

# A Special Olympian sure to make Phoenix proud

As a Phoenix city councilman, I have had the opportunity to meet some pretty amazing people, from world leaders to the teachers who dedicate their lives to inspiring our young people to be the best they can be.

I recently had the opportunity to meet one young lady who really touched my heart. Her name is Leanna Maul. From Jan. 29 through Feb. 5, Leanna will represent Phoenix at the 2013 Special Olympics World Games in PyeongChang, South Korea, joining 3,300 athletes and coaches from 112 countries. Her sport is snowshoeing.

In many ways, Leanna is your typical Washington High School senior. She smiles a lot and loves meeting new



## My Turn

DANIEL  
VALENZUELA

heads up to Flagstaff with her coach to perfect her moves in the snow. Snowshoeing has taught Leanna lessons about life and the importance of taking one step at a time to achieve your dreams. She has already proven that

people. Her favorite class is history because she enjoys learning about the world, and her least favorite class is math.

During the past three years, after the school day ends, Leanna hits the field to practice her sport, and on many weekends

she has the dedication and determination to be a winner at the Games and in life.

Like many, Leanna has faced some challenges, but she refuses to give in and let these challenges limit her. She credits her grandmother's love and support for lifting her up as she pursues her dreams, and her teacher and coach, Terrie Sansom, for being by her side each step of this amazing journey.

Special Olympics, founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1968, was created to promote "respect, acceptance, inclusion and human dignity for people with intellectual disabilities." The International Olympic Committee officially endorses and recognizes Special

Olympics.

Leanna embodies the spirit of the people who call Phoenix home, and I know she will represent us well. I encourage you to support Leanna in her quest for the gold by visiting [SpecialOlympicsWorldGames2013.kintera.org](http://SpecialOlympicsWorldGames2013.kintera.org).

Leanna, your Phoenix family will be cheering you on from here at home!

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