

Special Olympics Utah is more than sports **IT CHANGES LIVES.**



ATHLETE: Mitchell Burt
TEAM: Jaguars
Participating since 2014

Jennie and Steve Burt are amazed at the positive effect that Special Olympics Utah has had on their son Mitchell. Mitch, age 9, joined the Jaguars shortly after his 8th birthday. His parents appreciated how quickly his coaches, Unified Partners and teammates included him. "People often tiptoe around Mitch or treat him like he's different, but at Special Olympics he is completely accepted for who he is," said Jennie. "He knows he is part of something and that he belongs."

Mitch has benefitted physically from competing in track and basketball. He's gotten stronger through training and exercise. "His ability to stretch his limits and defy people's expectations is pretty amazing," Jennie said. "He's had many health struggles. Mitch didn't learn to walk until he was three years-old. No one was sure if he would ever be physically active. Now seeing him run down a track with the biggest grin on his sweaty little face is a win for us!"

Mitch competed with his basketball team, coached by Steve, at the 2015 Fall Sports Classic. His team took fourth in their division, but all that mattered to Mitch was getting to play with his friends. As for his parents, they appreciate the social and relationship skills he is learning. Steve said, "Being the youngest on the team, he looks up to his older teammates and other athletes. He may have a meltdown on the court, but he snaps out of it when he sees the other boys start to play. He learns from their positive attitudes, whether they are winners or not, and is motivated to keep going."

In addition to participating in Special Olympics Utah, Mitch is a budding actor who likes to dress-up in costumes and sing opera, rap and play air violin. He enjoys school, swimming and watching sports. He loves his younger siblings, Jack and Emme, who always support and cheer for him at games.

You can support athletes like MITCHELL BURT by making a donation to Special Olympics Utah. Please visit www.sout.org or call 801-363-1111.

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Utah

