

**Sporting Champion Visit  
Sussex Parallel Youth Games – 11 June 2008  
Clare Strange**

On 11 June 2008, the Sussex Parallel Youth Games shone as brightly as the summer sunshine at Olympos, Burgess Hill. The Games is an annual event that looks to expand the opportunities for young disabled children in competitive sport in Sussex. The warm, bright weather matched the cheery mood as an assortment of Sussex special needs schools and VIPs enjoyed the variety of sports and competitions showcased at the high profile venue.



The day began with over 300 children arriving from 15 schools across the county for the Opening Ceremony where Clare Strange, an elite British Wheelchair Basketball player and Sport England Sporting Champion, inspired all the participants through her passion and success in sport, urging them to continue to play and compete in sport at all levels. The event offered opportunities for young disabled children to compete in sports including Boccia, New Age Kurling, Wheelchair Basketball, Basketball, Tennis and Cricket.

The Games provided an excellent opportunity for Olympos, Burgess Hill to showcase their world-class facilities as a 2012 pre-games training and holding camp in their bid to attract visiting national Olympic teams.

The Parallel Youth Games would not have been possible without the amazing teams of volunteers, including students from Imberhorne School, St. Paul's Catholic College, Chichester College and Oathall Community College. American Express sent a team of volunteers to the Games for the second year running as part of their 'Good Citizenship Scheme' with the team of volunteers "enjoying the event as much as the children – if not more"!

The event is run by the Sussex County Sports Partnership Trust and part funded by the Co-op Community Dividend Fund. Now in its third successful year, it is well established in Sussex and continues to grow from strength-to-strength.



Sussex has become a leader for disability sport hosting the South East Regional Disability Athletics Championships and the South East Regional Boccia Tournament. It is hoped that these Games will prove to be a springboard to some local aspiring athletes as Sadie Mason, Partnership Director who opened the event says, "Who knows there may even be a future Paralympian among the participants today"! All those involved in organising and attending the event know the value, reward and benefit sport can deliver to all!

*For further details about Sussex Parallel Youth Games please contact, Katy Russell, Sussex Disability Development Officer, Sussex County Sports Partnership Trust 01273 644185 [krussell@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:krussell@brighton.ac.uk) or visit [www.sussexsport.org](http://www.sussexsport.org).*

*For further details about Sporting Champions visit [www.sportingchampions.org.uk](http://www.sportingchampions.org.uk)*