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Special Needs, Part 1
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STEVE ADUBATO, host:

Breaking down barriers for children with special needs, next on CAUCUS: NEW JERSEY.

Announcer: Funding for this edition of CAUCUS has been provided by Special Olympics New Jersey, Holy Name Hospital, PSE&G and by The Russell Berrie Foundation.

Unidentified Reporter: When Brad Hennefer was born 20 years ago, it was clear he was different. He had Down syndrome, but his parents made two very important choices early on that would greatly impact his future. They decided to mainstream him and they introduced him to sports.

Ms. NANCY HENNEFER (Brad's Mom): It started out at a very young age. It started out at just a regular T-ball league. He tried swimming lessons. He tried basketball. He tried golf, he tried tennis. We were always looking for opportunities to involve him with other children.

Reporter: And it worked. Sports became a way for Brad to really fit in in a way he couldn't academically.

Mr. JOHN VALORE (Coach, Cherry Hill High School East): I first met Brad his freshman year when dad came to us and asked that--if Brad could be involved in some way with the basketball team at practice. Not necessarily as a player, but some way of maybe keeping stats or helping out with the statisticians.

Give me three guards.

Reporter: But it soon became apparent that Brad could do more. By his senior year, he had played on two JV teams and had made the varsity teams in both golf and basketball. But it didn't always come easy.

Mr. VALORE: At first it would be difficult for him to pick up. But once you have repetition, repetition, repetition, he learns through repetition, and he's right there with any of the other drills.

Reporter: That dedication earned him both the respect and admiration of his teammates.

Mr. BEN GERSTEIN (Team Member): Brad's amazing, courageous and funny.

Mr. SAM ROSE (Team Member): He always puts a smile on his face. He can always put a smile on your face.

Mr. LOGAN MARRO (Team Member): Brad brings a real sense of, I would say, meaning. He kind of puts everything in place for you, everything in perspective for you. You see how much fun he's having out in the court, and it inspires you to do the same.

Reporter: Bob Hennefer is Brad's older brother. He's been Brad's protector,

coach and buddy since they were little. Now he draws inspiration from his younger brother.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER (Brad's Brother): Every day I think about his accomplishments, and if he can do it with his disability and his drive to do everything and to accomplish everything that he sets out, why can't I? Why can't everybody else?

Reporter: What Brad has accomplished in his short life goes well beyond the basketball court. Last year he became the first kid with Down syndrome to graduate from Cherry Hill East High School. He now holds down not one, but two steady jobs, and he even has a girlfriend. But his mom still dreams for more.

Ms. HENNEFER: I think our long-term dream for Brad is to be gainfully employed, to have a loving family, and to be part of the community, to be part of an environment where he can be self-confident, he's respected by the community, and just to live a full life like anyone else.

ADUBATO: That's a pretty terrific guy. You're about to meet him in just a second. Welcome to Families in Focus, a very special CAUCUS series looking at the challenges facing the modern American family. I'm Steve Adubato.

Now, here to talk more about raising children with special needs are the gentleman you saw in the taped piece. Looks like a superstar to me. Brad Hennefer, who is currently attending Camden County College, working two jobs and, as you can see, is a very talented athlete. His coach, John Valore, who is the boy's varsity basketball coach at Cherry Hill East High. And also Bob Hennefer, a golf professional and Brad's protector. It's his brother, his older brother. Anthony Russ, a Lawrence High School senior who volunteers for Special Olympics of New Jersey, is also--who also has a brother with special needs. And finally, Kris Deni is director of student services for Lawrence Township.

I want to thank all of you for joining us.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER (Special Olympics New Jersey Athlete): Thank you.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Yeah.

ADUBATO: What were you thinking when you were looking at that, Brad?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Well, I like being around a team and being a part of a team and I like Coach Valore because he's the man.

ADUBATO: He's the man. Who's the man, Coach?

Mr. VALORE: Well, I would think he would be the man for doing what he did over the course of four years.

(Graphic on screen)

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Breaking Down Barriers Resource Center

ADUBATO: What did he do?

Mr. VALORE: Accomplish what he did. Well, we started out at--with the team his freshman year and we didn't know what to expect and we put him in with some drills and he did--he did well. He worked at it and, like I mentioned in the tape, through repetition, he earned himself a spot on the team. And throughout the practice, you could see him develop each and every day because of the repetition, because of learning and being associated with the teammates throughout the year, he enjoyed what he was doing. And once you start enjoying what you're doing, you become better at it.

ADUBATO: Let me ask you something, Coach, before I go to Bob. Did you have any stereotypes going in? Did you have a sense, you know, Brad has "special needs." That means different things to different people. What did it mean to you?

Mr. VALORE: I didn't have any thoughts about Brad being a part of our program. I knew that we should reach out to Brad and have him in our program. Now, where would we have him, as a statistician or as a player, but I said, 'Let's give him an opportunity. Let's give him a uniform. Let's see what he could do.'

ADUBATO: That's all you can do, right?

Mr. VALORE: Right.

ADUBATO: What were you thinking when you were watching that, Bob?

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: It's just very humbling to see. It's very--it's very great to see his accomplishments, to see him go so far. You know, starting out, you know, I obviously know what it's like to go through high school before he did and how kids can be cruel.

ADUBATO: How much older?

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Five years older than Brad.

ADUBATO: Five years.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: So I know kids can be cruel and, you know, you go through the motions, but to see him be a part of a community, to be a part of a team and to, you know, be surrounded with the kids that you saw in there that, you know, that call him great and he's the man, and it's great.

ADUBATO: How about these quotes. You ready for this, Bob? One of his teammates, "Brad is amazing, he's courageous and he's a funny guy."

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Every one of them. They're all true.

ADUBATO: A bunch of other things, right?

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Endless. Endless amounts of compliments.

ADUBATO: Look at him, he's loving this right now.

For you, the family. Let's talk about the family first.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Mm-hmm.

ADUBATO: It's one thing to say that you're spectacular and all that you see how much that Brad has accomplished.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Mm-hmm.

ADUBATO: What were the challenges for you?

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Not being there all the time. You know, because I was in--I was away in college for most of his high school time, so I'm used to being there side by side, and we would always do things together, so I was always there to look out for him and be protective of him, but now he's in high school, he's on his own. He's doing his own thing.

ADUBATO: Hm.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: And to see how he would handle himself on his own, that was the biggest challenge for me. You know, worrying about him all the time, but he obviously proved us all wrong. He can handle himself.

ADUBATO: And your mom in this, right?

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Mm-hmm.

ADUBATO: Totally committed, totally positive.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Absolutely. Yeah.

ADUBATO: No limits there.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: No doubts.

ADUBATO: Let me ask you, Anthony, you're an athlete.

Mr. ANTHONY RUSS (Lawrence High School Quarterback): Yeah.

ADUBATO: You play where?

Mr. RUSS: Lawrence High School.

ADUBATO: You have a sibling?

Mr. RUSS: Yes.

ADUBATO: Describe your brother.

Mr. RUSS: Like Bob and Brad, I'm five years older than him. He likes being involved in sports, loves sports like Brad, and for me, I think we're a lot like these two. We're real close. I'm going to be away at school for--when he goes through high school, most of it. For me, I have a brother who's a freshman as well, so he'll kind of be looking out for him. But the connection I have with Matt, my little brother, is real special and I am going to miss that. I'm going to worry about him all the time while I'm away at school. So I can understand everything he's saying.

ADUBATO: Where are you going to school?

Mr. RUSS: I'm going to Harvard next year for football.

ADUBATO: Stop bragging, will you? Harvard, good for you.

Mr. RUSS: Thank you. Thanks.

ADUBATO: Very proud of you.

Mr. RUSS: Thanks.

ADUBATO: How close are you to your brother?

Mr. RUSS: We're real, real close. We--everything we do, he comes home school either before me or after me, depending on the day, and the first thing he does is come up to me. I go to him, 'How's your day?' I know he started Special Olympics training, actually where Brad trained a few times in Lawrence. And he wanted me to introduce him to everybody there. I've been in there, I was involved in the program as well, so I knew stuff about it anyway, but just we're always go to each other first, I think. The first thing we do when we go home.

ADUBATO: Made you a better person?

Mr. RUSS: Definitely.

ADUBATO: Yeah.

Kris, let me ask you something. The term, again, special needs gets thrown around a lot. We all have needs, OK?

Ms. KRIS DENI (Director of Student Services for Lawrence Township): Mm-hmm.

ADUBATO: Let's talk about it. Define it.

Ms. DENI: Well, special needs can be in the area of cognitive skills, social skills, behavioral, physical needs. It's a very broad spectrum that departments such as mine serve.

ADUBATO: OK. Give us a couple of examples.

Ms. DENI: Well, we have youngsters who present with autism. I think that's a condition that's getting a lot of public play.

ADUBATO: And there's a huge spectrum there.

Ms. DENI: It's a huge spectrum.

ADUBATO: Of autism.

Ms. DENI: And they can be from very mildly involved youngsters with Asperger syndrome all the way up to youngsters who have classic autism with cognitive challenges, behavioral challenges, and most often language and social needs.

ADUBATO: Hm.

Ms. DENI: We have other youngsters who have cognitive problems, academic needs. Others with behavioral issues, and some who are physically challenged. They may be in wheelchairs, we may serve those youngsters in our schools with

one-on-one nurses. They do come to our schools with nurses. They make friendships and are part of the school.

ADUBATO: There's a--there are a range of special needs.

Ms. DENI: Quite a range.

ADUBATO: Let's talk a little bit about family, a little bit more about family. I'm curious about this. This is a--we'll do two half-hours, by the way. Log on to our Web site, we'll link you. We also have the Special Olympics Web site, guys? Our friends Marc Edenzon and T.J. Nelligan, who have been incredibly helpful to us. I want to log on--log on to our site, we'll hook you up with them and a range of other organizations that can be helpful.

I'm curious about family here. Look, I look at the two of you guys. I mean, he's a good brother, right?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yes, he is.

ADUBATO: Right? You're a good brother.

Mr. RUSS: I hope so.

ADUBATO: Your brother, I'm sure, would say the same thing.

Mr. RUSS: Yeah.

ADUBATO: Right? But I ask myself, to what degree are you typical? Not typical? How most--how do most families, do you think, deal with someone in the family, again, all have needs, but certain special needs, as you did--as you described, Kris. Is this typical, do you think, Bob?

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: I'm not sure because I don't know anything different. I mean, I was brought up very, you know, we were brought up very normal. We weren't brought up knowing that, you know, he had Down syndrome. I wasn't told until...

ADUBATO: He's just pulled right in.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Just...

ADUBATO: 'You're going to be with us. We're going to play ball together.'

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Exactly. It's just, you know, he was just one of the guys. He was--we treated him--I would treat him like I would treat any other brother. I mean, you know, beat him up--beat up on him a little bit.

ADUBATO: You did?

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: And have fun with him. Oh yeah.

ADUBATO: Is that true?

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Had to.

ADUBATO: Brad, did he?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: No, no. Isn't true at all.

ADUBATO: It's not true at all.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Nah.

ADUBATO: Did you feel special?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: I feel very happy for my brother.

ADUBATO: Happy for your brother.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

ADUBATO: What do you mean?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Like my brother taking to concerts or Flyers games and the Sixers games.

ADUBATO: Flyers games? Did you say Flyers games?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Oh, yeah.

ADUBATO: I will not hold that against you. Coming from up here in northern New Jersey. So you love the Flyers.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: We do.

ADUBATO: What are your other favorite teams?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: 76ers.

ADUBATO: Oh, there's a whole Philadelphia thing going on there. All right. OK. I understand what's going on here. I don't know. My producers ask about A-Rod. No, we're not talking about that on this show.

So he was always there for you. He took you to games. You didn't feel special. You felt included, right?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yes.

ADUBATO: Well, do you feel special?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: I do.

ADUBATO: How so?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: I like my brother a lot because he's the best brother and I take--I look out for him every step of the way.

ADUBATO: You know what's interesting? I ask you if you feel special, your interpretation of this is, 'Yeah, because I got a brother like Bob.' That's what makes you special. How do think most families feel? I know it's a generalized question.

Mr. RUSS: Yeah.

ADUBATO: But again, we've been exposed to so many families through Special Olympics, all I see is really supportive families. When I think about how many families may not respond in such a positive way and just, 'Come on, let's go. We're going to play ball, we're going to see the Flyers.' Or I would think Yankees, but go ahead.

Mr. RUSS: Well, like Bob and Brad, my family's all been--we really haven't treated Matt any different. I fight with him just...

ADUBATO: From day one?

Mr. RUSS: Yeah, from day one.

ADUBATO: Kid's born five years younger than you. Who else is there, by the way, in the family?

Mr. RUSS: My parents and my other brother, Mike.

ADUBATO: What about you guys?

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Just the two of us.

ADUBATO: Just the two of us.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

ADUBATO: So Mike is where in that?

Mr. RUSS: He's a freshman.

ADUBATO: OK.

Mr. RUSS: So he's right in between.

ADUBATO: OK. He's in between you and your brother.

Mr. RUSS: Yeah.

ADUBATO: OK. So your younger brother is born. He's got special needs.

Mr. RUSS: Yeah.

ADUBATO: Nothing different from day one.

Mr. RUSS: Well, no, from day one we didn't really know. We found out later on, and at that point, him and Mike were real close. They fought a lot because they're closer in age, but they're also very close and loving because they're closer in age. But me and Mike just treated him just like we treat each other. My parents treat him just like they treat us. The dog treats him just like he treats us. It's...

ADUBATO: Did your parents really say anything? Or was it just what they did?

Mr. RUSS: No, they didn't really have to say anything. I mean, me and my

brother Mike were observant. We knew kind of what was going on. They didn't have to say anything, but they never really came out and said anything to us.

ADUBATO: Kris, help me on this.

Ms. DENI: Well, I can. If I can spill the beans a little bit, his mom and dad are real champions for him and, you know, I was there when we were getting him ready for his first day of seventh grade, and as you know, the most important thing in seventh grade is not academics, it's the locker.

ADUBATO: The locker.

Ms. DENI: Right. And so, you know.

ADUBATO: OK.

Ms. DENI: Mom and dad came to our evening orientation and we spent a good 30 minutes. She's got the details. You know, mom's got the details. She wanted him to fit in like everybody else. She wanted to make sure that we would make sure he had the locker, he could open the locker, would it be located next to his room. And so I, you know, I think it's that every successful student has a champion, and that champion is their brother, their mom and dad, their coach; everybody needs a champion to just sort of clear the way a little bit and let them shine. And I think that Anthony and his brother do that for Matt, and his mom and dad are right in there.

ADUBATO: Do you--other families, because you've dealt with so many different families.

Ms. DENI: Mm-hmm.

ADUBATO: Do some other families, have you seen other families just not go that way?

Ms. DENI: I think it's extremely challenging to have a youngster with a disability, and I think first comes information; second, parents have to know they're not alone. It is up for districts to reach out to families and say, 'We're your partner. We're here through the age of 21, and by the way, when they start to reach 14, 15, we're going to start talking about when we're no longer here and we're going to talk about what happens after you graduate.' And it's really up to the districts to reach out and say, 'We're more than just a set of classes that your student takes in school.'

ADUBATO: So I want to understand something. While we're talking about families--this series is called Families in Focus. We've been doing it for 13, 14 years. What I'm hearing, Coach, is that family is first defined by blood. But that real family, you know, whether for Brad or anyone else who has certain needs, family really is much broader than blood family. Family is coach. Family is teacher. Family is people in the community. Family is a volunteer at Special Olympics.

Ms. DENI: Mm-hmm.

ADUBATO: Am I making too much of that about family?

Mr. VALORE: No, I don't think so. I think you're hitting it right there. Brad was family for us from the get-go.

ADUBATO: Really?

Mr. VALORE: He--we enjoyed it 180 days in which he was with us through the school year. We had the opportunity to all be together. When I was supervisor of the lunch room with Brad during the course of the day.

ADUBATO: Time out. Back up. You're the what?

Mr. VALORE: I was the supervisor for one of my periods for Brad...

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah, that's true.

Mr. VALORE: ...at lunch.

ADUBATO: And he's your what? Your right arm.

Mr. VALORE: He's my right arm. Yes, he was.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yes, I am.

ADUBATO: So what was the job?

Mr. VALORE: Well, to supervise the cafeteria, and Brad was in the cafeteria.

ADUBATO: Hold on, what was the job? What was the job?

Mr. VALORE: Not to supervise Brad, but the whole cafeteria.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

ADUBATO: What was the job?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: I--and Coach will watch me in the lunch room. I don't get into any fights or anything, just be nice and be polite.

ADUBATO: Be nice and polite. But you're also supervising an entire lunch room.

Mr. VALORE: Yes, I am.

ADUBATO: You've got one eye on this guy.

Mr. VALORE: Oh, yes, I did.

ADUBATO: And you've got the whole thing going on.

Mr. VALORE: Right.

ADUBATO: You know, it sounds like such a cliché, but it sounds like this guy just fit right in. He's the life of the party. He's making them laugh. And something--were you closer--Brad, let me ask you. Were there certain people, certain friends that you got really close with? Like a best friend?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

ADUBATO: You did.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: I did.

ADUBATO: Who was that?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Logan Marro and Ben Gerstein.

ADUBATO: Best friends?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

ADUBATO: What made them so close?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: I like Ben Gerstein because he's a member at Hillcrest Country Club and we play golf together.

ADUBATO: Let me get this straight. Hold on. Ben is a member at a country club.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

ADUBATO: And he takes you in?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

ADUBATO: This guy is good. So that's not the only reason you're best friends with him.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

ADUBATO: But that's a good reason.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yes.

ADUBATO: But golf's a big part of your life?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: It is.

ADUBATO: When did you--when did you start loving golf?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: I played golf since I was three years old.

ADUBATO: You're eight, he's three, right? At the time.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Mm-hmm.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

ADUBATO: Were you teaching him?

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: We would go to the driving range. I didn't teach him just then.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: We would go to the driving range and we played a lot of miniature golf down at the Jersey shore.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: He would go.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: So we got him involved and, you know, I always used to tag him along.

ADUBATO: How good is this guy?

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: He's pretty good.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: I am pretty good. I put all holes in ones.

ADUBATO: You've had holes in ones?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah. Out of 10 or 30 shots.

ADUBATO: Let me ask you something, Brad, I enjoy golf. I am a 12 handicap and every once in a while for fun I enjoy a few dollars being involved. Would that be something?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: No, actually, I play my brother for free.

ADUBATO: Oh, for free. Oh, OK.

So let's go through the sports here, because golf isn't the only sport, right? You've got basketball.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

ADUBATO: You've got golf, anything else?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah. Power lifting.

ADUBATO: Power lifting.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: Mm-hmm.

ADUBATO: How did you get into power lifting?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: In Lawrenceville, like he said, I power lifting in Lawrenceville and...(unintelligible).

ADUBATO: You just got into power lifting.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: But he started weight lifting at the gym with the Cherry Hills East boys' basketball team.

ADUBATO: Right.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: And he had--it took on him. He loved it and he kept on going with the guys...

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: I did.

Mr. BOB HENNEFER: ...pretty much every day and, you know, he's--he works out all the time, he loves it. So we got him involved in power lifting.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yeah.

ADUBATO: And you're a hard worker, too. That's the other thing that's interesting.

Coach, talk about how hard of work--because you have two jobs, right?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: I do.

ADUBATO: What are they?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Wegmans and...

ADUBATO: You work for Wegmans and...

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: ...and Aero Mart.

ADUBATO: Oh, Aero Mart. Two jobs. I'm feeling lazy, man. I'm feeling very lazy.

Mr. VALORE: Two jobs and also goes to school, Camden County Community College.

ADUBATO: Yeah, how...

Mr. VALORE: He has a full...

ADUBATO: Let's talk about the juggling, OK. And you're a statistician, too?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: Yes, I am.

ADUBATO: Where?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: At Cherry Hill East.

ADUBATO: All right. Do you sleep?

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: No.

ADUBATO: I didn't think so. OK.

Mr. BRAD HENNEFER: No, I don't.

ADUBATO: Let me try to understand something. Again, I know I'm asking a generalized question, a cliché question. How typical? He doesn't sound typical of any guy his age or any young woman his age. He just doesn't because no one does that much. No one is that productive. No one does. But at the same time, when we look at what Brad's doing, what message should that be sending to anyone else who says, 'I can't, I can't,' regardless of their situation?

Ms. DENI: I think it's important for our students to see a model like Brad and to see a model like Anthony. You know, there's two sides of a coin. And,

you know, each of these young men does remarkable things and they bring a message to our students of, you really can, you really can, and you can help each other to do something. So I think we've seen what these brothers give to each other.

ADUBATO: Right.

Ms. DENI: And we find the same thing. We have an ambassador's program at our high school to...

ADUBATO: Ambassador's program?

Ms. DENI: We do. And we were flooded with volunteers when we brought a life skills program to our high school for the first time. We knew that navigating a big high school could be tough.

ADUBATO: For anyone.

Ms. DENI: So--for anyone. So we asked for volunteers from the high school community to come and learn about our youngsters and help them, and before we knew it we had 26 volunteers. Before we knew it we were not watching them in the cafeteria because their friends had their backs. And they would come to us and say, 'I'd really like Janine to go to the step dancing class with me. I'll pick her up. I'll take care of her.' And we saw those kinds of friendships blossom. And you know what? Again, both sides are getting a great deal out of that. And that's...

ADUBATO: Both sides.

Ms. DENI: Both sides.

ADUBATO: By the way, log on to our Web site. Also we'll connect you to the Special Olympics of New Jersey operation. They're always looking for volunteers, people who are committed, who care, who are curious and they want to try to find a way to make a difference.

Anthony, let me ask you something.

Mr. RUSS: Yeah.

ADUBATO: You volunteer at Special Olympics.

Mr. RUSS: Yeah.

ADUBATO: Describe that for us.

Mr. RUSS: Well, it's once a week. It just actually started up again this year. It's called unified basketball. We go over on Monday nights for an hour and a half, two hours, and we just play a game of basketball with Special Olympics athletes, and it's me and a group of other football players from my school.

ADUBATO: Did you recruit those guys?

Mr. RUSS: My coach, Rob Radice, came to me and Matt Gregory, who does a lot over there, he works there in the summer every day, too, and he said, 'You--we have this opportunity for you guys to get some volunteer work in. Do you want

to go over, get a group of 10 guys, maybe, it's Tuesday night.' It used to be on Tuesdays. So we went over. We had to kind of pull some guys in at first, and then it just kind of, from the first day on everybody loved it, and as I was saying in the green room before, we had so many, we actually had to go to three teams, and next week we're going to be at four teams, so.

ADUBATO: You mean it's expanded.

Mr. RUSS: Yeah, it's exploded.

ADUBATO: Well, right out of the box, though, Anthony, was it hard to get guys to jump in and say, 'I want to volunteer'? Because now it's going great.

Mr. RUSS: Yeah. Oh yeah, now...

ADUBATO: Everyone wants to be involved. It's expanded.

Mr. RUSS: (Unintelligible).

ADUBATO: But how about at the beginning?

Mr. RUSS: The beginning was tough. It was.

ADUBATO: It was?

Mr. RUSS: Yeah.

ADUBATO: How did you pitch it? What did you say?

Mr. RUSS: Well, we just kind of said like, 'Look, guys, come on, we have to--they--the community gives so much to us, we have to give back in some way. I mean, we can't just play football and go to school and sleep and eat.'

ADUBATO: You said that?

Mr. RUSS: Yeah. Me and Matt Gregory did, yeah.

ADUBATO: How did you know--how did you know that? I mean, how did you know that it's not enough just to play football and be really good at it? How do you know that?

Mr. RUSS: I think just the way my parents brought me up.

ADUBATO: So the whole idea of giving back. I've got a minute in this segment and then we're going to switch gears and talk about a whole range. Make sure you catch party two of this series called "Breaking Down Barriers."

Coach, let me ask you before we end this segment. When you hear Anthony and you deal with kids--for how many years have you been coaching?

Mr. VALORE: Forty-two years.

ADUBATO: Forty-two years.

Mr. VALORE: Forty-two years.

ADUBATO: You've seen not hundreds, but thousands of athletes at this point,

right?

Mr. VALORE: I've seen a lot.

ADUBATO: A lot of it has to do with character.

Mr. VALORE: No question about it.

ADUBATO: That's it, isn't it?

Mr. VALORE: A lot has to do with character. It's easy to coach a young man that has the character. You learn to appreciate him a little bit more, and it's more enjoyable when you work with people such as Brad and other players we have within our system. I've been very fortunate in Cherry Hill system to work with this type of person, as far as with character is concerned.

ADUBATO: Yeah.

Mr. VALORE: And I can't speak enough about this young man and what he has taught our players.

ADUBATO: I'll tell you what. We're going to have another half-hour to talk about you, but also send out some very powerful messages to people watching. See us next time. We'll be there.

Announcer: If you would like more information on this program or if you'd like to express an opinion, e-mail us at info@caucusnj.org and visit us online at caucusnj.org.

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Don't miss Steve Adubato and co-host Rafael Pi Roman each week on "Inside Trenton" Saturdays at 8:30 AM on 13 and Sundays at 7:30 AM on NJN public television.