

ATHLETES

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“He’s just really rewarding to coach because he may not be able to verbally say, ‘OK, thanks coach,’ or I get it coach, but he’s such an observer and he has such perseverance,” she said.

Smalley said it is also obvious that Arey enjoys participating.

“We can tell there’s just so much more that Lyall is thinking that were not able to see because of his lack of verbalization,” Smalley said. “You can just tell he enjoys being out there and doing it.”

His mother, Remick, agrees.

“I think it’s given him more opportunities to communicate in his own way,” Remick Arey said.

It is only one facet of Arey’s life, however.

In addition to Special Olympics, Arey works at Transitions in Hermiston and volunteers at Crazy Mike’s video store, where he logs movies into the

computer. “Movie are his thing,” Remick Arey said. “It’s probably a dreamy job for him.”

She said her son also stays active with friends through Special Olympics.

“In reality, his social calendar is way busier than his parents’,” Remick Arey said. “He’s so much more social than we could ever imagine.”

Smalley said the local Special Olympics program offers snow sports, bocce, golf, basketball and bowling, and the athletes range in age from children to 30 and older.

“We are always interested in recruiting new athletes of any age to the program,” she said. “Many of our athletes have participated in our program for decades.”

For more information on the program or enrolling an athlete, people can contact local program coordinator Stu Bance, 541-376-8132. To learn more about Special Olympics, visit www.soor.org.



Special Olympics bocce athletes Lyall Arey, left, and Jilli Smalley shake hands after a practice recently. Arey and Smalley, who are both on the autism spectrum, have known each other for years, went to prom together and enjoy competing in Special Olympics events together.

JESSICA KELLER PHOTO



SEAN HART PHOTO

Columbia Aeromodelers member Ken Thompson launches a radio-controlled model airplane into the air before allowing McNary Heights Elementary School fourth-grader Zac Russell to fly the plane using a buddy box Friday.

RC PLANES

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overwhelms them.”

Columbia Aeromodelers member Ken Thompson, Hermiston, said it was fun to show students his hobby and generate interest in the sport.

“We introduced a lot of grade school kids — I think there was probably about 100 — to the sport of radio-controlled model aviation,” he said. “We put on a flying demonstration with several of the planes. I had one of the youngsters (control a plane) on what we call a buddy box. It’s a second transmitter tethered to the primary transmitter.”

Zac Russell, 10, was the lucky student chosen to fly with the buddy box from the group of students from McNary Heights Elementary School. He said he had flown small remote control planes and helicopters before but never a plane as large as the one he flew Friday.

“I think it was awesome,” he said. “I learned

that it is hard for the first time to fly big planes. It was swerving a little bit because of the wind.”

Fifth-grader Jenexy Rivera said she learned a lot during the presentation.

“It was pretty awesome,” she said. “I liked it because the planes were really outstanding. Some of them were fast, and they did tricks.”

Thompson said he hoped the presentation was educational and also generated interest in the sport.

He said the Columbia Aeromodelers currently have five core members and another five who occasionally participate, but the club does not have a designated facility to conduct events.

“We would love to get the sport organized, but you first have to have a place to do it,” he said. “We want a safer place to fly so that we can generate more interest in the community.”

For more information about the club, visit facebook.com/columbiaaeromodelers.



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