



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

OUR PROGRAMS

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



“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

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.