

## Changing Lives Through Special Olympics

### I. Introduction

- I have had the privilege of working with mentally retarded people for over a year now. The spring is my favorite time to work with them because they are all eager and excited for the outdoor portion of Special Olympics to begin. Just the other day I was driving a group of mentally retarded people to the local YMCA for Special Olympics practice. One was rambling on about how she is going to be so good this year and how she cannot wait to run fast to get more gold medals. She kept telling me that her dad told her to practice hard, but not to overdue herself. This woman is over fifty years old, legally blind, and what we would consider out of shape, BUT she does not let any of these things hold her back from participating in the Special Olympics.
- Without volunteers Special Olympics would not be possible, which means the self-esteem and drive of many handicap individuals would not be as high as they are today.

**A. Exigence:** I shared a story to show just how important the Special Olympics is to the athletes and how they depend on volunteers to make it possible. While visited with the athletes about the Special Olympics one girl said to me, “The volunteers are the ones that tell us where to go, without them we would be lost.” Even though she suffers from a mental disorder she still understands how important it is that Special Olympics has people that donate their time and efforts.

**B. Audience:** I have one audience for my message campaign, Monmouth College students. Today I will be focusing on both male and female students of all ages. I want them to achieve a better understand of why it is important to volunteer and how it affects the athletes just as much as their own lives.

**C. Goals:** My main goal is to get Monmouth College students to contribute their time and talents to Special Olympics. I also want to give those students that have hesitation to feel comfortable and confident in volunteering.

## II. Message

- Monmouth College has a large number of service and social clubs and organizations that involve a large portion of the student body. For my strategy I am going to visit different club meetings and give a brief speech about why it is important to volunteer for the Special Olympics, and how this event is for a great cause and helps out thousands of handicap people every year. I will use the Rational Model to inform my audience on the facts of the Olympics and clear up any misconceptions that they might have about working with mentally and physically handicap people.

### SHOW VISUAL AID NOW (Speech outline)

**Goal:** My specific goal for the speech is to inform students that Special Olympics is important and easy to get involved in. I also wanted them to feel reassured that they do not have to work with athletes that need special training due to behavior problems, etc.

**Background:** I used the *Rational Model* to express how important Special Olympics is. I did this by stating facts that showed how Special Olympics would not be possible without volunteers. My speech also gave insight as to how important the event is to not only the athletes but to the people who volunteer. I targeted my speech to organizations and clubs that are based on volunteering and helping out others. I also made it clear that volunteering for Special Olympics represents good positive values. I also used the *Cognitive Dissonance* theory to show students that they do not need to be fearful of Special Olympic athletes. By explaining the conflict, or the fear, that some students have when working with handicap people, I was able to break down their doubt. I was also able to reassure them that they will not be put in a situation that they are unable to handle. I simply explained the trade off between getting over one's fears and making a handicapped person feel important and successful (*Theory of Reasoned Action*).

### **Specific Goal(s)**

**Getting attention:** I plan on getting my audiences attention by starting off my speech with a story from a Special Olympics athlete. I will also have pictures that will physically show how important this event is to those with disabilities. My pictures will be of the athletes with their Olympic medals on. I used *vividness* here.

**Need:** For my need step I focused on using the *Rational Model* to express the facts of Special Olympics, and the need for people to volunteer. Here I also tried to make my speech express how important volunteers are and how big of a difference they make in the athletes performance and outcome. Another way I used the *Rational Model* in my speech was to express the positive values that are behind volunteering.

**Solution:** The solution to volunteering is to sign-up and get involved. I used the *Hovland's Learning Theory* to attract the students' attention to my topic, get them to

understand how important it is to the handicap people, learn about ways they can get involved and make a difference, and then lastly have an incentive to change and volunteer their time.

### **III. Conclusion**

By using the Rational Model and the Cognitive Dissonance Theory I feel that I have delivered a clear message as to why Monmouth College students should volunteer for Special Olympics. I feel that my persuasive methods are effective and will be very successful.

## VISUAL AID

### Speech Outline

#### *Title: Support Special Olympics*

**Topic:** Special Olympics is an important event that would not be made possible without the efforts of volunteers. Monmouth College students should volunteer their time to help out the mentally and physically disabled people in Monmouth and other surrounding communities.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this speech is to get Monmouth College students to volunteer their time to the Special Olympics.

#### **I. Introduction**

**A. Attention Getting Strategy:** I have had the privilege of working with mentally retarded people for over a year now. This is my favorite time to work with them because they are all eager and excited for the Outdoor portion of Special Olympics to begin. Just the other day I was driving a group of consumers the local YMCA for Special Olympics practice. One was rambling on about how she is going to be so good this year and how she cannot wait to run fast to get more gold medals. She kept telling me that her dad told her to practice hard but not to overdo herself. This woman is over fifty years old, legally blind, and what we would consider out of shape BUT she does not let any of these things hold her back from participating in the Special Olympics.

**B. Thesis Claim:** Monmouth College students should volunteer for the Special Olympics because it makes a significant difference in the lives of mentally and physically handicap people.

#### **C. Forecasting of Key Points:**

1. First, I am going to explain why the Special Olympics is so important, and how it makes a huge difference in not only the lives of the disabled participants, but also the volunteers.
2. Second, I will clear up any misconceptions and fears that students might have working with disabled people.
3. Finally, I will explain how Monmouth College student's can get involved and volunteer.

(Transition) Have you ever participated in something that only took an hour of your life but made a lifetime of change in someone else's? Special Olympics volunteers get to experience this every time they come in contact with an athlete.

#### **II. Body**

**A. First,** Special Olympics touches the lives of thousands of people each year.

1. Special Olympics reaches more than 2.25 million athletes and families total (Special Olympics Volunteers," n.p.).

2. According to the Special Olympic website, “Special Olympics is made up of over 700,000 volunteers (Special Olympic Volunteers,” n.p)
3. Without the help of volunteers this event would not be made possible.
  - a. Volunteers do more than just show up the day of the Olympics.
  - b. The athletes and volunteers often form a bond that lasts a lifetime.
4. The athletes depend on the volunteers for support, direction, and encouragement.

(Transition) Although volunteering for Special Olympics is a great cause there are some students that have apprehensions about working with mentally retarded people.

B. **Second**, It is important not to stereotype people with disabilities.

1. A majority of students have had little to no contact with disabled people but base their fears off of misconceptions.
2. Other students 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.
  - a. In terms of Special Olympics athletics with behavior needs will be assigned to a trained volunteer that knows how to handle their behavior.
  - b. It is important to remember that people with disabilities are still human and can express emotions and frustrations just as everyone else can.
3. Special Olympics has a job for everyone!
  - a. If volunteers sign up and have reservations about working with the handicap they can be accommodated by other jobs that are not one-on-one.
  - b. Volunteers can also work together until they become comfortable working alone.
4. It is important in situations like these to put all fears aside and concentrate more on helping the Special Olympic athlete to do they best they can.

(Transition) Now that you understand how important it is that Special Olympics has volunteers it is time to learn how to go about donating your own time and efforts.

C. **Finally**, By contacting the area director of Monmouth, Cathy Betar or myself, you will be asked to follow a few simple steps before becoming a volunteer.

1. A registration form will need to be filled out followed by a background check.
2. Volunteers can be all ages but it is required that you are at least 10 years old to be a general volunteer and at least 18 years old to be a coach.

3. Coaching, timer, scorekeeper, awards, office help, fundraising, sports official, and being on a committee are all ways that students can help out.
4. Volunteers can apply online at [http://www.soill.org/areas/area\\_4.html](http://www.soill.org/areas/area_4.html) or by e-mailing Cathy Betar at [cbetar@soill.org](mailto:cbetar@soill.org).

(Transition) Contributing to Special Olympics is a wonderful thing that helps out a wide variety of people.

### **III. In Conclusion,**

- A. **Review the Key Points:** Today, I have given you several reasons why you should volunteer for Special Olympics.
  1. Special Olympics would not be possible without volunteers.
  2. There is a job that for everyone, even if they have reservations with working with the athletes.
  3. It is easy to get involved and does not take a lot of time or effort to do so.
- B. **Representation of Thesis Claim:** Monmouth College students should volunteer for the Special Olympics because it makes a significant difference in the lives of mentally and physically handicap people.
- C. **Memory Devise:**
  1. Share your talents and time to the athletes of Special Olympics and you will truly be rewarded.
  2. Think about how important you can make one life feel just be volunteering for Special Olympics and encouraging a disabled individual to succeed.

#### *Work Cited*

“Special Olympic Volunteers.” Special Olympics. (March 1, 2007)  
<http://www.specialolympics.org/Special+Olympics+Public+Website/English/Volunteer/default.htm>