

Special Olympics Project UNIFY®

Special Olympics Project UNIFY® is an education and sports based program started by Special Olympics in 2008 designed to build an inclusive environment among youth with and without intellectual disabilities, as well as empower them to become youth leaders and speak up for change in their community.

Project UNIFY works in three ways:

- 1. Inclusive Sports** – provide students with and without intellectual disabilities opportunities to participate in sports activities alongside one another;
- 2. Youth Leadership & Advocacy** – provide students with and without intellectual disabilities opportunities to take on leadership roles to promote Project UNIFY activities in the school and in the community; and
- 3. Whole-School Engagement** – provide opportunities for all students in the school to participate in Project UNIFY through sustained school-wide activities.

For more information about Project UNIFY, visit specialolympics.org/putoolkit. In the Project UNIFY toolkit, there are many great resources on how to get Project UNIFY into your school or better an existing program.

Inclusive Sports

- **Outcome:** Students without intellectual disabilities hold more positive attitudes toward their peers with intellectual disabilities.

Youth Leadership & Advocacy

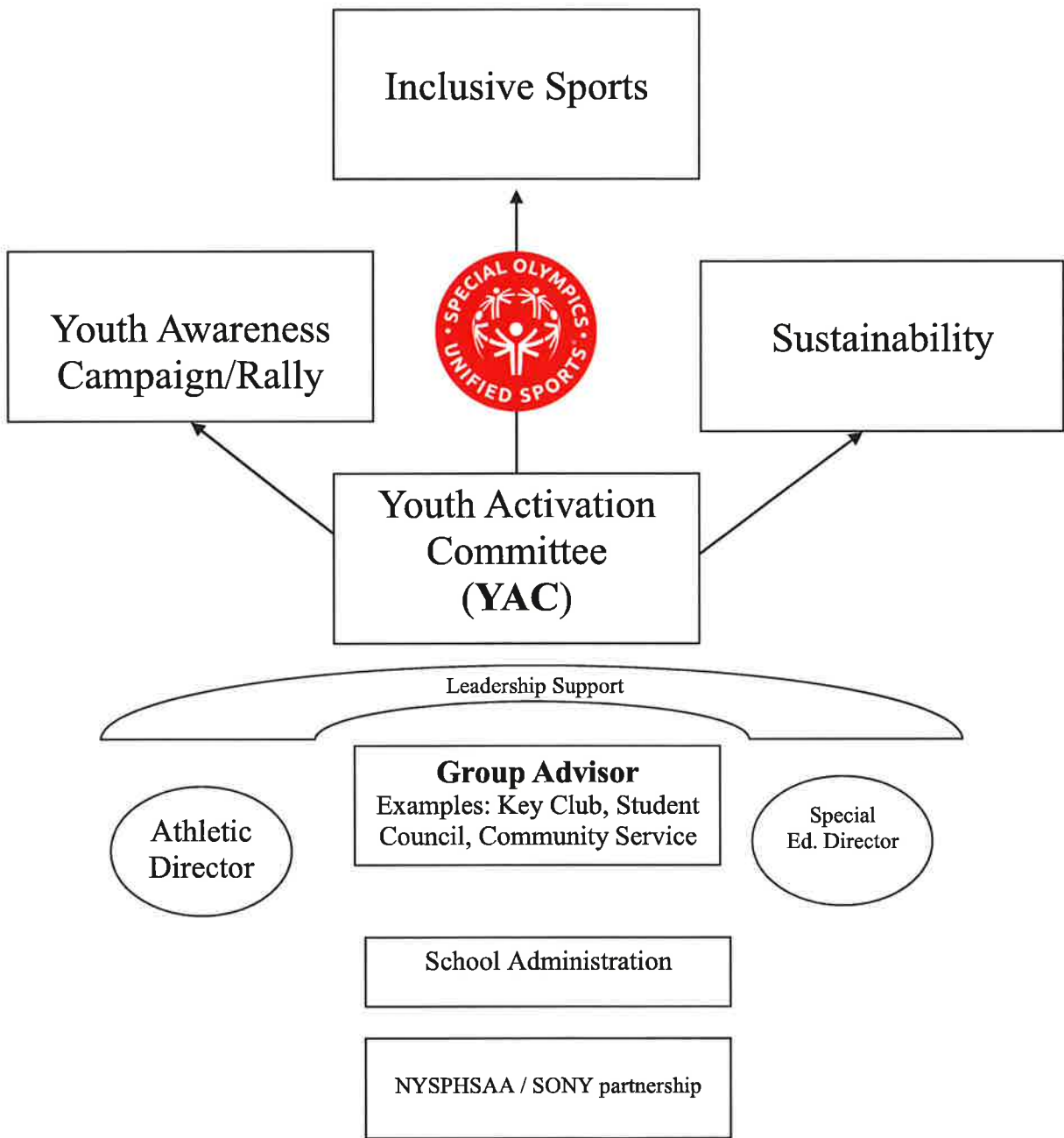
- **Outcome:** Youth are given the opportunity to voice their opinions, share their ideas and be a part of a larger inclusion movement.

Whole-School Engagement

- **Outcome:** School communities of acceptance are created, where students of all abilities can feel welcomed and included.



Special Olympics
New York





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Youth Activation Committee

A Youth Activation Committee (YAC) consists of youth leaders with and without intellectual disabilities from the same school or community who strategize and plan activities. The YAC takes responsibility for the promotion and sustainability of the inclusive sports program.

Objective:

Educate, motivate and activate youth to become agents of change in their communities through advocacy for respect, inclusion and acceptance for all people.

Action:

Strategize, plan and implement activities that create a culture of inclusiveness in the school, using the principles of youth leadership and advocacy to achieve a goal of whole school engagement utilizing unified sports and sports related initiatives of Special Olympics.

Potential activities include: Create and support school district's Unified Basketball Team, Spread the Word to End the Word Campaign, round table discussions of inclusivity and dignity, conducting a youth forum, Rallies for Respect, discussing and understanding stereotypes, building awareness through participation in Polar Plunges or other Special Olympics events, volunteering at Special Olympics competitions and events, attending Sectional Youth Summit.

Impact:

The creation of an whole school environment where authentic social inclusion and learning happens through meaningful activity providing for respect and dignity for all.

Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor, State of New York
Honorary Chairman

Frank Mitola
Chairman

Neal J. Johnson
President & CEO

Dorothy Buehring Phillips
(1910 - 1994) Founder

Special Olympics New York

504 Balltown Road, Schenectady, NY 12304 Tel + 1 518 388 0790 Fax + 1 518 388 0795

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Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation for the benefit of persons with intellectual disabilities



Program Schedule: (2014 – 2015 School Year)

- (June, July & Aug.) Identify 12+ schools – Join the Unified League
- (September) Informational Webinar
- (September) Informational Meeting for additional Stakeholders
- (Sept- Dec) Recruit & Select Advisor
- (January) Unified Sports Orientation for Advisor/Coach
- (January) Form a Club/Team of students [10 – 40+ people]
- (January) YAC Workshop with Student and Advisor participation
- (Feb-Mar) Plan activities that build awareness and sustainability
- (Mar-Apr) Students hold club activities that increase awareness and
 - sustainability
- (March) Basketball Coach Training
- (March) Unified Sports player sign-up and medical clearance
 - [10 – 12 athletes (Male & Female, Grades 7-12)]
- (April) Basketball Practice Begins
- (April & May) Regular Season Games
- (May) Culminating Sectional Tournament

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Youth Activation Committee Member Reflection

This year Columbia High School was a part of something incredible. Thanks To the Special Olympics New York, Columbia High School Athletics had its very own Unified Team. At first, very few people understood what this new team was. The unified team was comprised of students with disabilities along with students without disabilities. Together these students practiced regularly and played in competitive basketball games. Athletes living with disabilities finally had the chance to be a part of a team, something they may have never experienced. The main goal was to create lasting friendships for these athletes and provide them with opportunities they never had before. However, the team was not the only new addition to Columbia this year. An overwhelming amount of support for the team came from a group of students known as YAC. The Youth Activation Committee was in charge of creating as much support for the team, as well as fundraising. Overall I believe it was a successful start to a life changing program.

From the beginning of the season I was very hesitant on how things would play out. I was afraid the games wouldn't be held to a competitive standard and that the athletes wouldn't gain any enjoyment. However, the season was the exact opposite. It was incredible to watch these athletes practice together, learn together, and grow together. Before the very first game, I decide to watch the team practice. The instant I walked into the gym and saw the team, I knew the season would be exactly what I hoped for. The energy the team carried with them throughout the season was contagious. The most amazing thing was that the energy these kids contained was there throughout the season. Even when the students were faced with challenges, they worked through them together. They didn't expect to win easily but they attacked every game with the same enthusiasm. The team grew immensely together and I am so amazingly proud of what they accomplished this season.

The Unified Team achieved amazing goals this year, however the driving force behind the team was the YAC. This program was a new idea for Columbia, but I believe we did a nice job considering this was uncharted territory. We began the season by having a bake sale which raised over \$400. This was a great starting spot for the group. The next big step was preparing for our only home game of the season. Before the game, members of the unified team and members of YAC tie dyed T-shirts together. Then I made sure each shirt said CHS and the athletes had their

numbers painted on the back. The day of our home game every student wore their shirt. This really brought the members of YAC together with the athletes.

The moment had finally arrived to see how the turnout would be for the big home game. To our surprise the YAC members were able to completely fill the stands with proud families and fellow classmates. After the big game we moved on to the championship games which were held at the Glens Falls Civic Center. The team was thrilled to be playing on such a large court. They played their hearts out and never let their heads drop if they missed a shot. I am so incredibly proud of their accomplishments and how they grew as a team. This is a truly inspiring program.

Overall this experience changed the lives of all those involved. I saw attitudes of the athletes change quickly; also, those athletes who were shy and quiet completely broke out of their shells. Every student had an equal opportunity to play and contributed in their own way. This program brought the school together and the overall attitude became more positive throughout the hallways. I cannot wait to see what next season has to bring.

Raechel Yost
Columbia High School
YAC Member





Unified Basketball Sports League

Project Application

<i>Mailing Address</i>			
School Name:			
Street:			
City:	State:	New York	
	Zip:		

Name	Position	Phone	E-mail
	Superintendent		
	Principal		
	Athletic Director		
	Special Education Director		
	YAC Advisor		
	Coach		
	<i>Additional</i>		
	<i>Additional</i>		

Draft Project Budget:

SONY grant funding not to exceed \$2000.00

Item	Total Cost	SONY / Grant Funding	School Funding
Advisor Salary			
Coach Salary			
Officials			
Transportation			
Uniforms			
YAC Supplies			
<i>Additional</i>			
<i>Additional</i>			
<i>Additional</i>			
<i>Additional</i>			
Total:			

Completed By: _____

Please Return to:

Special Olympics New York
Bill Collins, Director of Training
504 Balltown Road
Schenectady, New York 12304

Fax: (518) 388 - 0795

bcollins@nyso.org



Sample
Unified Basketball Sports League

Special Olympics
New York



Project Application

Mailing Address			
School Name:	Glens Falls High School		
Street:	10 Quade street		
City:	Glens Falls	State:	New York
		Zip:	12901

Name	Position	Phone	E-mail
Paul Jenkins	Superintendent		PJenkins@GFSD.org
Mark Stratton	Principal		MStratton@GFSD.org
Chip Corlew	Athletic Director		ACorlew@GFSD.org
Mary Dilliams	Special Education Director		MDilliams@GFSD.org
	YAC Advisor		
John Crossman	Coach		JCrossman@GFSD.org
	Additional		
	Additional		

Draft Project Budget:

Sample

SONY grant funding not to exceed \$2000.00

Item	Total Cost	SONY / Grant Funding	School Funding
Advisor Salary	1,400	1,000	400
Coach Salary	1,600	Ø	1,600
Officials 3 home games @ 75 each	225 ⁰⁰	225	Ø
Transportation 3 Away games @ 300 each	900 ⁰⁰	Ø	900
Uniforms	575 ⁰⁰	575	Ø
YAC Supplies	200	200	Ø
Additional			
Additional			
Additional			
Additional			
Total:	4,900	2,000	2,900

Completed By: _____

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