



We're Proud of Our Ability



KEEN (Kids Enjoy Exercise Now) was founded over 16 years ago by Elliott Portnoy, who brought KEEN to the Washington, DC area, modeling it on a program he had established in Oxford, England. From its humble origins as a single program at a school gym in suburban Maryland, Elliott, along with his wife Estee, have grown KEEN into a national organization with affiliates across the country, providing innovative recreational programs to children and families.

KEEN began with a simple idea: pair a trained volunteer—a coach—and a young person with disabilities—an athlete—and let them discover together what they can achieve and how much fun they can have.



KEEN

is a national, nonprofit volunteer-led organization

that provides one-to-one recreational opportunities for children and young adults with mental and physical disabilities at no cost to their families and caregivers. KEEN's mission is to foster the self-esteem, confidence, skills and talents of its athletes through non-competitive activities, allowing young people facing even the most significant challenges to meet their individual goals.



FROM THE FOUNDERS

We have always loved sports. Whether as spectators or participants, sports have been a part of our lives and an enormous source of fun. Unfortunately for children with either physical or cognitive disabilities, this type of fun doesn't always come easily. But we know that with a little help from someone by their side, the joy of any game can come alive for these children.

KEEN (Kids Enjoy Exercise Now) was created to provide a program that was completely free, that relied on volunteers with no previous experience working with children with disabilities, that didn't require a commitment of time from those volunteers and that deliberately set out to serve the hardest-to-serve young people facing even the most significant disabilities.

At KEEN, simple things—a game of catch, splashing in the swimming pool, a high-five at the bowling alley, dancing to the music—are possible for every child and bring moments of pure joy at our sessions. From city to city, program to program, there is always a smile on a child's face at KEEN.

Over the years, the athletes, families and volunteers of KEEN have taught and inspired us daily, reminding us what is most important in life. We invite you to share the magic of KEEN, to see why we are proud of our ability.

Elliott + Estee

—Elliott and Estee Portnoy, Founders.

“Without KEEN staff and volunteers, Dominic would not have learned how to enjoy socializing, playing, and trying new sports. KEEN has helped me network and my son Dominic has learned how to play sports and get along with others.”

—Sally, mother of Dominic,
St. Louis, Missouri

EVERYONE WINS

Often it is hard to know who is getting the most out of KEEN: our athletes, who look forward to the sessions of fun and play; our volunteers, who, after spending a magical hour with an athlete, want to come back time and time again; or the parents of our athletes who treasure the hour of rest.

Every kid loves to play...

but not every kid can... at least not in the way most kids can.



For me, I have a chance to read a book without interruption. For Jack, he gets undivided attention from two volunteers. It's good exercise for Jack and a welcomed respite for me. I once had a good friend ask, "Why would you drive one hour into the city and back for a one-hour program?" My reply was and is simple—because Jack loves it.

— **Monique**, mother of Jack
Chicago, Illinois



I had never seen anybody having fun with my child before...and I can't begin to tell you what that felt like. Other recreational programs say "anybody can participate," but as I learned a long time ago, that's simply not true. At KEEN, that statement is 100% true and, for more than 15 years, there has never been a time when both of my children weren't happy to be there. At KEEN, they can be themselves and be accepted.

— **Sue**, mother of Warren and Emily,
Bethesda, Maryland



OUR PROGRAMS

Are always free of charge • Are open to every child, no matter the severity of their disability



With financial support and grass-roots commitment, communities across the country can benefit from KEEN's unique approach. KEEN's signature program, KEEN Sports, is the starting point for all new KEEN affiliates. Once a KEEN Sports program is firmly established, other programs can be added. KEEN Swim and KEEN Music are favorites across the country. Other programs include: KEEN Tennis, KEEN Basketball, KEEN Bowling and KEEN Fit.

KEEN Sports

KEEN Sports provides a weekend afternoon of fun for all age groups: kids, teens and young adults. Athletes and volunteers come together for individual and group activities, such as shooting a basketball, kicking a soccer ball or walking around a track. Many KEEN athletes love to bounce on the giant physio balls or to be pulled along the floor on a scooter.

KEEN Swim

Among many large, inflatable pool toys, athletes of all ages and their coaches have a blast in the pool at KEEN Swim. Like all of KEEN's programs, coaches work individually with their athletes to find the activities that they enjoy.

KEEN Music

Kids and teens sing, dance and play musical instruments in this program facilitated by a musician. Through a variety of activities and with assistance from their coaches, our athletes tap into the artists inside of them.

PROUDS

At the end of each session, athletes join together in one big circle for "Prouds." During this special KEEN activity, athletes let others know what they did that day that made them feel very proud, assisted as needed by their coach. The accompanying smiles and applause end the session on a high note. At the same time, the volunteers feel proud that they came to KEEN.



We invite you to be a part of

KEEN



VOLUNTEER

Our volunteers come from all walks of life—young professionals, students and families all gain from the experience of fun and play. Individuals and groups are invited to join us on the weekends for one of our many programs. We provide all the necessary training before you attend your first session. It is because of our volunteers' support and dedication that KEEN is able to: provide our athletes with the one-to-one attention they need, offer our programs free of charge, and serve more kids and open new programs.

DONATE

In 2006, the law firm Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal generously provided the seed funding to expand KEEN's programs into 7 communities across the country. We are proud of their continued support, as well as the support of Autism Speaks, CIGNA, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and numerous other organizations and individuals. KEEN USA relies on the generosity of individuals and companies whose contribution enables KEEN to grow and continue to offer our programs completely free of charge. To make a tax-deductible contribution, go to www.KEENusa.org or call 1- 866-903-KEEN (5336).



Being a part of KEEN has been an incredible experience. I feel very lucky that I get to interact with such an amazing group of people. It really touches me to know that we provide an outlet for these kids to be able to come play in a safe and fun environment. Without KEEN, these amazing children might not have that chance. And I am grateful to be a part of an organization that gives these kids that chance.

– **Kate**, member 2004 US Olympic Rowing Team
KEEN Volunteer
New York, New York



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DVD HOLDER

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GET INVOLVED

KEEN's model works. KEEN is easily replicated. The only thing holding us back from serving more athletes is additional volunteers and funds. Sign up to be a part of KEEN by going to www.KEENusa.org to volunteer or make a contribution today.



KEEN AFFILIATES (as of 2008)



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