

**# 81 President Obama comment on The Tonight Show- Advocacy Needed NOW!**

Dearest Advocates:

This saddens my heart to even have to send this email but it is necessary in order for everyone to understand and WE need to continue to educate **EVERYONE** (including the President of the United States) that words can be hurtful and we all need to be sensitive to others in this world.

President Obama was recently on the Tonight Show when Jay Leno asked him about his recent bowled a 129 score. Leno replied dryly, "That's very good, Mr. President."

President Obama chuckled and said it's "like the Special Olympics or something."

To see the Tonight Show clip with President Obama's comment regarding Special Olympics go to:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/03/19/obama-special-olympics-cr\\_n\\_177185.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/03/19/obama-special-olympics-cr_n_177185.html)

It sounds like President Obama needs some additional education in the area of sensitivity training and understanding words do hurt others. I strongly recommend we make this into a learning experience for everyone.

**Please take a moment and let President Obama** know your concerns regarding the language we use in society does impact on so many...especially in the disability community.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT/> or call Comments: 202-456-1111, Switchboard: 202-456-1414 or FAX: 202-456-2461

In addition, Special Olympics decided to have Chairman and CEO Timothy Shriver do an exclusive interview on Good Morning America . See below the transcript.

Also some additional links to the issue:

<http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2009/03/64400743/1>

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29784865/>

[http://www.specialolympics.org/official\\_statement.aspx](http://www.specialolympics.org/official_statement.aspx)

Let's turn this into a learning opportunity for everyone. I know I've already sent my personal letter to the President and inviting him to the next Georgia State Games the end of May at Emory University to meet my amazing son and see his abilities!

***"UNITED – WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!"***

Sincerely,

***Heidi***

**(Proud Mother to Jacob - 9 yrs old with Down syndrome and Jared - 7 yrs old)**

*“Help the Children Now, So They Can Help Themselves Later!”*

[www.heidijmoore.com](http://www.heidijmoore.com)

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Rather than release a formal written statement, Special Olympics decided to have Chairman and CEO Timothy Shriver do an exclusive interview on GMA .

Transcript:

March 20, 2009, 7:04am EST

Robin Roberts, GMA: For more reaction to the President's comments about Special Olympics, just a few minutes ago I spoke with the Chairman of the organization, Tim Shriver. He said the President called him from Air Force One before "The Tonight Show" even aired.

Tim Shriver: He expressed his disappointment and he apologized I think in a way that was very moving. He expressed that he did not intend to humiliate this population, certainly did not want to embarrass or give anybody any more reason for pain or for suffering I would say. He was very sincere, expressed an openness and an interest in being more engaged in the movement, said he was a fan of the movement. I think importantly said that he was ready to have some of our athletes over to the White House to bowl or play basketball or help him improve his score.

GMA: Is that enough for you or do you think there is something else that he should do?

Tim Shriver: Well I think its important to see that words hurt and words do matter, and these words that in some respect can be seen as humiliating or a put down to people with special needs do cause pain and they do result in stereotypes and result in behavior that is neglectful and almost oppressive of people with special needs. This kind of language needs to be a teachable moment I think for our country. That would help every parent who is at home this morning watching this show turn to their children and say that this is a chance for us to recognize that when we talk about Special Olympics, when we talk about people with special needs, lets make sure we talk about it in an affirming way.

GMA: Tim also said there is a Special Olympian in the Detroit area who has bowled three perfect games, three games, 300. He said he was sure he could find the time to come to the White House and teach the President.