



2011 SPECIAL OLYMPICS GLOBAL YOUTH ACTIVATION SUMMIT

25 June – 4 July, Athens, Greece

Overview

The 2011 Special Olympics Global Youth Activation Summit is a gathering for more than 100 young people, with and without intellectual disabilities, from around the world who are committed to making a difference in their schools and communities through Special Olympics.

The youth participants, aged 12-18, represent 30 countries from the Special Olympics movement's seven regions and come from various educational levels including: middle/intermediate school and high/secondary school. The students are paired – one Special Olympics athlete and a peer partner without an intellectual disability from the same community, state or country.

During the summit, participants will attend youth-led leadership training programs and interactive sports experiences. They will also act as journalists reporting on the World Games, publishing their stories and photos daily on the Special Olympics and 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games Web sites and social network sites.

The summit will also include a Global Youth Rally gathering thousands of young people from the Athens, Greece area and around the world for an exciting, motivational, multi-media event to address key issues young people face regarding intellectual disabilities and society.

Fast Facts

- The 2011 Global Youth Activation Summit represents the sixth such event. The inaugural summit took place in 2001 at the Special Olympics World Winter Games in Alaska.
- Since 2001, there have been 48 youth summits at the national, regional and global levels, involving representatives from nearly 140 Special Olympics Programs and 2,700 young leaders.
- Special Olympics sent “Get Into It” kits to hundreds of schools and libraries throughout Greece as part of the School Enrichment Program. Each kit contains lesson plans, videos, fundraising ideas and books on diversity and acceptance.
- Special Olympics believes that through sports, young people can make a difference in friendships, schools and communities. The Global Youth Activation Summit is one of several Special Olympics programs reaching more than 3.5 million young people with and without intellectual disability in 170 programs in all Regions of the world. Other programs and initiatives include:
 - Project UNIFY http://www.specialolympics.org/project_unify_overview.aspx
 - Get Into It® www.specialolympics.org/getintoit
 - Unified Sports® http://www.specialolympics.org/unified_sports.aspx
 - “R” word campaign www.r-word.org
 - Young Athletes™ http://www.specialolympics.org/young_athletes.aspx
- To learn more about the Global Youth Summit, Special Olympics and other ways young leaders can get involved, please visit...http://resources.specialolympics.org/Sections/Schools_and_Youth.aspx



Summit Goals:

The summit will provide a forum where youth participants will acquire and enhance their knowledge and the skills needed to lead themselves, their peers, their schools and their communities forward in promoting effective and safe environments for creating and sustaining positive changes through volunteering and contributing to the improvement of their communities.

Through this experience they will be activated as agents of change – fostering acceptance, respect, dignity and advocacy for all people throughout the world.

The three goals of the summit in Greece are:

1. **EDUCATE - Awareness:** Provide young people with peer – led opportunities to understand the priorities set out by youth leaders in regard to the Special Olympics 2011-2015 Strategic Plan and UN Conventions as they serve as active agents for change in their local, national and global Special Olympics Programs and communities. Awareness is one part, the other is skill development – we need to make sure youth are **aware** of the strategies to be effective change agents and **skilled** to take action in effective ways.
2. **MOTIVATE - Attitude:** Energize young people by showing them how their efforts to build communities that **accept, respect and advocate** with and for persons with intellectual disabilities come together to form a force for change that will be felt and remembered for generations to come.
3. **ACTIVATE - Action:** Stimulate new approaches for **sharing** experiences, **engaging** in Special Olympics Programs and community **action** and policy change.

Global Youth Activation Summit Highlights:

1. **Young People DO Change the World sessions:** GYAS participants and selected others participate in a variety of training sessions that will focus on important topics relevant to youth EDUCATE, MOTIVATE and ACTIVATE themes and aligned with SOI's 2015 Strategic Plan. Participants will rely on subject matter experts as well as one another to present information from school and home communities in order to share their best practices, ultimately planning their course for the next 2 years of SOI Strategic Plan activation leading up to the 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games and GYAS in Seoul, Korea.
2. **Global Youth Rally:** Youth leaders will take center stage in this educational, motivational and activation oriented event. Showcasing the event will be young people addressing key issues along with Special Olympics athletes and entertainers. The Rally will be fast-paced with multi-media content designed to connect with youth including the R word, sharing stories/experiences and getting involved.
3. **Photo and Blogging session:** GYAS will receive a brief training from experienced peers and other media experts in the art of conducting interviews, taking photographs and then crafting Special Olympics messaging around compelling and inspirational stories of athletes, family members, volunteers and others. These stories and images taken during the World Games, are shared via assorted technology and traditional media sources. Experiences serve as an example of how to continue this practice upon returning home.



4. **School Enrichment Exchange:** GYAS participants will spend some time in activities with local Greek school students who have been involved with the School Enrichment Program these past 9 months. Local students will plan activities that will demonstrate their involvement with Special Olympics, reflect on the highlights and impact on local, state, national, regional or global athletes. This also serves to recognize these outstanding school programs and student leaders. GYAS will have an opportunity to share their ideas with local youth and create activities to collaborate on following the Games.
5. **Webinars:** GYAS and selected others have an opportunity to engage in a real-time discussion and sharing of information and calls to action with other youth around the state, country and the world. Using a basic webcam and desktop PC, a free interactive platform is used to connect all on this learning experience.

About Special Olympics

Special Olympics is an international organization that changes lives by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities, promoting acceptance for all, and fostering communities of understanding and respect worldwide. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown from a few hundred athletes to nearly 3.5 million athletes in over 170 countries in all regions of the world, providing year-round sports training, athletic competition health screenings, and other related programs. Special Olympics now takes place every day, changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities in all regions of the world and in community playgrounds and ball fields in every small neighborhood's backyard. Special Olympics provides people with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy and friendship. Visit Special Olympics at www.specialolympics.org.

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