

Persuasive Campaign – Audience Analysis Paper
Special Olympics**I. Topic—Exigence & Invention**A. Topic/Exigence

I have chosen to motivate students of Monmouth College to volunteer their time and talents to the Special Olympics. Special Olympics brings hope and joy to thousands of mentally and physically handicap people's lives through each interaction and smile. I believe that this is an important issue that touches thousands of people's lives, including some of our own, in one way or another. Monmouth College has taught us to explore, understand, and appreciation all different aspects of life. I feel that there is no better way to experience these things than to give back to the mentally and physically disabled by volunteering for the Special Olympics. In today's society I feel that we have lost sight of what is important and that we are too caught up in our own lives. Volunteering for Special Olympics is a perfect way to give back to society and take a break from the fast-pasted world we live in. Special Olympics welcomes and encourages people from all walks of life to participate and join the force to help brighten the lives of Special Olympics athletes. The following information shows how important Special Olympics volunteers are:

- Without the volunteers the Special Olympics would not exist (“Special Olympic Volunteers,”n.p).
- Special Olympics is made up of over 700,000 volunteers (“Special Olympic Volunteers,” n.p).
- Special Olympics touches more than 2.25 million athletes and families total. (“Special Olympics,” n.p).

After informing my audience on how vital Special Olympics is I will try to motivate and encourage them to donate their own time and efforts to the cause. Students can accomplish this by volunteering at their own community's Special Olympics, or by volunteering for the city of Monmouth's Special Olympics.

B. Invention

Volunteering and giving up our own personal time is starting to become a thing of the past. College aged students consume much of their time with alternative activities dealing mostly with school and their social lives. Attitudes have also developed that as long as a particular topic or situation does not concern us there is no reason to care about it. This kind of behavior has become a growing mindset for many young adults today. It is important as young adults to take action in our community and get involved to become more diverse individuals. Mentally and physically disabled people that participate in Special Olympics depend on volunteers to not only organize the event but to give them support and encouragement during it. Special Olympics is an amazing way to help others help themselves. The support and encouragement the participants get from volunteers help them not only in their athletic event but also in their everyday lives. Even after the Olympics is over participants gloat about their glory for weeks and months. They also take their newfound confidence and use it in other areas of their lives. Helping others help themselves can also be self-rewarding. It feels good to see disabled individuals succeed.

There are some people that have apprehensions about working with mentally retarded people. Several of these individuals have never had any personal contact with the disabled and base their fears off of perceptions. Others may have encountered an individual that was particularly aggressive or had a behavior problem, but they were not equipped with the proper training to handle the situation. In terms of Special Olympics these kinds of athletes will have their own personal attendant that is trained and capable of handling their behavior style. It is important to remember that people with disabilities are still human and can express emotions and frustrations just as everyone else can. The great part about Special Olympics is it has a job suitable for everyone. If a volunteer signs up for the first time and has reservations about working with the handicap they can be accommodated by other jobs that are not one-on-one. It is also important in situations like these to try and put all fears aside and concentrate more on helping the Special Olympic athlete to do the best they can. Regardless of doubts one may have, every athlete deserves to experience what it is like to be a winner.

Special Olympics is an amazing event that brings mentally and physically handicap people as one with their community. This is special and important because there was a time when disabled people were shunned and looked down upon. A not so long time ago several handicap people were forced to live in institutions where they were separated from the rest of society. Luckily now organizations have made it possible for mentally and physically impaired people to live in healthy and happy environments among their community. Thanks to Special Olympics these people have the opportunity to participate in sports and games that those without disabilities get to take part in. By

supporting Special Olympics you are also supporting the fact that you take pride in helping the handicap and accept them as part of society. Special people deserve to be happy just as everyone else. There is no better way to show this than to volunteer and help put a smile on a mentally or physically disabled persons face.

II. Audience Analysis

A. General Overview

The audience that I am going to target for my campaign is college students. This group of people has the capability to organize their schedules around events and activities that they are willing to participate in. College is usually a time in a person's life when they realize what they stand for and what kind of organizations and events they support. Therefore, by volunteering now, college students are more likely to continue to volunteer for Special Olympics in the future. A fall 2006 survey given to four-year freshmen at Monmouth College showed that 80.6% of the students performed volunteer work. This percent shows that a majority of college students have done volunteer work and will be more likely to participate in Special Olympics because of their past volunteer efforts. To break it down even further 25.5% volunteered for 1 to 2 hours and 14.6% volunteered 3 to 5 hours. Although these percents are not extremely high they are still encouraging because volunteers do not have to help out all day, but can choose the amount of hours they care to donate of their time.

B. Characteristics

1. *Attitude towards topic*

After interviewing Monmouth College students I found that overall students think that Special Olympics is an important organization that is essential for the lives of handicap individuals. I found that students think it is important for people with disabilities to share some of the same opportunities that non-disabled people get to partake in. Many also expressed that they felt one-on-one interaction with handicap people was important to the disabled peoples lives and self-esteem. I also concluded that although students support the event and the efforts of volunteers, they themselves are not particularly eager to engage their own time and efforts into Special Olympics.

2. *Attitude towards relevant behaviors and message purpose*

Even though the vast majority of Monmouth College students I interviewed agreed that Special Olympics supported a great cause, a large portion of them will most likely not volunteer to help out. This is due to the fact that some students have uncertainties working with mentally and physically disabled

people. Also, a large number of students expressed the lack of time that they have to commit to Special Olympics. Many felt that they had no extra time to donate to volunteer hours. If I can get students to understand the importance and life changing effects volunteers have on Special Olympic athletes, I can get them to take action with volunteering. I feel that some students may be embarrassed to take part in an organization that deals with handicap people. Volunteering is not always known as the “cool” thing to do, so if I can get a large group of students to see its benefits maybe this mindset will change.

3. Relevant audience beliefs

In general students have the same supporting attitude toward Special Olympics and the joy that it brings to the hearts of the athletes. They know that it allows the mentally and physically disabled people to unite with their communities, and take part in challenges that the rest of the world can tackle. They understand that it is an event that allows handicap people to feel better about themselves and the world they live. However, some students do not know some important facts about the event. I concluded that some students think Special Olympic volunteers are only made up of family members and trained staff of the athletes. This is a false assumption; Special Olympics volunteers are all different ages and vary from students to lawyers. Anyone can be a volunteer in the Special Olympics. What many college students do not know is that without the efforts of volunteers there would be no Olympic games. Volunteers that wanted to make a difference in the lives of mentally retarded people founded Special Olympics. I think I will be able to sway students to want to volunteer because it is not only for a good cause but because it touches the lives of many disabled people.

4. Relevant audience values and their saliency

Morally it is our duty to help those in need. Mentally and physically disabled people depend on others to help them through their daily lives. It is only right that we, as non-disabled people, help those in need. College students fit this category perfectly. College has help taught college students to become more respectable and responsible adults. With responsibility comes obligations of doing what is morally and ethically right. Volunteers in the Special Olympics are not only having fun but they are helping others help themselves.

5. Relevant audience needs and motives

College students have a need to feel accepted and helpful within their environment and for themselves. Students like to be involved to keep them busy while they are away from their families and home life. Volunteering for the Special Olympics would help college students in more ways than one. Students would first and foremost feel good knowing that they touched the lives of mentally and physically people. College students would also get a

since of pride for doing something other than drinking with their friends or doing a social activity. Volunteering would allow for an out reach into the community, which could potentially open many doors. The new connection with community members would be a great source of networking for future activities and/or jobs. Students would also have an opportunity to stay active and be in a fun and upbeat environment.

6. Reference groups for this audience

Joining a group that represents your identity is an important thing that takes place in all men and women's lives once arriving at college. Often students join clubs and organizations that they feel represent them and their personality types. For example, service clubs, sororities, fraternities, sport organizations, academic clubs, etc. Once the student has established their organization they act in accordance to their group. Fortunately, some of these clubs will work in the favor for volunteering for Special Olympics. According to "The American Freshman" survey, 25.5 % of Monmouth College freshmen were involved in 1 to 2 student clubs or groups in high school and 21.7% were involved in 3 to 5 of these groups. These percents mean that a large majority of college students will join clubs and groups in college to stay active. Untimely, this means that a large majority of these groups will deal with philosophic events. College students are more likely to volunteer for things if they have other people that will volunteer with them.

7. Situational variables

When considering the best time to target my campaign I must take into consideration my audience and how time appropriate my event is for them. Special Olympics is a flexible event with various sporting events scheduled throughout different times of them the year. May holds the outside Olympics which includes all of the track and field events. Although May is a busy time for college students it does take place in early May on a Saturday. This is a perfect opportunity to be out in the fresh air and take a break from studying before finals. Other indoor events take place during the winter months, which is convenient because school will be back in session after summer break. During the various months I can stress the importance of giving hope and encouragement to the mentally and physically challenged. I will illustrate how important it is to give back to those that are a little less fortunate than we are and to make time for others. During the month of November, which is when bowling Olympics takes place, I will stress the importance of being thankful and allowing others to be thankful for the donation of our time to the Special Olympics. Throughout my campaign I will have to be cautious of using the correct terms for mentally and physically disabled people. I want to make sure that I do not offend anyone while trying to recruit people to volunteer. I will have to take into consideration those on campus that have a

handicap person as a friend or in their family. I will also want to speak in a tactful manor when representing the Special Olympics.

8. *Mental sophistication*

While presenting my campaign to my audience I must take into consideration how knowledgeable they already are on Special Olympics. I also want to think about what kinds of facts are important to share with them and what will be most likely to attract and hold their attention. It is important that I consider all the different backgrounds my audience might have and what sort of experience they may or may not have with mentally and physically challenged individuals. I do not want to make myself sound too arrogant within my own experience with Special Olympics. I need to keep in mind that for some students volunteering would be a very scary and uncomfortable thing to do. It will also be important for me to remember not to speak too much on my own experiences within the Olympics because I do not want to bore anyone with my personal life stories. I want to hold my audience's attention throughout my whole presentation, allowing them to learn as much as possible about Special Olympics and what a great cause it is. However, as a college student myself, my audience may find a connection with me in the fact that I have already volunteered, and that may encourage them to do the same. I must remember that there is a fine line between my own experience and using that experience to encourage them.

C. Goal(s)

There are two major goals that I want to meet after my campaign is finished. The first is for students to not feel uncomfortable around mentally and physically individuals. Second, is to get individual students along with organizations such as sororities, fraternities, and social clubs to sign up and volunteer for Special Olympics. To reach my first goal I will have to get the students that do not feel comfortable around handicap people to have a lot of trust and patience. I will need to make them understand that they can take baby steps up to interacting with the athletes. There are many important jobs that take place at the Special Olympics that do not have anything to do with the participants. I want to make this point very clear to those that feel uncomfortable. I plan on doing this by giving an actual list of jobs that can be done at the event itself. For my second goal I will not only target individual students, but presidents and social chairs in various clubs and organizations. I will stress to them how important this event is and how by their participation it will make their organization stand out from all the rest. I plan on doing this by sending e-mails, talking personally to the presidents and social chairs, and specifically attending their club meetings.

1. *Obstacles*

Like anything else there are always obstacles that stand in the way of getting people to participate and volunteer in something. Referring back to my goals, I can see where the people that are uncomfortable around mentally and physically handicap individuals would be set in their ways and unwilling to change. For my second goal I could see where certain clubs and organizations would already have philanthropy events lined up and would not be willing to add a new one to their schedule. There is also going to be students that would not consider helping out others or giving up any of their time to volunteering. Regardless of how effective my message is some people will find ways to block me out and refuse to change or open their minds and hearts to volunteering.

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