



50 Game Changers: Raymond S. Kellis High School

Elise Calanni | December 2018

As a way of closing out the year and reviewing all the incredible work Special Olympics state Programs do to implement Unified programs in their communities, the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® team would like to share the story of one high school that represents the mission and vision of Special Olympics and Unified Champion Schools particularly well: Raymond S. Kellis High School in Arizona.

A model school for inclusion, Kellis was recently featured as one of [50 ESPN Game Changers](#), a year-long storytelling initiative by Special Olympics and ESPN to share stories of game changers and game changing moments of inclusion. A new Game Changer story airs every Wednesday on ESPN Sports Center at 7AM ET and is shared on social media shortly after.

Kellis is setting an example for inclusive schools all over the country through its commitment to [Special Olympics Unified Sports®](#). In November 2018, the school was honored as a [Special Olympics Unified Banner School](#)—a distinction given to schools that have demonstrated their commitment to inclusion by meeting [10 standards](#) of excellence. Unified Champion Schools like Kellis implement inclusive practices through a three-component model that offers Unified Sports, Inclusive Youth Leadership, and Whole School Engagement.



In July 2018, Kellis High School's Unified soccer team represented [Special Olympics Arizona](#) at the Special Olympics USA Games in Seattle, Washington. Unified Sports gives students with and without intellectual disabilities the opportunity to play together on the same playing field, but the reach goes far beyond sports. By playing unified, students become more compassionate, patient, and confident. Unified programs are proven to change the climate of the school and the dynamic between students.

The devotion to inclusion shown by Kellis is a perfect example of how Unified Champion Schools programming, when embraced by the whole school, can lead to a more positive learning experience for students, staff and community members alike.



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View the Kellis High School Game Changer video [HERE](#).

Resources:

[All ESPN Game Changers](#)

[Unified Champion Schools National Recognition Program](#)

<https://www.generationunified.org/>

<https://www.specialolympics.org/our-work/unified-champion-schools>

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Elise Calanni is a Communications, Resources, and Content Specialist for Unified Champion Schools, the youth engagement and activation strategy that promotes school communities where all young people, as well as adult leaders, become agents of change. The program currently is in 48 states, 2,103 school districts, and more than 6,400 schools, reaching students each year with messages and activities that promote inclusive youth leadership and social inclusion.