

# AKIM at Special Olympics Ireland



Children of Ireland cheering their team



Celebration lunch after victory over Hungary, with sponsors Phil & Terri Baird



Israeli athletes thank Friends of Akim USA for their sponsorship

Our thanks to Eunice Kennedy Shriver for her driving force behind the Special Olympics, who showed the world that it could be done. Giving the mentally challenged athletes the where with all to shrug off the feeling of being unable to cope with all that goes on around them. The Special Olympics showed the world how great they really are.

Phil and Terri Baird, President and Vice President of Friends of Akim, were asked to raise the necessary funds to send team Israel to the Olympics. These were not just AKIM athletes, but all mentally challenged athletes of Israel went to compete. Not only did they raise the money, they also went to Ireland to root their team in. The Israeli team won 21 - medals; 11 - gold, 8 - silver and 2 - bronze.

The Israeli delegation were the guests of the town of Ballemanies, Northern Ireland for 4 - days of festivities before the games began. Then they and team Israel came to Dublin and they brought Israeli flags of their adopted country. They watched them compete, they cheered, they laughed and they cried as the team fought their hearts out to accomplish what the world said could not be done. President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, summed it up "we must do more to help the mentally challenged have a productive life."

Our hats off to the wonderful, friendly people of Ireland for coping with all the athletes and their families and friends that came. They went out of their way to make us all feel welcome.

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USA Delegation enters the stadium