

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS (ALPs)

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OVERVIEW

Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs) train athletes to serve in meaningful leadership roles other than or in addition to, that of “competitor”. They offer athletes an opportunity to participate as partners in all aspects of the Special Olympics movement in Wisconsin.

Athletes as Partners

ALPs provide the Special Olympics Wisconsin family with a philosophical base that will help athletes grow as valued contributing members of our communities. This challenges all of our athletes, coaches, staff, volunteers, sponsors and families to assure that meaningful opportunities for growth are provided to interested, trained and qualified athletes.

Goals of ALPs

- Allow athletes self-determination of how and in what role they will participate in Special Olympics
- Provide our athletes with the training and certification, where appropriate, to properly prepare them for success
- Include athletes in meaningful positions of influence and leadership throughout the organization to help determine policy and set direction
- Provide training and education for existing leadership as we welcome and encourage athletes in their new roles
- Recognize the athletes’ ability to contribute in these roles in a meaningful way by holding them accountable to all Special Olympics Wisconsin policies, rules and standards

Benefits

- Enhanced self-confidence and social competency
- Greater readiness for employment
- Better preparation for independent living
- Increased ability to make personal decisions
- Improved friendships and family relationships

Opportunities

- Athletes on the program Board of Directors
- Athlete Congress or Input Councils
- Athletes as coaches and officials
- Athletes as donors
- Athletes employed by Special Olympics
- Athletes as newsletter/ website contributors
- Athletes as Global Messengers (speakers bureau)
- Athletes on local, Regional or State committees and management teams
- Athletes as mentors to other athletes

State Athlete Input Council

Adam Domino	Wausau Metro Adult	2-03
Peter Chumas*	Eau Claire Adults	3-06
Carolyn Voelker*	Thorpe Adult SO	3-18
Hannah Grable	Oshkosh Schools	4-27
Martha Hill*	Sheboygan Co. Adults	5-07
Ashley Kobel	Manitowoc Co. Miracles	5-14
Jake Casper	Oregon SO	6-05
Dallas Kopp	Platteville	6-48
Mila Holcombe*	Janesville Area SO	7-02
Gordon Hodge*	Shephards SO	7-20
Patrick Lynch*	Team Milwaukee	8-42
Arnett Williams	Team Milwaukee	8-42
Tom Pezzi	Facilitator	
Jeanne Hrovat	SOWI Staff Liaison	

*Term ends December 2011. New members will be selected for next three-year term.

ALPS TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

As athletes assume new leadership roles within Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI), there is a need for education and training for everyone involved. SOWI uses the Agency accreditation responses, as well as athlete surveys and feedback, to determine interest in specific training.

Currently, SOWI is providing the following trainings on a regular basis:

- 1) Introduction to ALPs
- 2) Global Messenger Workshop (beginner, refresher or graduate)-public speaking and interviewing skills
- 3) Athlete Governance or Leadership Training Workshop- general leadership skills such as how to express opinions, listen to other's ideas, and work together to solve problems
- 4) Athletes as Coaches Training—general coaching skills and sports-specific training
- 5) Other ALPs workshops such as Assisting with Fund Raising, Working with the Media, Reading Financial Reports and Technology are offered periodically as needed

ALPS AT THE AGENCY LEVEL

Agencies have been creative in their implementation of ALPs. Involvement ranges from simply enlisting veteran athletes as peer mentors to a more formal approach of developing structured Athlete Councils, and many things in between. SOWI supports each Agency's right to choose the level of involvement, but encourages all Agencies to be more intentional about offering leadership roles to athletes within their Agency.

As we continue to grow through ALPs, it has become clear that this type of program bottlenecks with staff or key volunteers because it is viewed as more work. On the contrary, we have found if expectations are clear, athletes are a huge resource to the program, and can relieve workloads of staff and key volunteers. In order to do this, athletes must be given clear expectations and be held accountable.

ATHLETE INPUT COUNCILS

SOWI has Athlete Input Councils at the Headquarters, Regional and local levels. The statewide council has representatives from each Region and meets five times per year to discuss statewide issues such as ALPs workshops, ALPs award criteria, athletes assisting with fundraising and more. Regional and local councils operate in much the same way, but address Regional or local Agency issues. See page 3 for a Sample Athlete Council Agreement.

ATHLETE VOLUNTEERS

Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs) train athletes to serve in meaningful leadership roles in addition to that of competitor. As a result, SOWI now has dozens of athletes who also serve as volunteers for our program. However, there are differences in how SOWI processes their information and manages their service compared to other volunteers.

- 1) Athletes are registered in the SOWI Games Management System (GMS) and all volunteers are registered in the Blackbaud database system
- 2) Of all the ALPs athlete volunteers, only athlete-coaches and athletes who serve on Regional and State committees will be screened because of their direct contact with athletes and because they are in a position of authority and trust of other athletes. Athlete coaches cannot serve as chaperones at State competitions
- 3) At this time, ALPs athletes are not included in the years of service awards. However, the Mike Schulte ALPs Athlete of the Year was created to honor ALPs athletes for their leadership rather than sports achievements.
- 4) Athlete volunteers cannot drive on behalf of SOWI

STATE ATHLETE INPUT COUNCIL CONTRACT



Special Olympics **Wisconsin**

Special Olympics Wisconsin – Athlete Council (SOWI-AIC) Member Contract

“The Mission of the SOWI Athlete Input Council is to work together to support SOWI athletes, coaches, family, friends, volunteers, and staff by gathering information, ideas and opinions of SOWI athletes and sharing that information with SOWI by putting it in writing so that we all understand and communicating to all involved in SOWI.”

I _____ have read and understand that I will abide by the following rules of conduct as a member of SOWI-AIC.

I will attend all regular scheduled meetings of the council. I promise I will call another council member or the state office in Madison if there is an emergency and I am not able to attend. I understand it is my responsibility to call another council member after the meeting to learn what I missed.

I understand that I am responsible for my own transportation to and from the meetings and extra activities.

If I don't attend four of the five meetings a year, I understand a letter will be sent to me from the facilitator/staff followed by a private meeting to discuss my member status.

I will be an active participant in events and activities requested of council members to help support Special Olympics Wisconsin.

The SOWI-AIC agreed to the following etiquette:

1. Stick to topic
2. Don't spread rumors
3. Use common sense
4. Respect everyone's ideas
5. Finish your work
6. Do your work
7. If you're not sure, ask questions
8. Be prepared
9. Use words athletes understand
10. Have eye contact – who should you be looking at? Each other.
11. Be respectful
12. Be a good leader
13. Be on time/prompt
14. Do your fair share
15. Have fun
16. Use appropriate language
17. Help other council members when needed
18. Set a positive example at all SOWI functions
19. Confidentiality on topics that are not to be shared outside the AIC

(Athlete Council Member Name)

(Date signed)

ATHLETES AS COACHES (AAC) PROGRAM

Criteria for Involvement

- 1) Athletes wishing to coach in the SOWI system must be registered and screened as a participant in the AAC program. This is done by completing a Class A volunteer registration form which includes taking the online Protective Behaviors training and viewing the online General Orientation. (Athlete coaches must be 18 years old or older.)
- 2) Athletes must have a mentor in the AAC process, and have the ability to meet the requirements of being a coach (attendance at practices and competitions, etc.). Agency managers may assist the athlete, but the athlete will be responsible for finding a mentor as well as transportation to and from practices and/or trainings as part of this program.
- 3) The athlete, with the help of their mentor, must complete the following requirements:
 - a) Attend an AAC Workshop where they will review portions of the modified Principles of Coaching course
 - b) Attend a sport-specific Certified Training School (CTS)
 - c) Complete 10 practicum hours which means hands-on coaching with athletes in the sport in which you attended the CTS. These hours must take place after you attend the sport-specific CTS. (This is different than if you begin helping at practices on an informal basis to see if you want to become a coach.)
 - d) Complete and submit the *Application for Sports Training Certification* form. Once the completed form is turned in to the Program office, the coaches certification will be recorded and reflected on the volunteer roster that is sent to Agency managers five times a year. Coach certifications expire on December 31st of the third calendar year from the date of the sport-specific training that was attended.

State Games/Tournament Registration Policy

Athletes, including athlete-coaches, are not eligible to act as chaperones or to drive on behalf of SOWI. In order for an athlete-coach to be registered as a coach for a state games/tournament they must meet all of the criteria for involvement in the AAC program. Teams with athletes in the program will be allowed extra quota slots to accommodate athlete-coaches. The state games/tournament ratio of athlete-coaches to competing athletes shall be as follows: Team sports- (excluding bocce, team or doubles bowling, and relay teams) one athlete-coach per team; Individual sports- (including bocce, team or doubles bowling and relay teams) one athlete-coach for every 12 athletes. An athlete-coach may serve as the only certified coach for a team. However, if an athlete is the only coach, please contact SOWI staff to assess if any accommodations are necessary. No athlete-coach will be allowed to register in a coach's role with any of the Unified Sports[®] offered by SOWI.

To preserve the integrity of the AAC position, SOWI does not allow athletes to participate and coach within the same sports season (i.e., an athlete will not be allowed to attend State competition as a coach if you have competed in that sports season as an athlete). Athlete coaches who no longer participate as an "athlete" do not have to renew their Athlete Participation and Release forms, but must keep their Class A volunteer registrations current.

SARGENT SHRIVER SPECIAL OLYMPICS GLOBAL MESSENGERS PROGRAM

History

In 1987, Special Olympics launched an important athlete recruitment campaign called “Join the World of Winners” aimed at providing Special Olympics sports training and competition for more individuals with cognitive disabilities.

Early in 1988, a Special Olympics Colorado athlete named Greg Mark decided he should be part of the athlete recruitment campaign. He recruited 30 of his friends—adults who had stopped competing in Special Olympics—to become involved again. Mark’s action inspired a program called **Athletes for Outreach**, through which Special Olympics athletes are trained to give presentations to peers and potential athletes; civic, sports, and church groups; school and community administrators; and families. The purpose of each presentation was to recruit new Special Olympics athletes and volunteers needed to expand programs.

Since its inception, the Athletes for Outreach program has been an unprecedented success. Today, over 800 athletes are educating individuals in their communities about Special Olympics. While Athletes for Outreach were busy making presentations, Special Olympics International Chairman Sargent Shriver was working tirelessly to advance the mission and philosophy of Special Olympics to people around the world.

In 1996, Sargent Shriver was presented with an award in recognition of his work as a “global messenger” for the Special Olympics movement. Additionally, in his honor, the Athletes for Outreach program was renamed the Sargent Shriver Special Olympics Global Messengers program—Global Messengers for short. The program name change became effective on January 1, 1997.

Training

Global Messengers are trained at workshops conducted by Special Olympics staff and experts in public speaking. The workshop requires each athlete to give a presentation, after which he/she is critiqued by peers and trainers.

Goals

Each Global Messenger is asked to give presentations throughout the year to recruit new athletes and volunteers or assist in fund raising, while telling the Special Olympics story.

Results

Special Olympics Wisconsin has conducted numerous Regional and Headquarters state-level workshops attended by athletes from all over the state. Since then, each Global Messenger has made a significant contribution to public awareness of Special Olympics in their communities and statewide.

Global Messengers have:

- Shared their message at Opening and Closing Ceremonies of all State competitions
- Spoken at Special Olympics Wisconsin Annual Conferences, Torch Run conferences and Special Olympics International conferences
- Given presentations to numerous corporations and civic organizations
- Appeared on Special Olympics posters and in public service announcements or media interviews
- Given presentations to college and university classes

“Special Olympics Global Messengers are once again proving that there are no limits to what people with cognitive disabilities can do, and challenging the world to accept them as active participants in society. They are speaking for themselves to tell their own story—and telling it far better than any of us could.”

Eunice Kennedy Shriver
Founder, Special Olympics International

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