



## **PLANNING YOUR OWN FIT FEET EVENT**

Fit Feet was developed in collaboration with the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine. Many Special Olympics athletes suffer from foot and ankle pain or deformities that impair their performance. Also, athletes are not always fitted with the best shoes and socks for their particular sport. Healthy Athletes, in cooperation with the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine, has developed the Fit Feet screening discipline to evaluate foot and ankle deformities. Athletes receive foot and ankle screening for deformities and are checked for proper shoes and socks. Athletes receive education in proper footwear and care of the feet and toes.

### **How to Initiate Fit Feet**

Several organizational steps can be followed in planning to initiate Fit Feet:

1. A Special Olympics Program can develop an interest in hosting Fit Feet, and contact either the Special Olympics Regional Healthy Athletes Coordinator or a Fit Feet Global Clinical Advisor.
  - 1a. The Special Olympics Program can nominate an appropriate podiatrist for training as the Clinical Director.
  - 1b. The SO Program can request assistance from the Fit Feet Global Clinical Advisor or Regional Clinical Advisor to work with the appropriate podiatry organization to identify a professional for training.
2. The state or country podiatry association can develop an interest in hosting Fit Feet, and contact the Fit Feet Global Clinical Advisor, the Fit Feet Regional Clinical Advisor or the Special Olympics Regional Healthy Athletes Coordinator.
3. An identified podiatrist will submit a resume for review by both the Global Clinical Advisor and the Special Olympics Program.
4. If the identified podiatrist meets the qualifications for and agrees to become the state or country Clinical Director, he/she will be invited to the next Train-the-Trainer session to learn how to coordinate the event.
5. Once trained, the state or country Clinical Director should meet with the Special Olympics Program Director to mutually agree on the following topics:
  - Location and date of the event at which Fit Feet will be held
  - Amount and location of space for Fit Feet at the event(s)
  - Dates and times of the clinic
  - Recruitment of volunteers
  - Scheduling of volunteer orientation to Special Olympics

Issues of fundraising and publicity

6. The state or country Clinical Director can then appoint any podiatrist to assist with the Fit Feet planning.

7. The state or country Clinical Director has the assistance and support of a Fit Feet Regional Clinical Advisor as well as the Fit Feet Global Clinical Advisor.

## **ORGANIZATION**

### **Getting Help**

Delegating responsibilities well ahead of time will help to make the planning process go smoothly. The following are roles and responsibilities that the Fit Feet state or country clinical director might delegate to other members of a team:

#### **Event coordinator (the major role of the Clinical Director)**

The event coordinator is responsible for working with local programs and sites to coordinate the event. Many programs now have a “Healthy Athletes Coordinator” who will be a key contact person for this. He/she should work closely with the Special Olympics Program to decide on site size and location, hours of screening, equipment needed, and provision of amenities (food, water, gifts) for volunteers. This person should also develop methods to encourage athletes to attend the event. He/she should work with local medical and professional groups to strengthen ties between the sponsors and the local community.

#### **Volunteer coordinator**

The volunteer coordinator is responsible for recruiting and scheduling volunteers. This person should work with the Special Olympics Program to decide when and how the general Special Olympics volunteer orientation will be completed. The volunteer coordinator should also provide orientation and training to volunteers in the Fit Feet clinics, as well as maps and parking information. On-site assignments and definition of responsibilities are included in the position’s duties.

#### **Media spokesperson**

The media spokesperson is the primary contact for media information. He/she will organize interviews about the event (before, during and after the event). The spokesperson should work with the local Special Olympics Program director or media person to coordinate and plan publicity. Ideally, the media spokesperson should have prior experience with the media, think well on his/her feet and have good writing skills. Special Olympics has press kits available for both Special Olympics, and Special Olympics Healthy Athletes. They should take pictures during the event and gather stories from athletes, families, and coaches about the impact of Fit Feet on their lives. Some of the Fit Feet publicity might be rolled into usual Special Olympics Games media information. After collecting this information, they should connect with Fit Feet manager or the Health Communications team at SOI.

#### **Fundraiser**

The Host professional organization may consider creating a budget line for state Games if it wishes to host Fit Feet yearly. Money may also be solicited from local businesses or fraternal organizations, especially if their names are associated with the event. Local or regional universities or schools might donate for publicity, a school challenge or a service-learning project. The sponsor may then create a budget line for future donations. All sponsors should be publicly recognized at the event for their support. A thank-you note or letter should also be sent to all sponsors. This recognition will reaffirm your appreciation for their participation in the Fit Feet event.