in the family, motherhood, leadership, and legacy sections.

**Eunice and World Leaders**

These images show Eunice being praised and awarded by world leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Ronald Reagan. They portray her global impact as well. We used these pictures during the award section in our documentary.

**The Shriver Family**

These images showed the Kennedy and Shriver families throughout Eunice’s life. We used these images to show how close Eunice and her family were.

**Camp Shriver**

We used many images of Camp Shriver in our documentary. Camp Shriver was held in Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s backyard, and eventually grew to be the Special Olympics. We used these images during the Camp Shriver section of the documentary, to show how the organization started.

**Eunice Signing Bill**

Eunice Kennedy Shriver influenced many different acts of legislation, all of which greatly benefited the athletes in Special Olympics and people with intellectual disabilities around the world. We used these pictures to describe Eunice’s impact in these acts.

**Health Exams**

Special Olympics not only provides an equal playing ground for people with intellectual disabilities, it is also the largest global health organization in the world dedicated to people with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics provides
free health exams to people with intellectual disabilities, and trains doctors to give these exams. We used these images to show another legacy of Eunice Kennedy Shriver.


This image collection portrays Eunice’s personal life and her time with the Special Olympics. We used these images throughout the documentary in the family, motherhood, leadership, and legacy sections.

**Eunice and Family**

These images showed the Kennedy and Shriver families throughout Eunice’s life. We used these images to show how close Eunice and her family were. This was important because Rosemary, Eunice’s sister, had a mental illness. This is where Eunice’s passion began.

**Eunice and Athletes**

These images showed Eunice with various athletes during her time in Special Olympics. She was awarding them with medals, playing with them, and teaching them. These images show how involved Eunice was with the athletes. Her leadership expanded beyond the organization and founding of the Special Olympics.

**The 1968 International Special Olympics.**

These are pictures of Eunice’s speech at the first Special Olympics and Soldier Field in Chicago. We used these photos to show how Special Olympics has expanded since 1968.

**Legislation**

These images showed some of the acts that Eunice directly influenced. They also showed the presidents who signed the acts. These were used in the legislation section of the documentary.
Letters:


This is a letter that Nelson Mandela wrote to Eunice Kennedy Shriver for her 88th birthday. He thanks her for all she has done for the world to make it a better place. We used this letter to get another perspective on Eunice. It is evident that everyone--families, athletes, even Nelson Mandela—admire Eunice’s drive and passion to help people with intellectual disabilities.


Andrew Pavlov, president of Special Olympics Russia, wrote this letter to Tim and the rest of the Shriver family after Eunice’s death. This shows the Special Olympics’ vast expansion into many different countries.


Ann Veneman, the executive director of UNICEF, wrote this letter mourning the loss of Eunice’s death. This gave us an understanding of how the Special Olympics has impacted other organizations, in addition to people.

Media and Audio Recordings:


This video was a short film on the first Special Olympics Games in Chicago. The first games were held in 1968 on Soldier Field. We used Eunice’s speech from this video in our documentary and found the video quite helpful in depicting the first Special Olympics and the athletes that participated in the first Special Olympics.

This source is a video of Eunice Kennedy Shriver describing the lack of opportunity children with intellectual disabilities have. We used the information from this video for the script of our documentary. An important aspect of our documentary is how far the world has come in the way they treat people with intellectual disabilities, and this source was important in conveying that point.


This video is a short film about John F. Kennedy and his helping fight for people with intellectual disabilities. We used a portion of President Kennedy giving a speech concerning the way people with intellectual disabilities were treated in the United States in our documentary.


We used the interview of Nelson Mandela on Eunice Shriver at the beginning of our documentary. He spoke about Eunice and her impact on the world. We used this in the section of our documentary with people describing Eunice and her legacy.


This source is a video of Ted Kennedy describing Eunice Kennedy Shriver in her childhood and younger days. We used this video to help us understand further the environment in which Eunice grew up in.


This source is a video of Eunice Kennedy Shriver speaking at the 1987 Special Olympics. We used a clip from this video of her telling people with intellectual disabilities that they have earned all of their rights, and that segregation and separation of people with intellectual disabilities is over. This source was useful because it showed Eunice and her passion for helping people with intellectual disabilities. The video also outlined the many things Eunice accomplished through the Special Olympics.

This source is a video of Eunice giving a speech in Ireland. She talks about how the “worlds most innocent victims” are being neglected and discriminated against. We used a small portion of this video in our documentary. It is one of the few recent videos of Eunice Kennedy Shriver giving a speech.

Secondary Sources

Interviews:


We met with Janet Froetscher, CEO of Special Olympics, in Washington DC for an interview. Janet gave us great information about Special Olympics’ health programs. Special Olympics is the world’s largest global health organization dedicated to people with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics also trains doctors to understand how to work with the intellectually disabled. We used this information in the section of our documentary describing Special Olympics’ various education and health programs.

Books:


This book describes the history and organization of the Special Olympics and explains how athletes and volunteers can get involved. We used information from this book in the Camp Shriver section of our documentary, and the history of Special Olympics.


I Am Proud unites inspiring pictures of Special Olympics athletes with messages from international leaders about the impact of the Special Olympics movement and its athletes on their lives. We used these compelling images and messages to better understand Eunice’s impact on the world.

The Kennedys: Dynasty and Disaster is quoted to be “one of the most comprehensive and revealing biographies ever written on an American family clan” [Kennedys]. It goes in-depth on the Kennedy family, and gives a thorough biography on each family member, including Eunice Kennedy Shriver. We used the information from Eunice’s biography in her background in the documentary.


Disability and Sport is the first comprehensive reference of the past, present, and future of disability sport. It presents information on a wide variety of disability sport issues and research findings, including classifications and integration, sports medicine, and the elimination of barriers for the intellectually disabled. Special Olympics was mentioned multiple times in this book as well. We used this information to further our knowledge on the history of disabled people and sports.


Hearts of Gold covers the various events in which athletes compete and the history of Special Olympics. This book gave us critical information on the start of the Special Olympics.


This source is a book that described the history of intellectual disabilities. We used this source to show the way people with intellectual disabilities were treated in the past, and how the way they have been treated has changed over time. The book depicted some of the harshness and cruelty that people with intellectual disabilities were treated with throughout history.


Leamer provides insight on the Kennedy women, including important information about Eunice Kennedy Shriver. He included a short bibliography, accomplishments, and awards. We used this information to learn more about Eunice’s life.

According to Edward Shorter, just forty years ago the institutions housing people with mental retardation had become a national scandal. The mentally retarded who lived at home were largely isolated and a source of family shame. Today, these people actively participate in our society and are entitled by law to educational, social, and medical services. We used the information in this book to describe the vast change of the way people with intellectual disabilities are viewed and treated.

Academic Journals:


This article highlights the 6th International Summer Special Olympics Games of intellectually disabled athletes in Louisiana. It also highlights benefits of the event and games played in the event. We used this specific article to inform ourselves on other Special Olympics events around the world.

Public Speeches:


This is a speech Bill Clinton made at a Special Olympics dinner at the white house. He explained how, more than 30 years ago, Eunice Kennedy Shriver “had an idea as simple as it was revolutionary, to give young people with disabilities the chance to know the thrill of athletic competition, the joy of participation, the pride of accomplishment”. We used the information in this speech to add to our script in the “legacy” section in our documentary.
Newspaper and Magazine Articles:


This source is an article that commemorates Eunice Kennedy Shriver after her death. Some of Eunice’s greatest accomplishments are listed in this article. We used this article to provide important information for our script and documentary.


In this article, Block describes Eunice’s many accomplishments and is praising her for them. This article gave us information about Eunice’s accomplishments, which we incorporated into our documentary.


Over hundred nations competed in the 2013 world winter games. The Special Olympics started off with only summer games, but added the winter games once it went international. We used this article for some background information on the Special Olympics winter games. This document was useful because it provided sources of media coverage for the Special Olympics.


The purpose of this article was to analyze the results of a recent survey taken to see student volunteers’ reflections of their experiences at world Summer Special Olympics games. Almost every volunteer explained that they had a new, positive outlook on people with intellectual disabilities after volunteering at the games. This was a very powerful source, because it shows that Special Olympics can change people’s mindsets about those with intellectual disabilities.


This article was an announcement of Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s death. We used it
to verify the date that Eunice Kennedy Shriver died.


This article describes Eunice’s journey with Special Olympics. We used it to better understand this journey.


This article briefly describes the history of the Special Olympics and commemorates Eunice and her husband, Sargent Shriver. The article describes how Eunice Kennedy Shriver changed the world and was a useful source for us because it provided a brief summary of the history of the Special Olympics.


This article is a short biography of Eunice’s life. We used it to inform ourselves on her early life and what she was like as a mother.


In this article, Hall recognizes Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s goals, and praises her for achieving them. Eunice Kennedy Shriver abolished the stereotype of a person with an intellectual disability, and replaced this with a new outlook. People with intellectual disabilities can contribute to the world, just like everyone else. They deserve to be treated equally, and can do anything they put their minds to, which Special Olympics proved. This article just reinforced our thoughts about Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s leadership. We used this information in the leadership section of our documentary.


In this article, Holahan talks about Timothy Shriver’s book, Fully Alive. Fully Alive describes Timothy’s experiences growing up in the Shriver household, with a
camp in his backyard. He also talks about his mother, Eunice, and his sister, Rosemary. This article provides great information because the book is from Tim’s point of view.


This article is written from an onlooker’s point of view of the first international Special Olympics at Soldier Field in Chicago. It is quite skeptical, but it goes on to prove this onlooker’s thoughts wrong. Eunice Kennedy Shriver was honored by Sports Illustrated and given the first Sportsman of the Year Legacy Award for her role in starting the Special Olympics. We used this article to describe the growth of the Special Olympics. We also used a picture from this article in the awards section of our documentary.


This source is an article from Sports Illustrated honoring Eunice Kennedy Shriver and all of her achievements and accomplishments. This article cited Eunice as a hero, and helped us really grasp all of the great things Eunice Kennedy Shriver did to change the world and the way people viewed others with intellectual disabilities.


This article describes how Eunice’s legacy lives on today through her son, Timothy Shriver. Timothy talks about Eunice’s incredible personality and her determination. This gives us a better idea of the qualities Eunice had that made her such a great leader.


Special Olympics is an international organization that changes lives through the power of sport by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities, promoting acceptance for all, and fostering communities of understanding and respect worldwide. This article celebrates Eunice’s life and everything she did for the intellectually disabled. This article gave us a personal connection to Eunice and her work.

This source was an article in U.S. News that described Eunice Kennedy Shriver as the Kennedy with the most lasting legacy. This source was helpful to us because we learned more about the hard work Eunice put into the Special Olympics and how her legacy still lives on today and will most likely last longer than the legacy of any other Kennedy.


This article is a short biography and celebration of Eunice’s life. We used it to inform ourselves on her early life and her accomplishments.


This source was an article about Camp Shriver, which was started by Eunice Kennedy Shriver. The article stated that Camp Shriver was the perfect model for including children with disabilities in a summer camp. Today, there are many camps for people with intellectual disabilities, and many of those camps model after Camp Shriver. We used the information in this article to better understand what Camp Shriver was like and how it changed the lives of people who participated in the summer camp.


More than 7,000 athletes from 177 countries cheered on by more than 80,000 spectators will march into the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum in the 2015 summer games in Los Angeles, California. The Special Olympics World Games have been held since 1968, founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who had a vision to create a world that is inclusive of all people, including those with intellectual disabilities. We used this information to show the vast expansion of the Special Olympics over the past 40 years.

This article provided information about ‘the forgotten Kennedy’, better known as Rosemary Kennedy. Rosemary had mild mental retardation and was the prime reason Eunice started Camp Shriver, later turning into the Special Olympics. We used this information in the section of the documentary about Rosemary.


In this article, Timothy Shriver was interviewed about Special Olympics and his mother, Eunice. It describes his plans for Special Olympics in the future.


This source was a newspaper article honoring Eunice and announcing her death. This article was used to verify the date that Eunice Kennedy Shriver died.

Media and Audio Recordings:


This short documentary of Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s life was presented at the Minerva Awards by her grandchildren in 2007. We used this information to describe her many characteristics that made her a leader.


This NPR radio recording gives a brief biography of Eunice Kennedy Shriver and describes her various accomplishments. We used this recording to better understand her life and accomplishments.

This source is a video of a man with an intellectual disability, Frank Stephens, giving a tribute speech to Eunice Kennedy Shriver. Frank was accepting the induction of Eunice Kennedy Shriver into Washington Sports Hall of Champions. Frank Stephens accepted the induction for Eunice Kennedy Shriver on September 15, 2009. This video was useful to us because the induction was one of Eunice’s many great honors that she received.


Life In the Shadows describes the troubles of people with intellectual disabilities and how they were hidden from society before Eunice spoke up for them. We used a short segment of John F. Kennedy making a public speech about improving the rights of people with intellectual disabilities.


This video provided an overview of Eunice’s life. It portrayed her accomplishments and awards that she received. We watched this video and used it to help us understand Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s personal and professional life.


This NPR radio recording gives a brief biography of Eunice Kennedy Shriver and describes her various accomplishments. We used this recording to better understand her life and accomplishments.

Online Articles:


This source is a website page about Francis Galton Carte De Visite, who wrote a book about eugenics, setting the standard for many people with intellectual
disabilities to be sterilized. We used this source to show how people with intellectual disabilities were treated before the Special Olympics.


This encyclopedia article gave us critical information on the history of intellectual disabilities. It included information from ancient Egypt all the way up to present day. We used this information to construct a timeline to give our documentary a historical aspect.


This source is a website page describing the way people with intellectual disabilities were treated in the past. This source was helpful because it showed the harshness and cruelty with which people with intellectual disabilities were treated. We specifically used the information about “idiot cages”, which were cages from the 16th and 17th century that held people with intellectual disabilities and were placed in the middle of a town for the citizens to ridicule and laugh at.


The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum was one of our most important sources. This particular article gave insight to JFK’s involvement in Special Olympics and helping Eunice pass certain acts and bills. We used this critical information to help write our script on the legislation section of our documentary.


This article gave a brief description of John F. Kennedy’s life, and how he helped Eunice (sister) with the Special Olympics by passing acts of legislation. We used this information in the legislation section of the documentary.

In this article, Rainie and Hetter make a convincing argument that Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s work could have been the most lasting legacy of the entire Kennedy family. The article gives a brief background on Eunice and the start of the Special Olympics, which we used in our script.


In the 1950s, people with intellectual disabilities were hidden away in mental institutions the majority of their lives. Eunice’s sister, Rosemary, had mild mental retardation and was sent to an institution after being lobotomized at age eighteen. Rosemary was the prime reason why Eunice started Camp Shriver; she didn’t want others to be treated the same way Rosemary had. This article showed how it was normal to hide the fact that Rosemary had had a lobotomy. We used this article in the section of our documentary showing the treatment of people with intellectual disabilities.


This source is a website page about sterilization of the intellectually disabled. We used a sterilization map from this page in our timeline in our documentary. This source was useful because it showed the way people with intellectual disabilities were treated before the Special Olympics.


This website page describing the history of eugenics and how it impacted people with intellectual disabilities. We used information from this website, as well as a picture of the Eugenics Movement tree in the timeline in our documentary.
Digital Images:


*This is an image of Greek gods. We used this in our documentary to describe how, in ancient Greece, people thought the intellectually disabled were born because the gods had been angered. This image was used in the historical timeline.*


*This digital image is of employees of Safilo supporting the Special Olympics. Safilo is an eye care company that sells reading glasses, prescription glasses, and contacts. Safilo donated many pairs of glasses to the Special Olympics for the intellectually disabled. This source was useful because it showed how the Special Olympics not only helped athletes but also provided health care and assistance to people with intellectual disabilities.*