

# QuEd up for Education

*People and programs impacting our QCSD community*

## Special Olympians bring home the Gold



These five swimmers, coached by Stacy Pletz, at right, captured Gold medals in the Special Olympics Pennsylvania Summer Games. The champions are, right to left, Malachi Fuentes, Will Buckley, Jack Bancroft, Katelyn Sovorsky and William Blaikie. Below, they take over the winner's podium after winning the 4 x 25-meter freestyle relay.

### By Gary Weckselblatt

Two students from Quakertown and two from Palisades combined to win the Gold Medal in the 4 x 25-meter freestyle relay at last weekend's Special Olympics Pennsylvania Summer Games.

Will Buckley, an eighth grader at Strayer Middle School, Malachi Fuentes, a ninth grader at Quakertown Community High School, and Palisades ninth graders Jack Bancroft and William Blaikie, took home the gold as part of Bucks County's contingent in the Summer Games at Penn State.

The students train and compete under the direction of head coach Stacy Pletz, as part of the Upper Bucks Special Olympics Aquatics, sponsored by the Upper Bucks YMCA. Katelyn Sovorsky, a 2013 graduate of QCHS, also competed in the events.

"This is both very emotional

and very rewarding," Pletz said of the team's outstanding results. "It takes a lot of time and a lot of dedication to get to this point. It's very hard to place, and move up to this level, but they have done that."

The championship relay effort was one of four Gold medals for Will, who also captured the 50-meter breaststroke, the 100-meter intermediate medley, and the 100-meter freestyle.

Katelyn won a Gold of her own in the 50-meter backstroke. She also gained a Silver in the 100 freestyle and finished fifth in the 50 freestyle.

Malachi took home a Silver medal in the 100 IM and a pair of Bronze medals in the 50 butterfly and 100 freestyle.

The Palisades students also took home Gold for their individual performances. Jack won the 50 freestyle, and was fifth in the 50 backstroke and sixth in the 25 freestyle.

William Blaikie also earned a Gold in the 50 backstroke. He gained a Silver in the 50 freestyle and finished fourth in the 25 backstroke.

"We made history" by winning the 4 x 25-meter freestyle relay, Pletz said. Last year, its first time in the Summer Games, the team only had two swimmers, Quakertown's Will and Malachi. This year, they were able to field a full relay.

"This was a whole lot of fun, and allows them to compete in a sport at their level," Pletz said. "While learning these skills in this sport it also helps them learn independent life skills, which is so important."

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