

# Community Builders Toolkit for Family Leaders

Section 4: Recruiting Family Volunteers

**Special Olympics**



1 Special Olympics

The *Community Builder Toolkit for Family Leaders, Section 4: Recruiting Family Volunteers* provides Power Point presentations, sample materials, templates and guidance for family leaders (both staff and volunteers) to introduce Special Olympics to families.

**Note: This section builds on information provided in:**

***Section 1: Orientation to Family Engagement***

***Section 2: Planning for Successful Family Engagement***

***Section 3: Welcoming Families***

# Toolkit Table of Contents



## Section 4: Recruiting Family Volunteers

- Importance of family volunteers
- Challenges in recruiting and retaining volunteers
- Range of volunteer roles to offer
- Recognizing contributions

2 Special Olympics

*The Community Builder Toolkit for Family Leaders, Section 4: Recruiting Families* is intended for family leaders, Board Members, Program staff and key volunteers. The objective of this section is to provide tools for recruiting families to serve in diverse volunteer roles. Key information includes:

- Importance of family volunteers
- Challenges in recruiting and retaining volunteers
- Range of volunteer roles to offer
- Recognizing contributions

# Family Volunteers are Terrific!



**Family Volunteers are Terrific!**

1. Lead or join your Family Support Network.
2. Host Family Forums that address father and sibling concerns, as well as mothers' concerns.
3. Be a coach or assist a coach for a season.
4. Lead a Sports Club in your neighborhood.
5. Join the fundraising committee and help organize events.
6. Join the Family Committee or other leadership committees to be part of the decision making.
7. Mentor an Athlete Leader to support them in being spokespersons for the Movement.
8. Share technology skills to help set up a website, Facebook page, or e-mail distribution list for families.
9. Be part of the Games Management Team for your local, national or regional games.
10. Train athletes as coaches and coach assistants.

**I'm In! Family Volunteer**

The success of Special Olympics depends on volunteers. There is a role for every family member in the Movement.

I pledge to:

- Lead or join my Family Support Network.
- Host Family Forums for fathers and siblings, as well as mothers.
- Be a coach or assist a coach for a season.
- Lead a Sports Club in my neighborhood.
- Join the fundraising committee and help organize events.
- Join the Family Committee or other leadership committees to be part of the decision making.
- Mentor an Athlete Leader to support them in being spokespersons for the Movement.
- Share technology skills to help set up a website, Facebook page, or e-mail distribution list for families.
- Be part of the Games Management Team for my local, national or regional games.
- Train athletes as coaches and coach assistants.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Program \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail address or phone number \_\_\_\_\_

**Athletes are terrific!**

1. Lead or join your Family Support Network.
2. Host Family Forums that address father and sibling concerns, as well as mothers' concerns.
3. Be a coach or assist a coach for a season.
4. Lead a Sports Club in your neighborhood.
5. Join the fundraising committee and help organize events.
6. Join the Family Committee or other leadership committees to be part of the decision making.
7. Mentor an Athlete Leader to support them in being spokespersons for the Movement.
8. Share technology skills to help set up a website, Facebook page, or e-mail distribution list for families.
9. Be part of the Games Management Team for your local, national or regional games.
10. Train athletes as coaches and coach assistants.

3 Special Olympics

Family volunteers are a cornerstone of strong Special Olympics Programs. Just as any volunteer organization serving children and youth does, we count on family members to be able to offer sports and other programs for athletes. Family volunteers serve as coaches, organize events and manage fundraisers. They work at home with athletes to help them be healthy and train at home, serve on Special Olympics Boards, lead family programming and more. As families relate to each other, the more family leaders who volunteer, the more likely other families will feel welcome to contribute their special talents and time, as well.

Yet volunteer work can also be very demanding and it is easy to rely on a small group of people to do everything and/or to forget to acknowledge the contributions that volunteers make to the organization. Discuss challenges and successes in recruitment and retention of volunteers as a whole group.

**Summarize:** Family volunteers need to know what opportunities exist to volunteer. They will be most interested and able to contribute if their unique skills and interests are tapped. They need to feel welcome and appreciated as volunteers.

## Quick and Easy Outreach



- Post Special Olympics news on Facebook
- Distribute fliers and brochures at school or church
- Call one or two new families to invite them to Games
- Share your story with others in Special Olympics at Family Forums

4 Special Olympics

Many family members may not have the time or interest in committing to a formal volunteer job, yet they can easily get involved in spreading the word about Special Olympics activities and athlete accomplishments. Some quick and easy outreach ideas encouraging families to:

- Post Special Olympics news on Facebook
- Distribute fliers and brochures at school or church
- Call one or two new families to invite them to Games

And for those who are passionate and interested:

- Share your story with others in Special Olympics at Family Forums

(Read slide) Discuss: How might you encourage these activities and recognize those those who take them on? What difference might it make to offer these opportunities and follow up with recognition?

# Event Volunteer Work



5 Special Olympics

Here is a photo from Japan that shows some family volunteers working with the young athletes. What do you think might have attracted them to help?

In fact, families frequently report that they get involved in Special Olympics because it is fun! What are some fun times that you need volunteers to help out? What roles do families play now and what else might they do? (Some ideas are below)

- Serve as a greeter at Summer Games
- Bring refreshments to family social
- Participate in a Polar Plunge to help raise funds

Activity: Ask group members to find a partner and spend 5 minutes role playing an interaction of a family coordinator and family member in discussion about an upcoming event and volunteer needs. Then ask for examples of “messages” that encourage the person playing the prospective volunteer to get involved.

Reflect: Think again about the Session 2: Welcoming Families and how you might incorporate the positive volunteer messages into your orientation sessions and include families who are enthusiastic about what they are doing as spokespersons at that event and/or other gatherings of families.

## Time-limited Assignments



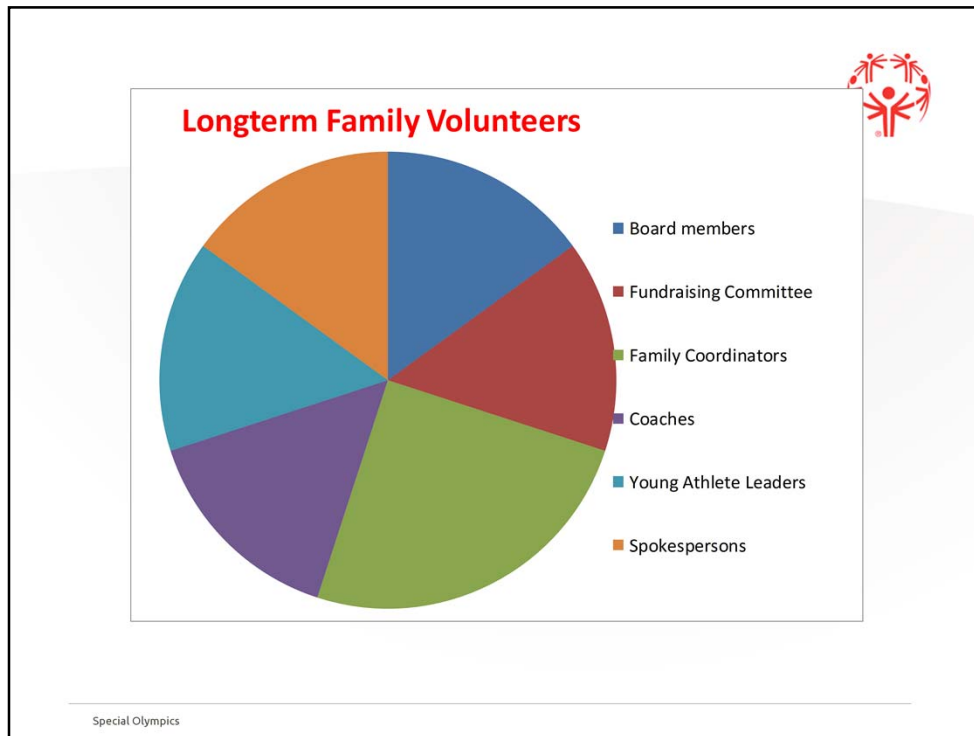
- Serve on planning committee for annual family social
- Help conduct family surveys once a year
- Participate in monthly meetings of the Family Support Network

6 Special Olympics

Also, it is often easier to get volunteers to participate if they know that there is a time limit to the job and they will work with others to complete a task, sharing responsibility and gaining friendships with other families and volunteers.

Again, as we seek to engage more families in more ways it is important to think about the audience that we are trying to engage. These family members are often challenged in caring for athletes and/or getting the services needed in school or the community. It is sometimes the case that Special Olympics provides the only opportunity for family members to find respite from caregiving duties. Other children or work responsibilities also interfere as families are extremely busy. When you ask them to get involved in quick and easy outreach activities, large events or other time-limited assignments it is a respectful way of inviting participation and recognizing the challenges and conflicting priorities that make participation challenging.

The key principle of trying to engage a broader spectrum of family members in Special Olympics also respects time limitations of those who have already committed as volunteers.



Volunteers are of course needed in many longterm jobs and many family members do these jobs throughout the organization. A big motivation parents have is to make sure that their athlete has a good experience in Special Olympics. Sometimes as we discussed, there is a core group that tends to do all the volunteer work. This is convenient for the Program to know who to turn to whenever anything comes up. However, it can appear to other families who might have something to contribute that they are not welcome to take on core positions.

As you work to grow family engagement opportunities in your organization, take time to review key positions such as those on this chart. Are there defined roles, responsibilities and terms for the positions? Is training provided regularly? Who is available to mentor new volunteers? Are there other positions that could be created to share leadership (e.g. Committee Co-chair, Assistant Coaches, Young Athlete Promoters)

# e-Library Launched



- Interactive site allows families to post their stories and photos
- Highlights Program successes to support best practice sharing
- Provides access to both the Family Toolkit and Young Athletes Toolkit

KS Day in Nassau, Bahamas  
A Smashing Success  
By Vashti Thompson. 14 years



<http://resources.specialolympics.org>

"I carry on Eunice Kennedy Shriver's legacy as I spread the word at every opportunity that persons with Intellectual Disabilities are no different from anyone else."

The e-Library can assist with recruitment and retention. It emphasizes the success and fun that families experience with Special Olympics and provides an opportunity for you to post a family volunteer success story and pictures.

Go to the website link.



# What Works, What Helps



What We Do Slideshow

Program Reports

WHAT WE DO



**The Power of Sports to Make Changes**  
Special Olympics is a sports organization for people with intellectual disabilities. It is much more, too. As simple as it sounds, making sports available to all with intellectual disabilities is the basis for powerful changes to individual lives and to communities.

## EKS DAY 2011 HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS



Some of the successes that are featured as examples from other Regions include Family Health Forums, Young Athlete Fun Day, and a Family Campus. The e-Library also provides a place for families to share their stories and be better connected to the global movement.

**Review** one or two family stories that are posted and pictures from reports. Discuss ways to get families to share their own stories of successful volunteer activities online and in person with others.

**Ask** participants to review the volunteer strategies presented and select at least two strategies they can do to expand family volunteer activities. Suggest these be included in their Action Plans (see Section 2: Planning for Successful Family Engagement)