

# Jersey students, staff Just Being Jersey in Springfield

by Lori Hopkins

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Over the weekend, Illini sent eight students to Springfield to attend the Youth Activation Summit for Project Unify. Project Unify is an initiative through Illinois Special Olympics that helps ensure that students with intellectual disabilities are integrated into the rest of the school. At the core of Project Unify is the idea of peer

partners, where students with and without intellectual disabilities are paired up. It is a great learning opportunity for both peer partners. Six of the Illini peer partners attended and learned more about Project Unify at the Youth Activation Summit, but one set of peer partners, Jacob Stocks and Will Powers served as committee members for the Summit. They have been heavily involved in planning this event and were presenters to students from all over the state! We are so proud of all of them, especially our presenters! They represented Jersey 100 with excellence, showing the *Jersey Be Jersey* way to students and staff from all over Illinois!

Those who attended were as follows: Mrs. Patty Heineman, Mr. Nate Blasa and Mrs. Rachel Evans, Educators; Mr. Jacob Stocks and Mr. Will Powers attended from Friday-Sundays as Committee members; and Mr. Eric Fleming, Mr. Caleb Lane, Miss Brittany Heitzman, Miss Taylor Soffray, Miss Elizabeth Meyer and Miss Haley Gibson came up Saturday-Sunday. Thank you to ALL for raising awareness of Project Unify and working together for the good of the whole. Your JUST BE JERSEY way is impressive!



So PROUD!