



Special Olympics

Be a fan.

Project UNIFY.

How To:

Create a Youth Summit or Youth Rally

Created by: The National Youth Activation Committee
Special Olympics Project UNIFY®

- I) Consider an idea that addresses an issue of concern
 - a. What could be improved upon in your school or local community?
 - i. Brainstorm some ideas for how you could possibly address these issues or concerns.
 - ii. Consider who may share this concern and identify people who may wish to work on them.

- II) Form a committee
 - a. Hold a meeting for people who share your views
 - i. Consider siblings of people with intellectual disabilities because they make great advocates
 - ii. Collaborate with other clubs, organizations, or activities in your school that have a similar mission or wish to be co-partners with your group
 - b. Identify at least one teacher, administrator, or activity sponsor who is willing to support the committee's plan

- i. Identify and obtain permission for a location that is suitable to hold organizational meetings, hand out materials, or simply to gather.
- c. Clear and effective communication between all members of the work group and adult sponsors is critical to a successful event. Be sure to get the phone numbers and email addresses from each individual involved.
- d. Discuss ideas and strategies as a group because it is important to consider all possible ideas. Be certain each individual has the opportunity to share his or her thoughts.
 - i. If you see an individual controlling conversation or group leadership, be sure to pause and ask others (sometimes ask by their name) about their opinion on the topic.
 - ii. It is important to find a time where as many people as possible are able to attend the group meetings.
 - 1. If this is difficult, consider hosting a conference call. Check out our “How to run an effective conference call” if you wish to do so.
 - iii. If some people cannot attend a meeting, it’s critical get the information to them as soon as possible in order for everyone to feel as if they are-involved and a contributing member.
 - 1. Email or Facebook everyone involved with the notes of the meeting and action items to be carried out.

- III) Discuss your group's development or plans with your school administration and faculty.
- a. When presenting your ideas to your school administration, make sure to remain professional and have a well thought out and organized presentation. Use notes and have some sort of visual (powerpoint, handouts, etc).
 - i. If you face resistance from the school administration or other key individuals, ask your sponsor or advisor for assistance. Sometimes we feel that school administration is impeding our progress, when really they are just abiding by school policy. It's important we respect those issues while collaborating to overcome obstacles. Your sponsor or advisor will be able to provide suggestions or ideas in overcoming obstacles in order to promote collaboration with your school administration.
 - b. Consider asking what role the school and personnel may offer
 - i. Offerings will vary greatly for each school, but may include announcements or student bulletins, letters sent home with students, school webpage space, marquee space for time and date of events, locations/time to have speakers, assemblies, provide a Public Service Announcement (PSA) for informational

purposes, etc. Seek the additional support you can in terms of venues, speakers, logistics, information, etc.

- ii. See what additional support you can get from local programs, clubs, organizations, media, and community members.

IV) Make a plan!

- a. Make a time frame for all things your group needs in order get everything done in a structured time-orientated schedule.
- b. Be certain to make the timeline organized, getting everything done as soon as possible, but make sure it is realistic.
 - i. Planning in advance leaves room for unexpected issues to occur.
 - ii. Develop the event plan and select a day and time.
 - iii. Be certain to clear logistics and finalize details before releasing the date to others. Make sure the place where the event is being held-is okay with the date and time.

V) What the event should include.

- a. Plan several events for the day of the rally/summit to maintain interest and demonstrate possibilities.
 - i. Try to personalize parts of the rally/summit for your local community
- b. If planning a summit, make it informative and have the sessions cover topics such as R-Word Campaigns, fundraising, networking, Unified Sports and programs, youth leadership, Project UNIFY, etc.

- c. If planning a rally make sure to get everyone involved, ensuring that the event is as fun and memorable as possible.
 - i. Have music for fun dancing
 - ii. Have a speech, skit, etc to inform the attendees about your topic
 - iii. Consider using media that may interest youth
 - iv. Consider having a motivational speaker as your host
- d. Identify and utilize people who can lead part of the rally/summit that will education, motivate, and activate participants while being fun and enthusiastic.

VI) Fundraising may be a key issue in the development of your event.

- a. Every great event costs money; the amount of money will depend on the activities planned and resources available.
- b. Be certain to determine what funds you have available, what the event will cost, and how much you need to raise to meet the pay for the entire event.
 - i. Consider looking online to apply for grants, such as the Project UNIFY Youth Grant or the youth grants offered at www.ysa.org (Youth Service America).
- c. Try making the fundraising a project that can be done in a unified group to promote the same values as your conference and help with teambuilding for your committee.

VII) Advertise

- a. For an event to be great, you have to inform as many people as possible.
- b. Consider having unified groups make posters or signs for the event.
- c. Contact the local newspaper, radio station, and school announcements to advertise. Make sure to have the permission of your school and all involved beforehand.

** Check out our “How to Make a State YAC” for more ideas on topics and activities for summits and rallies.