**2013 Special Olympics Global Youth Activation Summit**

*Youth Do Change the World* Educational Session #13

ACTIVATE - How to organize your R-word Campaign

**Purpose**

* The Spread the Word to End the Word (STWTETW) Campaign ([www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org)) is a youth-driven initiative that raises awareness about the derogatory use of the word “Retard” and its pernicious affects on people with ID. This campaign is implemented by youth through either developing Youth Rallies, signing Pledge Banners, viewing PSAs, and hosting Inclusive Schools Week. Originated in Special Olympics North America, this Session was focused on how we can bring this campaign internationally, through Yanni’s and Yoona’s participation at a recent Special Olympics Board Meeting.
* To further the Dignity Revolution for all people, each table was given both a positive and negative word to discuss amongst themselves. Each person had two sticky notes, where he or she wrote down an experience or what the word meant to them for both the positive and negative experience. To complete this activity, each person thought of specific actions he or she will complete to prevent the negative experience from happening again. Some of the positive words were inclusion, dignity, equity, and acceptance, while a few negative words were exclusion, hate, disrespect and inopportunity. Through crafting this road of commitments, we as a group, took another step in our Dignity Revolution for All People.
* Another activity that was scheduled for this Session but was moved to an earlier session, was creating 5-Acts of Dignity. Each person would trace his or her hand on a piece of paper, and write 5-actions he or she will commit to, for both the now and the future.

**Logistics**

1. Two Delegations presented the “Who? What? When? Where? Why?” on the STWTETW Campaign in their home country.
2. Using two-sticky notes, each person wrote a negative and positive experience, corresponding to the given word/phrase that was given to them. There were two sections in the room that were labeled: (1) What We Do **Not** Want ☹ and (2) What We Want ☺. Through choosing the designated section, participants were able to learn of the experiences of negativity and exclusion that many of us face, even if we may think otherwise.
3. Remembering the negative experience that each person described, he or she was encouraged to write on the “Road to Dignity for All” in committing how one will prevent that from happening again.
4. If time permitted, it can be symbolic to create a “Tunnel of People” where everyone makes two lines, by holding hands. Then each person would rip his or her negative experience, and run in the middle of the people, who are applauding and supporting them.

**Highlights**

* **Respect** – considering others’ opinions and feelings.
* “Don’t judge until you’ve stepped foot in their shoes.”
* “Looking at peoples’ abilities instead of their disabilities.”
* **Intolerance** – Do not respect others’ opinion and being close-minded about others; not accepting other peoples’ differences.”
* “Some people said I’m stupid when I did thing wrong – Despise”
* “Caring is the expression that shows one pay attention to another”

**Action Considerations**

1. Brainstorm ways that you can support and organize a STWTETW Event in your community (Review, *Conduct an R-Word Campaign*).
2. Encourage people to take the pledge on [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org).
3. In looking past the letters in the R-Word, analyze the meanings, low expectations and stereotypical thinking that accompanies the use of this word – this campaign is raising awareness to change attitudes, and to support people with ID to achieve their goals just like any other person.
4. Devise ways in educating others’ about the campaign, in a respectful and helpful way. (Review, *Respond to the R-Word*).

**Personal Reflection**

* Still today, millions of people with ID are excluded and shunned to inhumane treatment dehumanizing them as people with no value. How can you/we change this?
* Everyone has talents and gifts – how can we progress to a society of celebrating the uniqueness of each person, than categorizing in what one cannot do?

**For More Information**

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