

## The World of Special Olympics

*The sun never sets on our Special Olympics Movement. See what's happening now...*

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### An Open Letter to Ann Coulter

Posted on [October 23, 2012](#) by [Tim Shriver](#)

***The following is a guest post in the form of an open letter from Special Olympics athlete and global messenger John Franklin Stephens to Ann Coulter after [this tweet](#) during last night's Presidential debate.***

Dear Ann Coulter,

Come on Ms. Coulter, you aren't dumb and you aren't shallow. So why are you continually using a word like the R-word as an insult?

I'm a 30 year old man with Down syndrome who has struggled with the public's perception that an intellectual disability means that I am dumb and shallow. I am not either of those things, but I do process information more slowly than the rest of you. In fact it has taken me all day to figure out how to respond to your use of the R-word last night.

I thought first of asking whether you meant to describe the President as someone who was bullied as a child by people like you, but rose above it to find a way to succeed in life as many of my fellow Special Olympians have.

Then I wondered if you meant to describe him as someone who has to struggle to be thoughtful about everything he says, as everyone else races from one snarkey sound bite to the next.

Finally, I wondered if you meant to degrade him as someone who is likely to receive bad health care, live in low grade housing with very little income and still manages to see life as a wonderful gift.

Because, Ms. Coulter, that is who we are – and much, much more.

After I saw your tweet, I realized you just wanted to belittle the President by linking him to people like me. You assumed that people would understand and accept that being linked to someone like me is an insult and you assumed you could get away with it and still appear on TV.

I have to wonder if you considered other hateful words but recoiled from the backlash.

Well, Ms. Coulter, you, and society, need to learn that being compared to people like me should be considered a



John Franklin Stephens

badge of honor.

No one overcomes more than we do and still loves life so much.

Come join us someday at Special Olympics. See if you can walk away with your heart unchanged.

A friend you haven't made yet,  
John Franklin Stephens  
Global Messenger  
Special Olympics Virginia

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** John has previously written powerful opinion pieces on the R-word. [Read one here.](#)

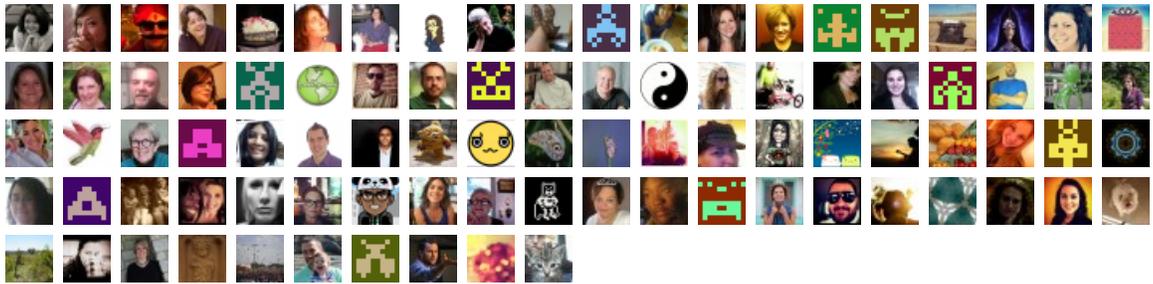
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**About Tim Shriver**

Special Olympics Fan in Chief, father of five, husband of one, brother of many, teacher at heart, Red Sox fan, spirit seeker  
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## 2,093 Responses to *An Open Letter to Ann Coulter*

 **chon morales** says:  
October 24, 2012 at 1:00 pm

Way to speak it brother...I'm sure Ms.coulter didn't mean anything negative, she just couldn't think of anything intelligent to say. You sure did. Keep the faith and don't let anyone bring you down.

[Reply](#)



**Katherine** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:59 pm

Well said, John! Your letter to Ms. Coulter was kind, courteous, intelligent and completely lacking in any 'snarkey' bits! Those who count themselves among your friends must be very proud to have the blessing of knowing you.

[Reply](#)

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**Libby Staley** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:58 pm

Mr. Stephens,

Your response is perfect. The only criticism I would offer is that you are giving Ms. Coulter waaaaay too much credit. First by assuming that she is not shallow. Ms. Coulter will say any hateful thing to get attention. She will say it to anyone, on television, online, or in one of her many hateful books. She loves attention and has found it worth sacrificing reputation to earn attention. I consider that to be a VERY shallow world view.

Your second false assumption is that Ms. Coulter could benefit from attending the Special Olympics. I'm afraid that until Ms. Coulter addresses the personality disorder that is at the source of her need for attention-at-any-cost, she will be unable to enjoy the event or to appreciate the opportunity to be surrounded by a gracious, caring, and selfless community such as yours.

Good news, though: Most everyone started ignoring Ann Coulter many years ago! I believe the depth of her illness became apparent to most when she referred to the widows of the 9/11 victims as "harpies and witches".

Love what you are doing in giving such a thoughtful voice to your cause, keep it up!

[Reply](#)

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**Peter** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:55 pm

John, you referred to yourself as a friend that Ann Coulter has not made yet. Let's be clear, she in no way deserves friendship of any kind let alone friendship from someone as fine as you. She is a hateful person and is a waste of DNA.

[Reply](#)



**Jaime** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:56 pm

Amen.

[Reply](#)



**Rebecca W** says:

October 24, 2012 at 1:00 pm

Heaven forbid this young man show her what she lacks, kindness.

[Reply](#)

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**Rachel** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:55 pm

John your an inspiration to us all !!

[Reply](#)

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**Robin N** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:55 pm

Bravo, sir!! Well done!! As the parent of a special needs child I know that it isnt only sticks and stones that hurt. God bless

[Reply](#)

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**Matt Tangvald** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:55 pm

Thank you Mr. Stephens for standing up for all of us who are disabled. You used such beautiful words to respond and educate with love instead of returning hate for hate.

[Reply](#)

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Pingback: [An Open Letter to Ann Coulter | McNichol Design](#)

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**exemplar1** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:54 pm

Bravo John! Well said.

[Reply](#)

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**Mario Chavez** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:53 pm

Ann who? Why is that spiteful woman still given a podium to vent her anger?

[Reply](#)

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**denverdodger** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:52 pm

Ann Coulter's a hack and a coward. She chose this ever-favorite (among the distasteful, hateful, immature and the extremely ignorant) noun over her and the people whom she serves preferred noun – beginning with an n – to describe the president. Why? Because she and her operatives are sadists and get pleasure from attacking the defenseless and marginalized. John, well done for your eloquently written and thoughtful prose – an ability which eludes the irrelevant mediocrities like Ms. Coulter.

[Reply](#)

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**Thomas** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:52 pm

Mr Stephens – The world truly needs more people with your heart and compassion and fewer people like Anne who deny their own lack of grace by attempting to ignorantly belittle others. Warm regards – Thomas

[Reply](#)

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**sirblue3719** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:52 pm

Bill for vice president!

[Reply](#)

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Pingback: [This letter to Ann Coulter is everything I wanted to see in response to her bigoted statements and more. | nonsense](#)

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**G Gordon Nicholson** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:51 pm

FANTASTIC RESPONSE TO A VERY PREJUDICED AND STUPID REMARK BY A JOURNALIST WHO REALLY SHOULD KNWO BETTER.

THANKS

GGNICHOLSON

[Reply](#)

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**john** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:59 pm

who ever said Ann Coulter is a Journalist????!!! just because you are on TV and offer opinions, you AREN'T a journalist! Journalists report news. Commentators, Editorialists, Propagandists offer their opinions on current events. Dont insult responsible journalists by calling Ann Coulter one.

[Reply](#)

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**Patrick Billey** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:51 pm

I don't know who is this Ann Coulter, I don't know, and don't want to know, about what she wrote. But I know that you have a beautiful heart, a lot of sensibility, and a great mind, John. Also, and if this means something for you when it comes from a native French speaker, your words are "magnifiques" 😊

[Reply](#)

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**Bill Collins** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:51 pm

Ignorance is not the province of either political party. Rather than turning this into a political diatribe (I have heard plenty of

libs use the word), why not focus your efforts and comments in a positive manner? Ms. Coulter's use of the r-word underscores the work we all need to do to eliminate its inappropriate use.

[Reply](#)

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**Murf** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:51 pm

Thank you John for your very thoughtful and, I hope, eye opening and mind expanding letter. I liked how you stated that it had taken you all day to compose your thoughts and also to refrain from lashing out at Miss Coulter. A whole lot of people could learn so much about how to not hurt others if they would only take that time to think as you so obviously have. I have been, and sometimes continue to be, one of those people who have spoken without thinking. I am hoping to do better and I feel sure that your words will help me in the future.

[Reply](#)

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**Marie** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:50 pm

Amazing commentary! John, maybe YOU should run for office! i'd trust you to do a better job then so many out there running now! Thank you for sharing your thoughts! I stand inspired from yet another olympian..AGAIN! 😊

[Reply](#)

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**John Tsunami** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:50 pm

It is interesting to me the comment written by the Australian responder here, and I must say I completely agree with his take on modern American politics as an American myself. America does many great things on a daily basis, but having the whole world watch our politicians act in the manner that they do is more than slightly disheartening. We claim to work so hard on our world wide projects for a better future for everyone, but its easy to see how easily people can lose faith in our system when the people we look to lead us act like this. At the very least people like Ann Coulter should keep their prejudice and ill-mannerisms out of the public eye, if not rise above appalling outbursts like this all together. Personally I feel the political spectrum should have no place for people that represent our country like this. Mr. Stephens admits in his letter it takes him a bit longer than most people to process information, yet he took an entire day of his time to respond to her about something that bothered him in a polite and respectful way, signing as a friend you haven't made yet, while most of our politicians would have briefly responded venomously, not caring much about the impact of their words. Its incredible really that simultaneously they will stand on the world stage telling us their opinions on who they think should lead our country next. Mr. Stephens, to simply applaud you doesn't come close to the merit you deserve for writing such a beautiful, compelling letter. I have read few in my lifetime that match its grandeur

[Reply](#)

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**[Sue Swift/Suz deMello](#)** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:50 pm

Reblogged this on [Fearless, Fast-paced Fiction: Suz deMello/Sue Swift](#) and commented:

Well worth reading. Embarrassing for Ann Coulter—she must have put so much Clorox on her hair that it's starting to affect

the brain beneath.

Ciao and namaste, everyone.

[Reply](#)

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**craguilar** says:

October 24, 2012 at 12:50 pm

Mr. Tim Shriver, congratulations on your letter and achievements. You are living proof that human life is always precious. This is relevant because many Democrats believe that fetuses with a Down syndrome diagnosis should be aborted, and that many Democrats have used the “R”-word to refer, not only to their political opponents, but to actual people with Down syndrome. Didn’t you hear the awful joke about Sarah Palin’s vagina? Well, that joke was not about a president perfectly capable of defending himself, but about a child with Down syndrome. I think you should be more outraged about that.

[Reply](#)

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