

# Super Kids

Photos and story by  
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**S**he didn't seem to mind that she crossed the finish line in last place. She still held her arms up high and smiled from ear to ear. As far as Kathy was concerned, she was the winner.

A 10-year-old from Hearne, Kathy Prewitt was born mentally and physically handicapped. But by the enthusiasm she displayed at the Special Olympics held March 31 at Bryan High School, Kathy proved she could overcome her disability and finish on top.

Kathy was one of 500 athletes from the area who competed in the annual event, which included gymnastics and track and field events such as shot put, standing long jump and footraces.

The best part about Special Olympics is that it is a chance to bring the athletes together and encourage participation. Robert Morris, a Special Olympian from Brenham, said, "I really enjoy it. I love coming here, it's fun."

Whoever said, "It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game" must have been involved in Special Olympics. Janie M. Velasquez, a representative of the Special Olympics committee, said, "Every athlete, no matter what place they finish in, is a winner. Positive interaction is more important — it helps in self-esteem."

Velasquez said that Special Olympics is wonderful because it provides a chance for both the athletes and the community to come together.

"This year, the local Apple Tree stores were a major sponsor of the event. They donated all of the Special Olympic banners in Olympic Town."

Olympic Town is the annual carnival adjacent to the Bryan High stadium that is made possible by community efforts and helps promote social contact among athletes. Olympic Town provides games and crafts, such as a dunking booth and face painting, so the athletes can relax and enjoy their spare time between events.

"Special Olympics is a wonderful thing," said John Lightfoot, a second-year volunteer coach from Conroe. "I see these kids out here trying so hard. Everyone should be involved in Special Olympics; it's a time to laugh and cry. The rewards are great."



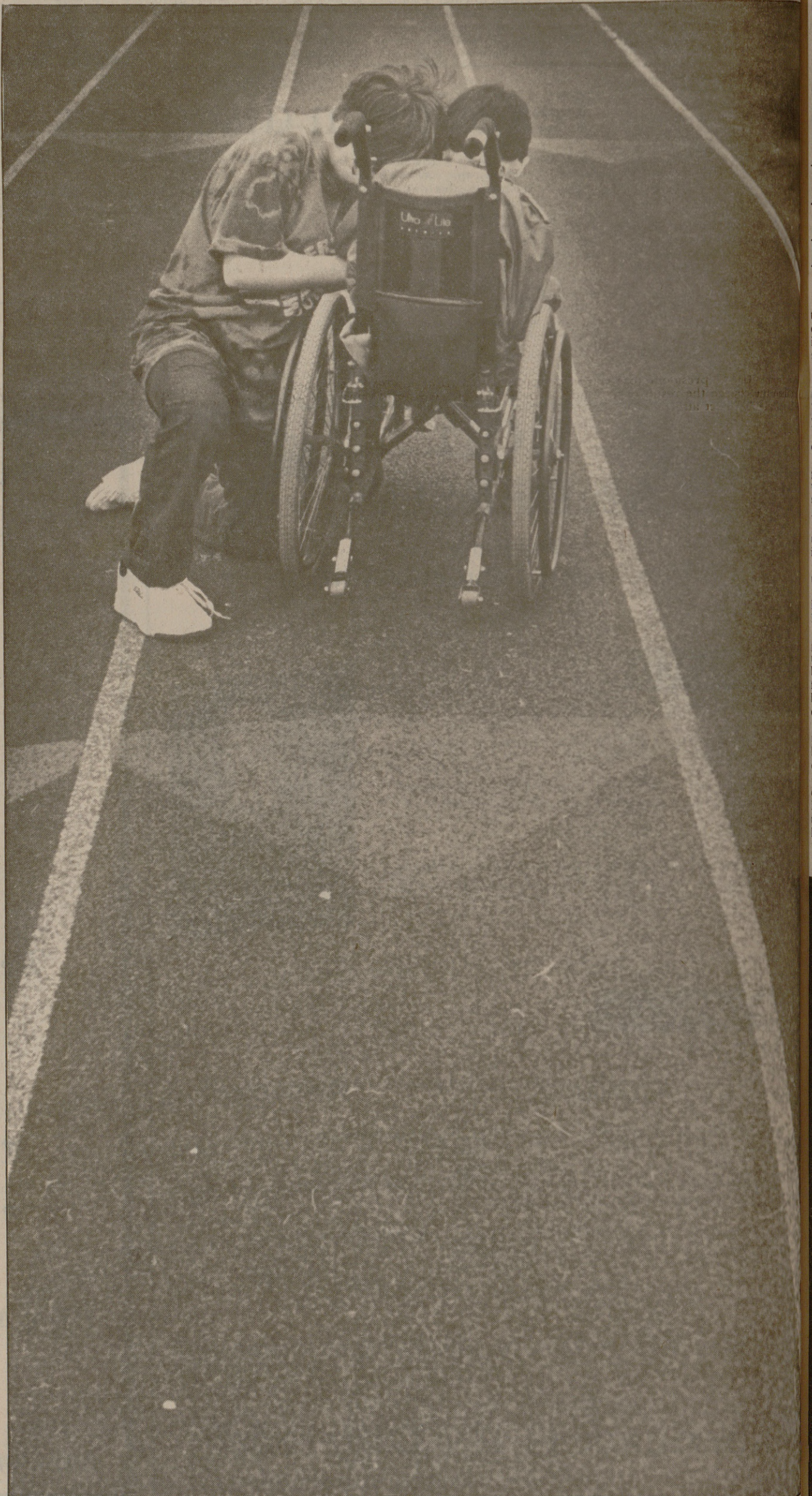
Kathy Prewitt runs into the open arms of a hugger at the end of her 100-meter dash during Special Olympics.



A Special Olympics coach tries to encourage his athlete, who was getting frustrated in the wheelchair race.



A Special Olympian displays the spirit of winning.



A young boy cries with his handicapped brother, who finished last in his wheelchair race.

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