



Spread the Word to End the Word Action Kit

KEY MESSAGES AND TALKING POINTS

It is time we **Spread the Word to End the Word™** and build awareness for society to stop and think about its' use of the R-word. Use of that R-word, "retard" or "retarded," is hurtful and painful and whether intended or not, is a form of bullying. Most people don't think of this word as hate speech, but that's exactly what it feels like to millions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and friends. The R-word is just as cruel and offensive as any other slur. Visit www.r-word.org to make your pledge today. Eliminating the use of this word is a step toward respect.

- Young people around the world are taking a stand and raising awareness of the dehumanizing and hurtful effects of the R-word and are helping encourage others to think before they speak.
- Youth leadership and athlete advocacy is extremely important to our history and our future for the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign. People should have a voice and for so long they didn't feel empowered to speak up about this R-word issue, and through our actions for Spread the Word, Special Olympics is empowering people to speak up about the issue. Nearly 500,000 people have taken the pledge. Use this tweet-ready text to get the word out: *I pledge #Respect thru my words & actions. Will you? Pledge now to create communities of inclusion for people with ID <http://r-word.org>*
- Did you know the pejorative and ever increasing use of the R-word in today's society further perpetuates the stigma and negative stereotypes that face people with intellectual disabilities?
- Up to three percent of the world's population have intellectual disabilities - that's 200 million people around the world. It's one of the largest disability populations in the world, perhaps you know someone?
- We ask that you help us change the conversation and help eliminate the demeaning use of the R-word from today's popular youth vernacular and replace it with "respect." We are asking for your help in creating a more accepting world for people with intellectual disabilities and all those people that may appear different, but have unique gifts and talents to share with the world.
- Special Olympics' Multi-National Public Opinion Study of Attitudes toward People with Intellectual Disabilities, conducted by Gallup, reveals that throughout the world, over 60 percent of people *still* believe that people with intellectual disabilities should be segregated in schools and in the workplace. This is intolerable. We need massive attitude change now to attack and reverse the stigma that is destructive to the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and a barrier to growth.
- Special Olympics Project UNIFY® is built upon the premise that in order to have the greatest impact the change needs to start with young people. Project UNIFY brings youth with and without intellectual disabilities together through education and sports and related initiatives that provide them with the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to create and sustain school communities that promote inclusion. Project UNIFY is already in over 2,100 schools in 42 states across the country and many of those schools support Spread the Word to End the Word efforts through running pledge stations or holding student rallies to promote inclusion.



- As we continue to grow this campaign and our Movement, there is so much potential for youth around the world to make change in their communities – half the world is under the age of 25. We are gearing up this summer to launch a youth marketing campaign that will empower youth to make change in their communities. Stay tuned, and in the meantime visit www.R-word.org to see how you can make change.
- Language affects attitudes. Attitudes impact actions. Make your pledge to choose respectful people first language at www.R-word.org.