



# Planning and Hosting a Youth Leadership Experience

A Group Youth Engagement Activity Resource



Special Olympics  
**Unified Champion  
Schools®**

# Acknowledgements



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## **Authors:**

**Elise Calanni**

Special Olympics North America

**Lillian Narvaez**

Special Olympics North America

**Sara Prescott**

Special Olympics North America

**Brian Quinn**

Special Olympics North America

## **Graphic Designer:**

**Shelly Norton**

## **Editor:**

**Amy P. Johnson**

## **Contributors:**

**Leigha Bannon**

Special Olympics North America

**Haylie Bernacki**

Special Olympics International

**Andrea Cahn**

Special Olympics North America

**Caroline Chevat**

Special Olympics North America

**Scott George**

Special Olympics North America

**Jennifer Hansen**

Special Olympics International

**Jerry Holy**

Special Olympics North America

**Kalee Iacoangeli**

Special Olympics New Jersey

**Nathan Johnson**

Special Olympics New York

**Morgan Larche**

Special Olympics Washington

**Jen Marcello**

Special Olympics Illinois

**Rebecca Ralston**

Special Olympics International

**Kerry Royce**

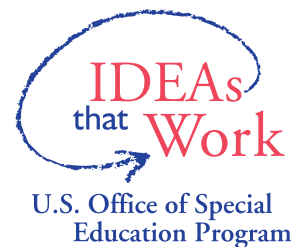
Special Olympics North America

**Ryland Towne**

Special Olympics North America

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# Introduction



## Special Olympics Mission

The mission of **Special Olympics** is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in sharing gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other **Special Olympics** athletes and the community.

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## Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools, funded by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education, is an education and sports-based strategy powered by an engaged youth community. This program increases athletic and leadership opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities, while creating communities of acceptance for all. Unified Champion Schools programming includes three main educational components in schools:

- **Special Olympics Unified Sports®**
- **Inclusive youth leadership**
- **Whole school engagement**

*For detailed Unified Champion Schools implementation strategies, please utilize the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools Playbook series, which includes elementary, middle level, and high school-specific resources available at: <https://resources.specialolympics.org/playbook-series/>*

# What is a Youth Leadership Experience?

**A Youth Leadership Experience (YLE)** is a deliberately planned series of activities designed to engage Special Olympics youth leaders and develop their knowledge of inclusive youth leadership, management of Special Olympics events, and community programming. The skills learned at a YLE will empower youth leaders to return to their schools and communities as agents of change.



Emerging youth leaders within the Special Olympics movement may participate in a Youth Leadership Experience at a State/Local Games, or other events and competitions planned by State Programs such as tournaments, clinics or trainings, for example. Youth participants may serve as embedded volunteers who are part of the overall Games/event structure, and have a chance to reflect on, review, evaluate, and learn from their experiences. Possible activities for a YLE include a combination of holding authentic volunteer roles, engaging in educational and interactive experiences, and shadowing experienced key volunteers. These experiences will provide young people with tools for becoming more deeply connected to the Special Olympics movement as committed volunteers, teammates, and friends for life.

The first YLE took place at the 2018 Special Olympics USA Games in Seattle, Washington, with 38 youth pairs and their mentors attending from throughout the U.S. During the Games, these youth took part in various roles that provided deeper integration into Special Olympics programming and Games events. The organizing team for the first YLE created this resource to adapt this exciting inclusive youth leadership opportunity to State/Local Games or other events.

## **Target outcomes for participants include:**

- Deeper experience in several Special Olympics volunteer roles, with an emphasis on Games management.
- Awareness of the full spectrum of Special Olympics sport, health, wellness and community building programming.
- Connections developed with the State Special Olympics Program before, during and after the event.
- Exposure to the range of leadership opportunities within the Special Olympics movement.



# Section 1: Before the Youth Leadership Experience Planning Your Event



Special Olympics  
**Unified Champion  
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# Section 1: Planning Your Event



Because a **Youth Leadership Experience** can include several moving parts, it is vital to start planning for the event early, and thoughtfully. With the support of a planning committee, Programs will find that it becomes easier to coordinate logistics ahead of time for the most seamless and successful event. Every Program goes through the event-planning process differently, so the information in this section should be adapted accordingly.

## This pre-event section includes guidance on:

- Planning your YLE according to a suggested timeline (pages 8-9).
- Creating a YLE Planning Committee (page 10).
- Working with the host event's Games Organizing Committee (GOC) or Games Management Team (GMT) (page 11).
- Selecting youth to participate (page 12).







## Planning and Timeline

*Below is a suggested timeline to utilize when planning your Youth Leadership Experience.*

### 6-9 Months Prior to Event

- ☐ Create a basic overview and proposal for the event including the who, what, when, where, why, how, and projected budget.
- ☐ Share the proposal with Special Olympics leadership responsible for the overall competition or event where the YLE will take place to ensure collaboration (e.g., State competition manager, GMT, staff responsible for Games registration).
- ☐ Gain approval from all relevant staff on the proposal and budget.
- ☐ Work with functional area leads to identify the most meaningful roles for YLE participants, and details for key logistical components such as:

**Transportation · Housing · Meals · Registration**

### 4-6 Months Prior to Event

- ☐ Recruit a YLE planning committee to help lead development and execution of the event.  
*See additional information in the guide for more tips on working with a committee.*
- ☐ Identify which committee members will take on which roles.
- ☐ Begin drafting the YLE schedule.

### 3-4 Months Prior to Event

- ☐ Begin identifying additional people needed to support the YLE (guest presenters, adult mentors for youth shadowing, etc.).
- ☐ Finalize the general schedule.





### 3-4 Months Prior to Event (continued)

- ❑ Distribute schedule and registration information to your target audiences (e.g., schools, local Special Olympics Programs, heads of delegations). **Note:** This timing may vary depending on when the general State Games competition registration is released.
- ❑ Recruit YLE participants.
- ❑ Provide updates to the GMT. **Note:** It is recommended that updates are provided monthly.

### 2 Months Prior to Event

- ❑ Complete the registration process for YLE participants.
- ❑ Begin providing pre-event training and communication to assist participants as they prepare for the YLE.

### 1 Month Prior to Event

- ❑ Finalize and share the comprehensive schedule with participants, along with all logistical details.
- ❑ Provide updates to the GMT.
- ❑ Create a detailed schedule for members of the YLE committee that clearly states what their responsibilities will be during all times of the YLE event.
- ❑ Determine how you will gather feedback from the YLE participants about their experience (e.g., survey).

### Within 1 Month After Event

- ❑ Gather feedback from participants.
- ❑ Report back to the GMT on results of the event and suggestions for future YLE events.
- ❑ Share success stories and content from the YLE with the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools team for best practice sharing.





## Creating a Youth Leadership Experience Planning Committee

*Below are some tips to consider when recruiting and leading a committee to organize a YLE.*

- ☐ Identify why a committee is needed, and what the overall goals of the committee are.
- ☐ Determine which specific roles are needed, and create job descriptions outlining expectations for committee members.
- ☐ Recruit people with a variety of backgrounds and perspectives to sit on this committee.

### **This may include:**

- Special Olympics staff
- Educators/school staff
- Student leaders with and without disabilities who will be part of the YLE
- College students
- Games Management volunteers

- ☐ Once the committee is formed, share the big picture vision for the event along with the planning timeline and detailed expectations for each person.
- ☐ Set a schedule of regular meetings/calls for the group to convene; provide an agenda in advance of each meeting.

### **The agenda may include things such as:**

- Progress updates from individual members
- Creative brainstorming
- Event planning details

- ☐ Provide support, and follow up with individual committee members as needed.
- ☐ Create a detailed schedule for members of the YLE committee that clearly states what their responsibilities will be during all times of the YLE.
- ☐ Provide recognition and appreciation of committee members during and after the YLE.



## **Working with the Host Event's Games Organizing Committee (GOC) or Games Management Team (GMT)**

Whether your **Youth Leadership Experience** is happening in tandem with a State Games, local event, or otherwise, it is important to identify and build a relationship with the group that is managing that host event. During the planning stages of the host event, the YLE Planning Committee should identify the functioning areas in which the YLE participants will be able to play a key role. YLE participants should be incorporated into existing committees of the GOC or GMT, and assist with planning for specific functional areas.

### **Examples of committees/functional areas:**

- Olympic Town
- Opening Ceremony/Closing Ceremony
- Social media/storytelling
- Special Olympics Young Athletes
- Sports

Provide the GOC/GMT with pertinent information regarding the YLE being planned, such as number of youth to be hosted, whether any mentors will be present for the youth, and number of staff members from the YLE Planning Committee that will be on site to support the event. This will affect the budget for the Games or other associated events due to housing, meals, and any special events that the youth will be attending.

### **Budget**

The cost of the YLE can be incorporated into the existing budget for the Games. It may also be covered under the Unified Champion Schools budget.

### **Possible expenses to be included in the budget:**

- Housing
- Transportation
- Pre-planning meetings/webinar
- External Speakers
- Meals
- Uniforms
- Supplies/materials





## Selecting Youth to Participate Nomination vs. Application

Depending on demand and capacity, a YLE Planning Committee may choose between nominating youth leaders to participate in a state-level YLE, or conducting a full application process. However youth leaders are selected, it is important to gain a full picture of each student including contact information, interests, and Special Olympics background.

**Supplemental materials: Sample Youth Leader Survey (see Appendix, page 32)**

### Benefits of a nomination process:

- Understanding of selected youth leaders' capabilities, interests and prior experience
- Increased control of participant numbers and assignments to support end goals
- Ability to provide more focused experiences specific to selected youth leaders
- Ability to pull from existing groups of youth (e.g., State Youth Activation Committee)
- Higher likelihood for continued engagement after the YLE

### Benefits of an application process:

- Ability to open the opportunity to a full network of youth within school communities
- Potential for reaching new youth leaders and/or schools
- Ability to provide an unbiased participation selection process
- Ability to invite other YLE key stakeholders to be a part of the selection process

## Eligibility Requirements and Expectations

**Note:** These eligibility requirements were used at the first YLE, but will not necessarily apply to your event. These expectations are mere suggestions of qualifications your State Program may use for the selection process of youth leaders, but the ultimate choice and process is the Program's alone. State Program staff are responsible for identifying the most appropriate participants for this event through whichever process they prefer.

## Suggested participant qualifications:

### Unified Youth Pair

- The pair should consist of one person with an intellectual disability and one person without.
- The pair must be the same gender for appropriate housing.
- The suggested allowable age range is 15-18 years old, with preference for rising high school juniors, so that they are still participating in Special Olympics school-based programming during the next school year. Participants must be at least 15 years old and under age 19 as of the first day of the YLE. Young people outside this age range will be considered on a case-by-case basis with a strong justification.
- Candidates should have a strong track record of involvement and have expressed a desire for involvement beyond high school and college.

### Preferred youth attendees include:

- A youth pair that knows each other and participates in the same school/community.
- Youth who have taken on a leadership role with Special Olympics, such as through a Unified Club, Youth Activation Committee or Athlete Leadership Program.
- Youth with experience playing Special Olympics Unified Sports.
- Youth who have volunteered at Special Olympics events or conducted events in their schools.

## Pre-event Activation

### Unified pairs and adult mentors are expected to be engaged prior to the YLE in the following ways:

- Participation in educational webinars, approximately one per month in the six months leading up to YLE.
- Leadership role with the State Program before the Games (e.g., assisting with send-off party, social media, story collecting, fundraising).
- Promotion of youth leader roles, the event, and inclusion through social media and blog posts leading up to the YLE.
- Volunteer training.



## Section 2: During the Youth Leadership Experience Suggested YLE Activities





## Section 2: Suggested YLE Activities

Throughout the **Youth Leadership Experience**, youth leaders should participate in a range of activities that will give them deeper insight into the many programmatic areas of Special Olympics. Program staff will contribute to the variety of skills that YLE participants will develop, by facilitating the immersion, participation, and reflection of youth leaders in these activities.



At the first Youth Leadership Experience, participants went through rotations so that every youth got to experience each available opportunity. It is important to note that these activities are merely suggestions. Each State Program should adapt the activities to their event as appropriate. This includes expanding or creating new activities at their discretion.

### This Section includes:

- **Special Olympics Young Athletes** activities (page 16)
- **Volunteer Shadow Experience** activities (page 18)
- **Special Olympics Unified Sports** activities (page 20)
- **Storytelling** activities (page 23)





## Special Olympics Young Athletes

Young Athletes Demonstrations allow for YLE participants to be engaged in different facets of a smaller event including registration, activity management, and one-on-one work with participants.

### **Potential Staff Roles:**

**Please determine who will be covering these responsibilities (YLE Staff, GMT Member, or other):**

- Recruiting Young Athletes
- Confirming activities and supplies for Festival
- Setting up the Transitional Sports Event and determining whether there will be a tie to a Sports Federation
- Scheduling YLE participants in an effective way
- Coordinating with Healthy Athletes
- Establishing role of YLE participants at Young Athletes Demonstration

**Example activities that make up an effective Special Olympics Young Athletes track are:**

- Young Athletes Demonstration
- Young Athletes Festival
- Transitional Sports Event
- Healthy Young Athletes

**Supplemental materials: Young Athletes Volunteer Roles (see Appendix, page 34)**

## **Young Athletes Demonstration**

Set up various Young Athletes stations at the primary Games venue. This activity may take place during one or more days of your local, area or state-level competitions. Young Athletes participants can be recruited from your current Young Athletes roster, local parent groups, Head Start or other early education centers, and elementary schools. If funding is available, provide bus transportation for schools, as this will help to increase attendance. If you are hosting a Young Athletes event during Summer Games, consider contacting summer camps in the area and offering the event as a potential field trip for their campers. Use the various activities listed in the Special Olympics Young Athletes Activity Guide to create a demonstration that suits your event.



## Young Athletes Festival

Include festive elements in your Young Athletes Demonstration. Engage community partners that can provide the YLE with booths or activities in addition to the Young Athletes skills stations (e.g., photo booth, DJ, dance area, face painting).

## Transitional Sports Event

A Transitional Sports Event can either be added to the Young Athletes Demonstration, or hosted as an independent transitional sports demonstration. This event allows youth leaders the opportunity to introduce Special Olympics sports to Young Athletes participants. You may consider partnering on the event with a local Special Olympics team or sport federation. Event examples may include a “Future Stars Race” in which the children run the track in front of the State/Local Games fans; or a soccer demonstration facilitated with a federation partner. A Transitional Sports Event should be followed up with information provided to parents on how to register their child for Special Olympics at age 8.

## Healthy Young Athletes

A YLE Young Athletes Demonstration could also be a good fit for a state-level Healthy Athletes event. During the Young Athletes Demonstration, have the children go through the Healthy Athletes Village that may be happening at the Games. Adding a health element to the YLE rounds out the event nicely and provides both the leaders and participants with an in-depth understanding of the comprehensive role Special Olympics plays in the life of an athlete.







## Volunteer Shadow Experience

The **Volunteer Shadow Experience** provides an opportunity for young people with and without intellectual disabilities to work alongside and gain experience from staff and/or seasoned volunteers in specific functional areas during State/Local Games or other events. This track can be used as a way for young people to gain exposure to possible career or volunteer positions, and potentially gain a new perspective on future interests. It is also a great opportunity for hosts to share best practices and establish a new generation of event organizers. This experience should be coordinated primarily by the staff supporter, the seasoned volunteer, and the shadowing participant.

### Potential Staff Roles:

- Recruiting volunteer shadows
- Matching YLE participants with volunteer shadows based on interest
- Coordinating YLE participants' schedules during YLE prior to event
- Troubleshooting schedules on site if volunteer shadow schedules change

**The two major areas of a Volunteer Shadow Experience are observation and hands-on.**

**Supplemental materials: Sample Question Prompts for Volunteers (see Appendix, page 36)**

### Observation

During a Volunteer Shadow Experience, youth leaders observe event operations, and responsibilities of their assigned host. This may involve a range of activities such as attending meetings; observing interpersonal interactions between athletes, families and volunteers; and discussing why or how event management decisions are made. This activity should reflect a typical volunteer shift and all aspects of the volunteer role. This type of shadowing works best when a participant is interested in gaining a greater understanding of the host's role leading up to and during the event. The host should provide opportunities to debrief to ensure both parties benefit from the experience.





## Hands-on

This is an extension of the observation activity, whereby the youth leader begins to undertake some of the tasks and responsibilities they observed or were assigned by the host. This provides the participant with practical experience and opportunity to gain skills under the supervision of an expert. The assigned host should be present during the hands-on portion of the volunteer shadow experience to address any questions or offer advice.

## Suggested hosts may include:

- Games Director
- Coaches/heads of delegation
- Competition/venue leads
- Support (delegation/volunteer)
- Healthy Athletes professionals
- Administration/HR
- Development/fundraising staff
- Competition officials
- Exhibitors/donors/partners
- Media/PR staff/photographers
- Young Athletes staff/event organizers
- Special events staff  
(e.g., Olympic Village, Opening/Closing Ceremonies)
- Area Management Team members
- Special Olympics Program staff
- Athlete leaders





## Special Olympics Unified Sports®

The **Special Olympics Unified Sports** track focuses on informing student leaders of the leadership and sports opportunities available to them as they transition through various education levels. This track serves to empower student leaders with the tools and knowledge they need to move forward with their involvement in Special Olympics Unified Sports to college or the community. The track also invites student leaders to make connections with one another, helping to build their youth network so that they feel supported throughout their journey with Special Olympics.

**Example activities that make up an effective Special Olympics Unified Sports track are:**

- Unified Sports Pitch
- Bring in the Professionals
- Unified Sports Observation & Bingo

### Unified Sports Pitch

The goal of the Unified Sports Pitch is to ensure that all YLE participants are comfortable talking about Special Olympics Unified Sports with school administration or staff when trying to start or maintain a Unified Sports team.

For this activity:

- Split YLE participants into small groups.
- Each group should have an initial discussion regarding what they already know about Unified Sports.
- Based on what they know, have each group create a pitch describing what Unified Sports is. This can be a song, dance or whatever they see fit.
- Give groups 10 minutes to complete the task.
- Have each group perform their pitch to the rest of the YLE participants.
- After each group pitches, have a whole group discussion about what the correct follow-up steps are.

#### **Potential Staff Roles:**

- Organizing people to facilitate small group discussions and being available to answer questions on Unified Sports

**Note:** If the participants already have Unified Sports at their school, suggest they consider their pitch being given to an audience at a school that does not have one. How did it improve their school? What were some tangible effects they saw?





## Bring in the Professionals

Invite high school athletic directors, collegiate recreation professionals, local Special Olympics program volunteers, and student leaders to speak to YLE participants about the implementation process of Unified Sports in their respective areas. Learning from these professionals can be incredibly beneficial for YLE participants, and will help them with the overall transition process after high school or college.

Make sure YLE participants feel comfortable asking questions after the professionals have presented. If the youth are having a difficult time asking questions, have a list of questions on hand so that you can lead the conversation forward.

This activity should provide YLE participants with a wealth of information to bolster their confidence when entering the next level of engagement with Special Olympics.

### Potential Staff Roles:

- Coordinating the professionals who will be attending
- Prepping the professionals on what a YLE is and what their purpose is

**Supplemental materials: College Engagement One-Pager**  
(see Appendix, page 37)





## Unified Sports Observation & Bingo

Create a game of bingo in which each box identifies a different aspect of Unified Sports and meaningful involvement. Have students play the bingo game as they observe the various Unified Sports at the larger event.

**Examples for the bingo board could include:**

### **Meaningful Involvement Examples:**

- A partner passed to an athlete and the athlete scored
- An athlete stole the ball and passed it to a partner who scored

### **Sport-Specific Examples:**

- A tennis volley that went across the court three times
- A score of four in bocce

### **Sportsmanship Examples**

- High fives shared between teammates
- Helping someone up after they have fallen

**Potential Staff Roles:**

- Creating the bingo board
- Being available to answer questions during Unified Sports observation
- Facilitating the discussion post-observation

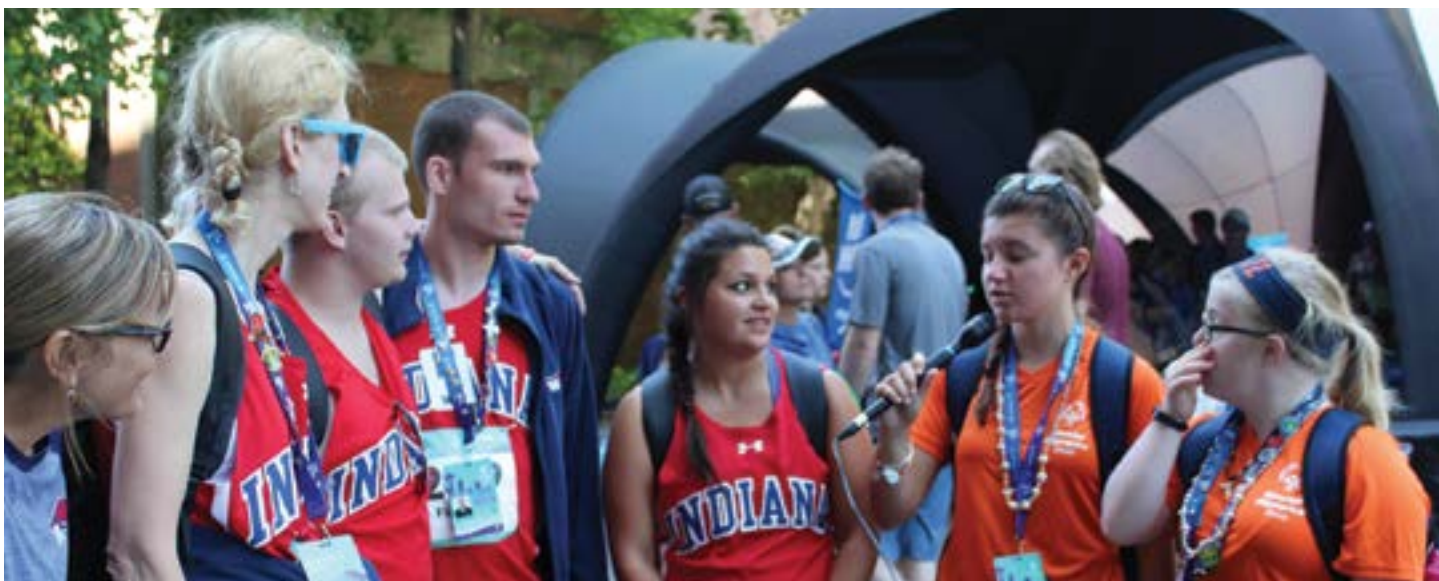


After the Unified Sports game ends, have the group come together to discuss what they saw. Open up the discussion for positive, but critical, feedback. Maybe they saw something that didn't look right. Have them explain what the issue was, and discuss, as a group, how it could have been improved.

To wrap up the discussion, ask student leaders to share how identification of these different aspects will help them create successful Unified Sports programs on their campus.

**Supplemental materials: Meaningful Involvement One-Pager and Special Olympics Unified Sports Bingo Card (see Appendix, pages 38 and 39)**





## Storytelling

The **YLE Storytelling** track engages youth leaders in a more independent rotation, allowing participants to explore the Games and observe its impact on every audience group, including delegations, volunteers and community members.

This track allows participants to immerse themselves in one of the foundational experiences of the Special Olympics movement: sharing stories of inclusion. Engaging youth in storytelling during a State/Local Games provides opportunity for youth to train in unique positions of leadership as they connect with new people and gain experience that builds confidence in their interactions. Athletes and partners are the voices of the movement, and they can educate others when they speak up.

**Example activities that make up a successful Storytelling track are:**

- Interview Scavenger Hunt
- Social Media Takeover & Reporting
- Specific Athlete Reporting

### Interview Scavenger Hunt

This is an opportunity for YLE participants to interview a variety of people during Games using a series of predetermined questions. Interviewees may range from athletes and family members to coaches and spectators. Everyone at the Games has a unique reason for being there and can provide opportunity for youth leaders to understand different perspectives.

**Potential Staff Roles:**

- Providing content collection supplies if permitted by budget (microphones, cameras, etc.)
- Creating scavenger hunt questionnaire

**Note:** If in your budget, supply YLE participants with microphones or cameras so you can utilize voice/ audio recordings for social media and external communications.

• **Supplemental materials:** Sample Scavenger Hunt Questions/Prompts (see Appendix, page 40)







## Social Media Takeover & Reporting

Have YLE pairs serve as Games reporters, using either the State Program's social media account, or their own social media accounts with an agreed upon hashtag established at the outset of the event. Like a social media correspondent, youth can tweet updates of what is happening at the Games, including athlete stories, competition results, or quotes from the field, for example. Create and provide youth with a tip sheet for best practices of reporting. Make it specific for each social media site.

### Potential Staff Roles:

- Monitoring social media channel being taken over, or decided upon hashtag for reposting during the event
- Creating tip sheet for best practices of social media and preferred hashtags

**Supplemental materials: Social Media Cheat Sheet (see Appendix, page 41)**

## Specific Athlete Reports

Encourage youth participants to follow a specific athlete or team competing at the Games. They can make connections with this athlete before the Games, and devote the entire Storytelling rotation to following this athlete or team's journey throughout the event, incorporating photos, quotes, and any information highlighting the athlete or team's progress. Following the Games, YLE participants can write a blog post featuring the athlete or team for distribution through the State Program's social media channels.

### Potential Staff Roles:

- Providing guidelines for communicating with competing athletes before, during and after the event



## Section 3: After the Youth Leadership Experience Follow-Up





## Section 3: Follow-up



### **Congratulations,** **you have completed your Youth Leadership Experience!**

Though the event itself has passed, the work is far from over. Now that the youth leaders are feeling engaged, it is important to keep up that momentum with follow-up activities. The YLE is not just a single event, it is a starting point for future involvement from the youth leaders that have been cultivated.

These suggested follow-up activities will not only encourage youth to remain engaged with the Program, but also to remain in contact with one another. What began as a group of individual youth leaders will quickly grow into a thriving network.

Like all of the previous activities in this guide, the follow-up activities below are simply suggestions for how to engage youth leaders in the long run. Adjust and/or expand these activities at your discretion, based on what works for your Program.





## Thank-You Note Writing

A successful Special Olympics event cannot happen without the generous help of volunteers, and it is important that YLE participants learn this. Working with participants to write and send thank-you notes to volunteers they worked with during the YLE is an easy, yet meaningful follow-up activity.

Have participants make a list of each volunteer they worked closely with during the event. Consider Young Athletes coordinators, volunteers they shadowed, officials, campus professionals, athletes, coaches and families. Empower participants to write thoughtful notes to each, thanking them for their time and commitment. If possible, assist them in the sending of these notes.

This activity is a great step in encouraging continued networking between youth leaders and the various adults they met during the event. Reinforcing these connections could be instrumental in opening doors for your youth leaders in the future.



## “Where Are They Now?” with Special Olympics Athletes

Throughout the YLE, students will have made many connections with competing athletes and other members of the delegation, particularly if they reported on a specific athlete or team during the Storytelling rotation. Now that the YLE and Games are over, encourage youth participants to complete a follow-up story on that particular athlete.

### Use questions like:

- What was your lasting impression of the event?
- What do you plan to do next?
- What did you learn from this experience?

A follow-up story like this not only encourages continued participant connection with the delegation members, but will provide the Program with a creative way to look back on the event through social media.

If there is a desired template, additional content requested like photos, or a preferred place to send completed stories, please ensure that all YLE participants and mentors have this information.



## Multimedia Report and Debrief

Engage the YLE group in writing about their experiences in a creative way, such as a blog post, photo essay, song, video project, or Adobe Spark page, for example. Showing their experience in a visual way can be more effective and memorable than a standard write-up.

### Ask participants to consider the following questions:

What did you learn in each of the activities?

How has the volunteer shadow experience contributed to your personal or career development?

How did being a storyteller or reporter change the way you think about yourself?

What skills did you develop from the experience?

### Note:

Content received can be utilized in the future for external communications including social media, and for recruitment of future YLE participants.





## Whole School Engagement Activity

Encourage YLE participants go the extra mile by putting their experience and leadership into action and planning a Whole School Engagement activity when they get back to school.

A successful Whole School Engagement activity will engage the entire staff and student body in building awareness and understanding of the benefits of social inclusion, and teaches students and staff to embrace diversity among all students.

### Examples of Whole School Engagement:

- Assemblies
- Unified Sports festivals/demonstrations
- Pep rallies
- Spread the Word campaigns
- Choose to Include campaigns
- Unified Spirit Week
- “It’s Our School, Too” play

**Note:** Additional resources on whole school engagement activities can be found at <https://resources.specialolympics.org/unified-champion-schools-resources/>

Students should complete a Whole School Engagement Action Plan, share it with their YLE mentor for feedback, and submit it to their school for approval once finalized. Additionally, students are encouraged to write a follow-up article about their activity with pictures, quotes, successes, and highlights no later than two weeks after the activity.

**Supplemental materials: Whole School Engagement Action Plan (see Appendix, page 42)**

## Appendix/Additional Resources



# Sample YLE Pair Survey

**Note:** This survey was used for the first YLE at the Special Olympics 2018 USA Games.

Please adjust the survey to reflect the needs of your Program and host event.

## 2018 USA Games Youth Leadership Experience

### Unified Pair Introductory Survey

#### Shared via Survey Monkey

*[Programs should insert guidance on how survey should be taken as a pair since they will be assigned as a pair; think about what kind of experiences and expectations they have for Seattle and with their future in the Special Olympics movement.]*

#### Page 1 – Basic Information Gathering

##### 1. Names

##### 2. Mentor Name

##### 3. Mentor Role

[Options – Unified Champion Schools Program Liaison, Program Staff, School Liaison, Educator, Coach]

##### 4. Mentor Email

##### 5. Email

##### 6. State Program

##### 7. School

#### Page 2 - Overall Special Olympics questions, past experience, and interests for youth leadership experience.

*[Programs should insert language on background of shadow experience, etc.]*

##### 8. How many years have you been involved in the Special Olympics movement?

[Options – less than 1 year, 1-2 years, 3-4 years, more than 5 years]

##### 9. What Special Olympics roles have you held before?

[Select all that apply – Unified Sports Teammate, Youth Activation Committee Member, Unified Club Member, Event Volunteer, Fundraiser, Event Organizer, Fans in the Stands, State Board Member, Other]

##### 10. Select the personal/professional skills your pair feels comfortable with:

[Select all that apply – Adaptability, Communication – Oral/Public Speaking, Communication – Written, Communication – Listening, Photography, Planning/Organization, Problem Solving, Teamwork, Technology, Time Management]

##### 11. What kind of Special Olympics events have you attended in the past?

[Select all that apply – State Games, National Games, International Games, Youth Summit, Fundraising Event, Training Camp (Sport or Leadership Development), School Rally, Other]

##### 12. A variety of programming is offered at Special Olympics events.

Please rank the top three areas you would like to be a part of in Seattle.

[Rank your top 3 – Healthy Athletes, Young Athletes, Special Events (e.g. Opening/Closing Ceremonies), Sports & Competition, Team Management, Schools & Youth, Storytelling & Media, Communications]



**Page 3 - Personal interests to organize track groups. Explore bringing Unified pairs together with similarities and differences in general interests and geography.**

*[We'd like to learn a little more about you]*

**13. What are your favorite sports to play/watch?**

[Select all that apply – Athletics (Track & Field), Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Cycling, Equestrian, Field Hockey, Figure Skating, Football (Flag), Golf, Gymnastics, Hockey (Floor), Lacrosse, Powerlifting, Swimming, Tennis, Volleyball, Wrestling, Other]

**14. Tell us what you like to do in your free time.**

[Select all that apply – Watch Movies/TV, Watch/Play Sports, Read Books/Magazines, Hike/Camp, Cook, Play/Listen to Music, Spend Time with Family/Friends, Play Video Games, Theater/Arts, Other]

**15. What social media accounts do you use?**

[Drop down – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Other]

Share your account handles if you would like to be tagged and included in our social media campaign leading up to June. Also, make sure you follow Special Olympics 2018 USA Games and Special Olympics North America! [Include at minimum 10 text fields]

# Young Athletes Volunteer Roles

## *Young Athletes Festival Volunteer Job Descriptions*

### *Sample from 2018 USA Games Youth Leadership Experience*

#### **Check-In Volunteers**

Check-In volunteers will be the first group of people the Young Athletes will interact with during the festival. These volunteers will greet Young Athletes and their families as they arrive. Check-In volunteers will complete the check-in process outlined below before assigning the family/group to Participant Guide volunteers.

##### **Pre-registered Young Athletes:**

Pre-registered participants should bring completed release forms with them (general waiver and photo release). If they do not have these forms, please collect on site. A packet will be prepped for these participants. This packet will include sticker credentials that must be worn at all times during the festival, T-shirt(s), and other promotional items. If a child has a wristband in their packet, please have them wear it during the festival. This denotes that the child's photo cannot be used in promotional materials. Pre-registered families/groups can have no more than two adult family members walk through the festival (additional children are welcome to either register and participate, or watch). Credentialed children over the age of 10 may go through the event in support of a sibling or family member, but they may not participate.

##### **Day-of Registrations:**

The festival will allow individuals to register the day of the event by completing the general waiver and photo release. All event-day registrants must have a parent/guardian with them to participate, but may have no more than two adult family members go through the festival (additional children are welcome to either register and participate, or watch). Credentialed children over the age of 10 may go through the event in support of a sibling or family member, but they may not participate. While supplies last, event-day registrants may receive a T-shirt. Check-In volunteers will complete the sticker credential for these children, and for those whose parent/guardian does not want their photo to be taken during the event, they will be given a paper bracelet to wear.

##### **Completing the Registration Process for all Families:**

Check-In volunteers will encourage families to visit the Special Olympics Washington booth to learn more about programming offered locally. Mentors stationed at the check-in station will double check that everyone who enters the festival has the proper credentials. Once all Young Athletes participants have completed the check-in process, they will be assigned by the Check-In volunteer to Participant Guide volunteers.

## **Participant Guide Volunteers**

Participant Guide volunteers will be assigned to a Young Athletes family/group by Check-In volunteers. Spend 2-3 minutes welcoming your group, getting to know names and ages, and sharing where you are from. Lead the group through Activity Stations 1-7, then move to the Strider Bike Course. The Obstacle Course will be next, and you will finish at the award and photo station. Your job is to keep an eye on the time. Pace the children so they spend approximately 60 minutes in the Young Athletes Festival. Work with the Activity Station volunteers to support the children in completing the activities. This is an active volunteer role that may require you to participate in the activity alongside the child.

### **Activity Station Volunteers**

Activity Station volunteers will be assigned to one of the seven stations offered inside the tents. When a group arrives, welcome participants to the station and give a broad, one-sentence overview of the activity. This is an active volunteer role. Demonstrate the activities for the children as they arrive. When needed, suggest and demonstrate modifications to the activity based on the child's ability level. Work with the Participant Guide volunteers to support the children in completing the activities. Cheer on and encourage the children as they participate in the activities. Reset equipment once children leave, and prepare for the next group to rotate through. If/when special guests or celebrities arrive to attend the Young Athletes Festival, Participant Guide volunteers should welcome them, talk to them about the program and the Festival, show them activities, and let them interact with children. Finally, give them the chance to hand out awards and take photos.

### **Strider Bike Volunteers**

Welcome participants to the station and give an overview of the balance bikes. Fit each child with a helmet, adjusting as needed to ensure a proper fit. Fit each child to a bike, and adjust the seat and handlebars according to the size of the child. This is an active volunteer role. Assist the children in walking, riding and gliding the bikes through the course. Help with traffic flow to avoid any collisions. Cheer on and encourage the children as they participate in activities. Help the children return their bikes when the station is complete.

### **Obstacle Course Volunteers**

Welcome participants to the station and give an overview of the obstacle course. This is an active volunteer role. Demonstrate activities for children when they arrive at the station so they know what to do. Suggest and demonstrate modifications based on children's ability levels. Work with Participant Guide volunteers to support the children in completing the activities. Cheer on and encourage the children as they participate in the course. Reset the equipment once the children leave, and prep for the next group.

### **Award and Photo Volunteers**

Welcome the participants to the station. Congratulate children on their success. Nordstrom volunteers will be giving children their award ribbons. Ensure that ribbons are fully stocked so that they can be distributed. Remind families that Young Athletes happens all year long in their local communities. Encourage families to learn more by going to the Special Olympics Washington booth where they can sign up for future programs. Usher participants out of the fenced-in festival area and thank them for attending.



# Sample questions to ask your Volunteer Shadow Host

## Make your experience valuable

### Items to consider:

1. How does this shadow experience fit into my personal or career goals?
2. How will this experience and knowledge impact my future?
3. What do I expect to gain from this experience?
4. What resources do I need to make this experience successful?

### Sample Questions to ask your Host:

1. How did you begin in this leadership role?
2. What are the skills needed to be successful in your position?
3. Why have you chosen this path? Do you enjoy it?
4. Do you have any words of warning or encouragement as a result of your experiences?
5. What is your favorite thing about this role?
6. What is most challenging about this role?
7. What do you spend most of your time doing?

## Reflection

1. How has the volunteer job shadow experience enhanced your personal / career development?
2. Was the shadow experience what you expected? Why or why not?
3. What is the greatest thing you learned by participating in this experience?

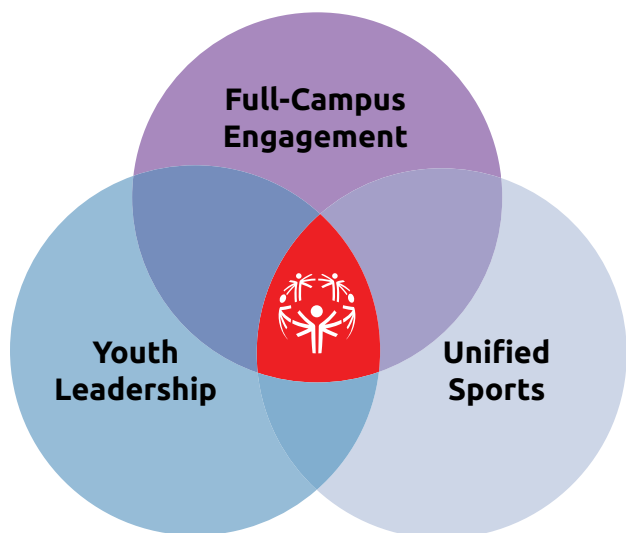
# College Engagement

## Two cornerstones of College Engagement:



### Special Olympics College Clubs

Three pillars:



### Special Olympics Unified Sports®

Could include the following:



One day experiences

One day Round  
Robin tournaments



Intramural League

Conference Leagues



NIRSA Championships

# Unified Sports Meaningful Involvement Bingo

**Special Olympics Unified Sports®** combines people with and without intellectual disabilities on sports teams for training and competition. People with intellectual disabilities are classified as Special Olympics athletes, and people without intellectual disabilities are classified as Unified partners.

It is very important that all Unified Sports teams follow the **Principle of Meaningful Involvement**, which makes sure that every team member has opportunities to contribute to his or her team's performance. This means that every teammate shows basic sport-specific skills and game understanding; plays a valued role on the team, highlighting his or her personal strengths and talents; and has the opportunity to play without a big risk of injury.

Competitive-level Unified Sports teams should have players who are of similar age and ability levels, which can be determined by running a player assessment at the start of the season. Having players of similar age and ability on the team decreases the potential for higher ability teammates to control the game, which is also called player dominance.

Player dominance is a consistent pattern of behavior that limits meaningful involvement for other players. It is important to note that player dominance applies to both Unified partners and Special Olympics athletes.

## Examples of player dominance:

1. Only players with higher skill levels are taking shots and scoring all the points for the team.
2. Players continually fail to pass the ball to open teammates for obvious scoring opportunities.
3. Players with higher skill levels get in a defensive position where they can steal or take back possession of the ball instead of staying with his or her assigned player or remaining in his or her zone defense position.
4. In the last minutes of the game, players with higher skill levels make most of the plays and exclude other teammates.

It is not player dominance when athletes and partners have the opportunity to display their individual skills to the best of their ability by contributing on both offense and defense.

**On the next page, use the Play Unified BINGO card** to help you spot examples of what a good Unified Sports competition looks like. If you see any of those things happening, mark an "X" through that box. Your goal is to cross off all of the boxes!



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Whole team celebrates together	Officials calling fouls	Teams shake hands after game	Every player has a chance to get in the game	Teammates communicating on field/court
Unified Sports or Play Unified logo	Team members are all in same uniform	Teammates take a selfie	Both teams have an adult head coach	All team members are having fun!
Team members on the bench chat with one another	Accurate score is kept		High five!	Teammates make at least 3 passes before shooting
Team cheer!	Team gets together for a photo	Teammate encourages player who missed a shot	Coach giving instructions from the sideline	Full team huddle
Athlete steals the ball	Teammates on bench celebrate after their team scores	All players are keeping up with the game pace	Officials wearing proper uniforms	Fans in the stands

# Sample Social Media Scavenger Hunt

## Who

You need to interview 10 people! Use the checklist below as you interview people. You may interview each other as part of your 10 Interviewees.

### Possible interview candidates:

- A student
- A student
- Someone under 12 years old
- A parent of an athlete
- A parent of an athlete
- An athlete
- An athlete
- A coach
- A volunteer
- A volunteer

## What

For each interview, ask five questions out of the following list:

- What has been your favorite part of [insert host event]?
- What does it mean to you to be here?
- What does inclusion mean to you?
- How does it feel to be included?
- What would you say to a bully who was picking on you?
- What would you say to a bully who was picking on someone else?
- What would you say to someone using the R-word?
- What words of encouragement would you tell a young student who wants to be a champion for inclusion?
- What would the world be like if we were all the exact same?
- Do you think youth have the power to change the world?

# Sample Social Media Cheat Sheet

Used at the 2018 Special Olympics USA Games  
Youth Leadership Experience

## Official 2018 Special Olympics USA Games handles:

Instagram: @specialolympicsusagames

Twitter: @2018USAgames

## Special Olympics handles:

Instagram: @specialolympics

Twitter: @specialolympics

## SO North America handles:

Instagram: @SONorthAmerica

Twitter: @SONorthAmerica

## Use these official hashtags!

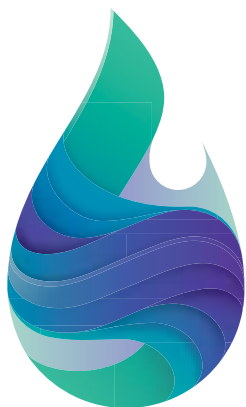
#RiseWithUs

#2018USAGames

#YLE2018

#BeFearlessBeKind

Make sure to tag your **state Special Olympics** Program's social media handles in your posts about the Youth Leadership Experience!



SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
**USA GAMES**  
SEATTLE 2018





# Whole School Engagement Action Plan

Strategy/Activity	Tasks	When will each task be completed?	Who will facilitate the completion of this goal?	Who else can help?
	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	
<b>This strategy/activity also connects with:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusive Youth Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Unified Sports	5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____	5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____	5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____	
	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	
<b>This strategy/activity also connects with:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusive Youth Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Unified Sports	5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____	5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____	5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____	