Tips for Volunteering at a Special Olympics Event

In order to make this event a success and your volunteer experience a satisfying and rewarding one, we offer the following information and suggestions:

Choose a job you are comfortable with and that you can commit to the time required. There are a wide variety of volunteer opportunities at this event and you should be able to find one to suit your needs. Be sure you understand the specific job you are assigned. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask the person in charge of your assigned area.

You represent Special Olympics New York while you perform your assignment as a volunteer. You will be asked to show identification upon registration at the event; wear your credential visibly at all times and conduct yourself in a professional manner in relating to athletes, other volunteers, families, the general public and the media.

When interacting with athletes, speak to them as you would anyone else attending the Games. If you have difficulty understanding an athlete's speech, do not hesitate to say so and ask them to speak slowly. Interpreters are available for athletes who communicate through sign language. All athletes will be wearing an identification bracelet with their name and delegation name on it if a situation arises where the athlete is unable to give that information.

Please do not try to "train" or "coach" the athletes. They have been training for many weeks for this event and any new direction or terminology could contradict or confuse the coach's instructions. Some well meaning volunteers could put an athlete at risk of disqualification by providing inappropriate assistance. Look to the officials and event staff for direction.

Some athletes will be very outgoing, others shy and reserved. Have patience and respect for them as individuals. All athletes enjoy being congratulated after an event with a "high five", hand shake, pat on the back or a hug; if initiated by the athlete. Award presentations are made shortly after each event where all athletes are recognized. If an athlete is disqualified in their event or does not finish, they will be recognized with a participation award. Individual efforts and overall performance deserve praise, regardless of their place finish.

Volunteers being used as Athlete Event Escorts should take guidance from that athlete's coach. Please note that a volunteer is NOT to accompany an athlete away from the competition area, to the locker room, rest room or to another venue unless accompanied by the athlete's coach.

Most of all, relax and enjoy yourself. Make friends and share in the excitement and joy that comes with every Special Olympics event. Thank you, in advance, for helping our athletes reach their goals.

"Let me Win, But if I Cannot Win, Let me be Brave in the Attempt"

Special Olympics Oath

Special Olympics

Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation

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Benefit of Citizens with Intellectual Disabilities

SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEW YORK VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

I will fulfill the responsibilities of my assignment.

I will set a good example for the athletes.

I will demonstrate good sportsmanship and cooperation.

I will be vigilant and aware of the safety of the athletes.

I will refrain from the consumption of alcoholic beverages and non-prescribed, controlled substances.

I will wear my credential and understand it must be visible during events.

I am specifically granting permission to Special Olympics to use my likeness, voice and words in media for purposes of advertising or communicating the purpose and activities of Special Olympics