



Sport opening new doors for Manawatu teen

Where it all started

As a young child growing up in Palmerston North, Jeremy Price tried out different sports and activities. He made some original choices, taking up unicycling and croquet. It was only in 2013, as a student at St Peter's College, that he discovered his love of swimming.

"I was at a school swimming sports and was asked if I wanted to try a club training after it, so I did," Jeremy says. He was hooked and a year later, when he heard about Special Olympics, he signed up without hesitation.

Jeremy is now 16 and enrolled at Freyberg High School. He is committed and passionate about his swimming, training two or three times a week, usually in the afternoons. His preferred stroke is breaststroke, which he enjoys training and competing in.

The difference sport makes

The rewards make the effort worthwhile, Jeremy says. Aside from the satisfaction that comes from doing something you enjoy, he finds swimming is a great way to relax and de-stress. There's also the social aspect of the sport – he's made lots of friends in the past four years.

Mostly, swimming is about getting together and doing your best.

"It's quite fun going to events - you get to know your opposition and we are all trying to get the same thing but we don't worry about who gets it as we are all friends outside of the race."

Jeremy says being diagnosed with ADHD and autism means people sometimes treat you differently, but one of the things he really likes about Special Olympics sport is that nobody is judging you about not being "normal."

Next stop, the world stage

Jeremy also enjoys the competitive nature of the sport and gets a kick out of winning.

In 2016, Jeremy won three medals at the 2016 Trans Tasman Tournament in Hamilton. After that, he decided to give the Nationals a go. And his ambition doesn't stop there. His ultimate goal?

"Top level - the 2020 Paralympics," Jeremy says.

His advice? Give Special Olympics a go!

At the end of the day, though, it's all about participating. Jeremy encourages other young people to try something outside their comfort zone.

"What I say is if you think it looks fun give it a go. Even if you don't like it, you can say you gave it a go."

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