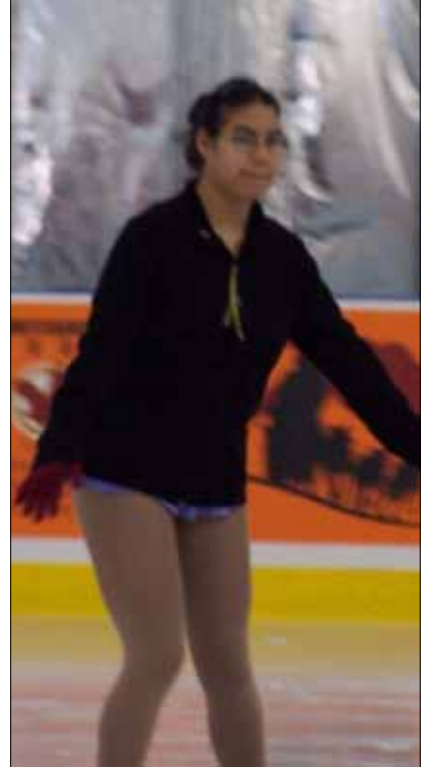


Hi! My name is Katie Colomb-Fedak. I am 17 years old and am 5 feet, 2 inches tall. I have brown eyes, curly, dark brown hair and I have size 7 feet. I am in grade 11 at Oak Park High School, where I have a lot of cool friends. I love going to school. I have FAS. It is just a disability, but the real reason that I'm writing this book for you is not to tell you about having FAS but to tell you about my amazing, great success- SKATING. It all started in August when I went to a summer camp. It was for people with disabilities and it was a lot of fun. I really learned a lot about different sports and made lots of new friends. The sport that I liked the most was figure skating and I really wanted to try it. I talked to my mom and the next day at camp we asked the coach if it would be possible if we could have some information on the skating lessons. The cool thing about it is that right off the hook I just gave my mom the little look and three letters came out of her mouth. They were Y-E-S. I knew that my life was headed in a new direction and I really like the road that I was going down. That is really the way that I got started in figure skating. It has been only six months since I started on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

In the second month I was asked to go to the Winter Games in Whitehorse, Yukon by my coach Colleen Lowden. The way that it works is not just anyone can go. It has to be a skater that has shown that they can do it. The way that I was told that I got to go was like this. One evening when I was at home with my mom and dad they said that they wanted to talk to me. I started to get scared. I really thought that I had done something wrong at school that day. It just turned out that all they had to tell me was that my coach had asked them if it was okay to start to train me to go and skate in Whitehorse. They said "yes" and then when they told me what really was going on I thought that they were not feeling so good. I found out that they were feeling fine and that they were not kidding around with me. They were telling me the truth. It really seems weird because the other girls have to wait for a long time. It took me two months and I'm in the games. I'm not saying that I don't want to go, I do. Every four years they can pick someone to go. Just my luck they have to pick someone from Special Olympics and that someone was me. I still can't get over that it is me that they have picked to go. I know that it will be a lot of fun. There are a lot of rules that we have to follow. It will be very easy because I really would not have been able to go without a chance like this. When my parents first told me, I was speechless and then I had to tell everyone that I knew and that is just what I did. Now I'm the talk of the family and it rocks. I love to compete and I love to feel like there are people out there that would do anything to be able to do the thing that I can do. Now I'm going to tell you something -I love to go to all my practices. By the way, I skate three times a week. The days are Monday at Vimy Arena from 7:00-8:30 pm, Thursday from 7:45-8:45 pm and Saturday from 12:00-1:00 at the Eric Coy Arena. I skate with a lot of other skaters. They are very good but they have been skating much longer than me. When I'm on the ice I feel free and I can do my thing. When I feel free it gives me a chance to forget about everything that is going on around me. I just go out there and land my jumps. When I land them, it really gives me a good feeling and just makes me want to do it and not give up, no matter what happens to me out there. I just go for the unthinkable. When I go down I just get right back up and try again. If I have that feeling of giving up then I just look at the other girls and tell myself that some day, I will be there at the top, but only if I stay with it. Colleen Lowden is my coach. She is really cool! Colleen keeps me going when I am tired and hopeless. Colleen encourages me and pushes me to get on with things. Colleen has inspired me by telling me anything worth having is worth working hard for. The two words you don't say around Colleen is "I can't". I like to think how far I want to go with this. That is just what keeps me going and I tell myself that I can do anything that I put my mind to. I know that if I really want it then I will go for it. Nothing can get in my way and I like that. When I look at all the other skaters and they are doing the bigger and harder jumps, it just



**makes me want to go and get the gold. That is one of the first places that I'm going and I'm not going to let anything get in my way. The other people can try to be really mean to me and say things that they might think will hurt me, but what they really don't know is that when they say things like that it just makes me stronger. It will make them have to think again because nothing that they can say is going to hurt me. It will just build me up straight to the top. You know why? Because if it gets to me I will just tell myself that it is just the other person that has the issue. I know that I don't have to listen to them and I really don't want things like that get in the way of my good skating. The more they say the more it will make me want to do better and to go farther. They can say all that they want but it is not going to stop me. Do you know why? Because it gives me really good exercise and it really makes me feel like I can do anything if I really want to. But just because I skate it does not mean that I can give up on my school work. No matter how many times I skate, for me to get to the top, I have to have money and a good job. I have one more year in high school and then I can go to school and keep up with all the skating that I will be doing later in life. And I just got new figure skates and I'm at the point with them when they have to be broken in and just let me tell you something I really think that is one of the hardest things about figure skating. It is very painful but I can't let that stop me. What I am saying is nothing can stop me. The ice is one of me and I am one with the ice. I have become more confident just being around people and I really should thank the ice for that. I really would like to know what I can do in this sport and I'm going to find out.**

**The only reason that I told you my height is because when you see me on the ice I look so much shorter. That is just because when you skate you have to bend a lot and that is what makes you look so short. So if you want to have a great, big dream like mine then all I have to say is just go all out for it and see where it takes you. Just have all the fun that you can have in it or with it.**

**If I had to do anything else I would dance. That is just one other thing that has helped me get this far. I really love to dance and that is one other thing that I'm not going to stop. If I could do anything else I really think that I would get into horse-back riding. That is just one more thing that I would do to help me have just a little more fun in my life and give me just a little more to say that I can do when I go out into the world and try to get a good job. I am very happy and when I get out into the world then I can really see what the world really has to give a good and talented girl like me. Let's just see who they will want to put out of work. Then if they still say that it is not good then I will pull out the big time and really go for a dance teacher or a skating teacher. And that would be known as the life of little Katie. I don't really think that I should look that far just yet because I still have far to go and I'm going there. I'm not going to let anyone stop me. I would be able to have people admire me and that is the next part of what I'm working on. When I skate, I look at the world like I own it, and I do own it. When I put on my skates I feel like if I had a day to learn how to skate like a pro that would be no problem for me because I love to skate. I would not want to do anything but skate but since I can't, then when I can skate, I will. I just love to skate!**

