

A Meaningful Experience for Athlete Leaders

Special Olympics
Pennsylvania



Definition of Athlete Leadership

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Through organized training and practical experience , Athlete Leadership prepares athletes to undertake meaningful positions of influence and leadership throughout the Special Olympics organization, both on and off the playing field.



Purpose of Athlete Leadership

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The purpose of Athlete Leadership is empowering athletes to develop leadership skills and utilize their voices and abilities to undertake meaningful leadership roles, influence change in the Special Olympics movement and create inclusive communities around the world.



Mission of Athlete Leadership

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Athlete Leadership University provides leadership training for Special Olympics athletes who want to serve in meaningful leadership roles other than or in addition to that of “competitor.” Education consists of both classroom training and practice opportunities for athletes. Through a certification process, athletes are encouraged to take multiple Athlete Leadership workshops so they can better understand and practice leadership skills.



Athlete Leadership University - Athlete Requirements

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- 16 years of age or older (Global Messenger).
- 18 years of age or older (Athlete Representative).
- Year round involvement with local program and SOPA.
- Responsible individuals with good behavior.
- Ability to communicate interpersonally with local
- management. team, other athletes, mentors and SOPA.
- Ability to be attentive during instruction.
- Represent SOPA professionally in manner and appearance.

Athlete Leadership University- Mentor Requirements'

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- 18 years of age or older.
- Chaperons and therefore, cannot be a current or former SO athlete.
- Class A volunteer
 - Protective Behavior
 - General Orientation
 - Valid Criminal Record Check
- Year round involvement with local program and SOPA.
- Good role model who is patient, supportive and allows the athlete to develop and grow.
- Must have a valid driver's license and car insurance in good standing.
- Represent SOPA professionally in manner and appearance.

Athlete Representatives

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Leadership Conference

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Athlete Congress

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Regional Input Council (RIC)



Mary Nigro: *North West*
Tim Spence: *South West*

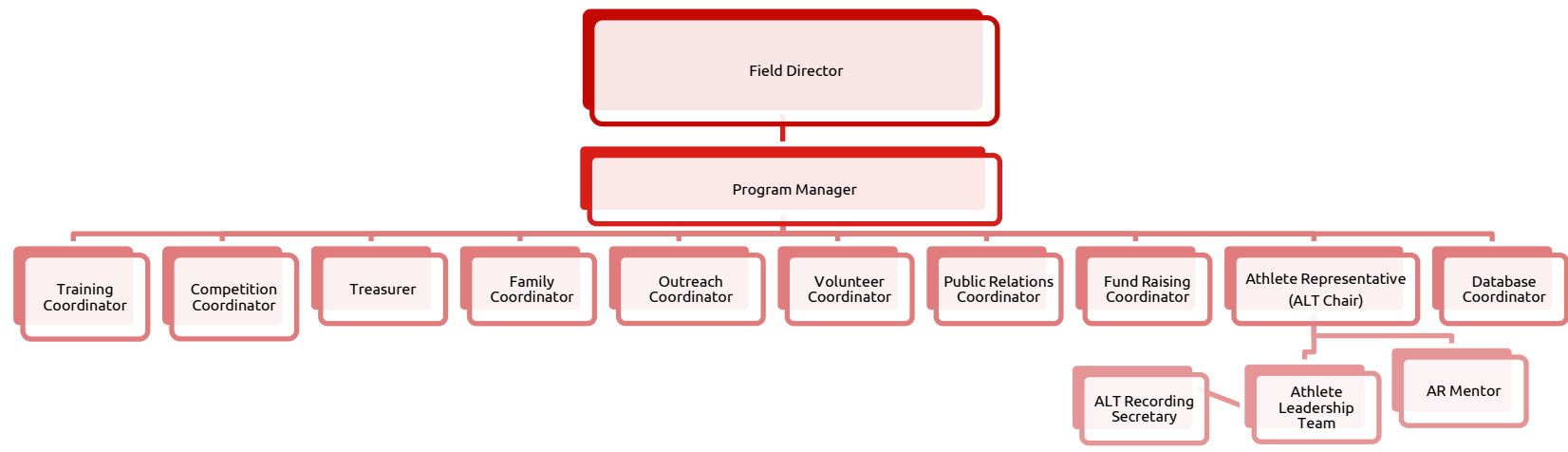
Mike Baker: *North Central*
Mike Stephens: *South Central*

Nina Kaneryia: *North East*
Joshua Stranix: *South East*

In an effort to improve communication between local athletes and the Board of Directors.



Special Olympics PA Local Level



Athlete Leadership Teams (ALTs)

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- What are they? *Forum for athletes to report about what is happening, voice their opinions about important issues and gain leadership training and experience.*
- Why have one? *Provides athletes opportunities to develop leadership skills, serve as volunteers, provide valuable input, be role models for other athletes and serve as ambassadors in the community.*
- When is your program ready to have an Athlete Leadership Team? *Ready when there seem to be issues coming up that could be addressed using athlete input.*

Athlete Leadership Teams (ALTs)

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Who should be involved?

➤ Athletes

➤ Mentor

➤ Recorder

Athlete Input Council/ Athlete Input Survey

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Athlete Input Councils:

Hosted at state competitions:

Opportunity to share feedback with Special Olympics PA staff/ GOC and discuss important issues.

Hosted at local program:

Opportunity to discuss a wide variety of issues.

Athlete Input Surveys:

Hosted at state and sectional competitions:

Opportunity to share feedback with Special Olympics PA staff/ GOC.



Both are an opportunity for athletes to have their voices heard to help create positive change at both the local and state level.

Games Organizing Committee (GOC)

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Games Organizing Committee (GOC):

Open to non-competing Athlete Representatives in the host and neighboring local programs.

Attend meetings and take on a role with the committee during the event.

Athlete Representative Resources:

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➤ **ALT Guide:**

http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/ALT_Guide.pdf

➤ **Athlete Representative I Practicum:**

http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/AR_I_Capstone_Practicum_Updated.pdf

➤ **Athlete Representative II Practicum:**

http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/Athlete_Representative_II_Practicum_Updated.pdf

➤ **Athlete Representative I Report Form:**

http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/AR_I_Capstone_Practicum_Report_Form_.pdf

➤ **Athlete Representative II Report Form:**

http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/Athlete_Representative_II_Practicum_Report_Form.pdf

Global Messengers

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Best Ways To Utilize Global Messengers

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- Fundraisers (Polar Plunge, Law Enforcement, Torch Run, Auctions, etc..)
- Athlete/Volunteer Recruitment Events (Schools, Churches, Business, Group Homes, etc)
- Conducting Athlete Input Surveys at Local, Invitational, Sectional and/ or State Competitions
- Global Messenger speeches on YouTube:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zexOiXCUScM>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2zMRXDn7NE>

Global Messenger Resources:

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➤ **Global Messenger I Report Form:**

http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/ALPs_Global_Messenger_Speech_Report_Updated_.pdf

➤ **Global Messenger II Practicum:**

http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/Global_Messenger_II_Practicum_Updated_.pdf

➤ **Global Messenger II Report Form:**

http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/Global_Messenger_II_Practicum_Report_Form_2.pdf

Healthy Lifestyles

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Health and Fitness Coordinator



- Health and Fitness Coordinator evolved from athletes during the 2014 Athlete Congress.
- Each local program is encouraged to have a Health and Fitness Coordinator who is a Special Olympics athlete that wants to promote healthier lifestyles in his/her local program.
- The Health and Fitness Coordinator is not a member of the local program management team, however may be asked to report out on an as needed basis.

Position Description Breakdown



1. Health and Fitness Coordinator for Local Program.

- Create a year round health and fitness club and communicate activities via social media (i.e. Facebook and/or Twitter), e-mail blast, local program newsletter; etc.

(*Key: led by athletes for athletes, unified partners and families)

Examples of club activities include: Walking, Running, Fitness Center, Cooking, Healthy Eating, Exercising Habits and Hygiene Club. The possibilities are endless!

- Provide healthy menu input at local program competitions.

Suggestions you could provide: Serving salads/wraps in place of sandwiches or pizza, Serving fruit, vegetables and/or baked chips in place of fried chips and Providing beverage options other than soda such as: Gatorade/Powerade, fruit juice, flavored water, etc.

- **Optional:** Help the local program partner with health and fitness organizations.

Partnership suggestions: Local YMCA with reduced rates, Food companies to provide healthy snack / beverage options at competitions and local fitness professionals and dieticians for sport-specific advice.

Position Description Breakdown Continued...



2. Volunteer / Offer Healthy Habits.

2016 – 2018: Volunteer at state and sectional competition.
2018 – 2020: Host at local and invitational competition.

3. Optional: Volunteer as Healthy Athlete Assistant.

18 years of age or older
May not be competing at competition where offered
Transportation to and from the event
Ability to communicate interpersonally with SOPA Staff, Clinical Director, volunteers and other athletes
Responsible individual with good behavior
Ability to be attentive during instruction

Health and Fitness Club Summary Report Form



Date:	Health and / or Fitness Activity:	Approximate number of participants:	How did you spread the word: (i.e. social media, e-mail blast, local program newsletter; etc)

Please submit the Health and Fitness Club Summary Report Form every 6 months.

Healthy Menu Summary Report Form



Date:	Event:	Approximate number of participants:	What menu recommendations that you made were served at the event:

Please submit the Healthy Menu Report Form immediately following the event.

Healthy Habits Event Summary Report Form



Role: (Volunteer or Host)	
Event:	
Event Date:	
Approximate number of athletes registered for competition:	
Healthy Habits Topic: (Please Circle Topic)	Sun Safety
	Hydration
	Nutrition
	Bone Health
	Physical Activity
Number of Healthy Habits Volunteers:	

Additional comments on what went well or challenges of this Healthy Habits Station:

Please submit the Healthy Habits Summary Report Form immediately following the event.

Healthy Athlete Assistant



- 18 years of age or older
- May not be competing at competition where offered
- Transportation to and from the event
- Ability to communicate interpersonally with SOPA Staff, Clinical Director, volunteers and other athletes
- Responsible individual with good behavior
- Ability to be attentive during instruction



Healthy Lifestyle Resources:



- **Healthy Lifestyles Q&A:**
http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/Healthy_Lifestyles_-_Frequently_Asked_Questions.pdf
- **Healthy Lifestyles Practicum:**
http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/Health_Lifestyles_Practicum.pdf
- **Healthy Lifestyles Report Form:**
http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/Healthy_Lifestyles_Practicum_Report_Form.pdf

Athletes as Coaches

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Requirements for becoming a Coach



Coach:

- Completes required background checks.
- Completion of General Orientation, Protective Behaviors and Concussion training.

Certified Coach:

- Attend a SOPA training school to become certified.
- Take “Continuing Education” once every three years after certification.

Expectations for becoming a Coach



- Athletes as Coaches are strongly encouraged to seek Special Olympics Coach certification within two years of this training.
- Athletes as Coaches will encourage other athletes in their local programs to become coaches.
- Athletes as Coaches will serve as an Athlete Leadership advocate.

SOPA Dating Policy



In the case of a SOPA athlete who is also a staff member or volunteer, the President & CEO must evaluate the circumstances on a case-by-case basis and determine if an authority relationship exists between the staff/volunteer athlete and the non-staff/volunteer athlete, and if it is determined that there is such a relationship, then apply the above policy in the same manner as the policy is applied to non-athlete staff or volunteers.

Coaching vs. Competing



- Athletes serving as coaches may not coach and compete in the same sport in the same season.
- Athletes serving as coaches may not compete in other sports taking place in the same season as the one they're coaching.
- If Athlete as Coach may return as a competitor for that sport/season the following year.
- Athletes serving as coaches may compete in sports outside of the season they are coaching.

Practicum



Assistant coach for at least one season.

- Attend at least 8 practices as an assistant coach (required).
- Attend local, invitational, sectional and or state competitions as an assistant coach (highly encouraged).
- Have Head Coach sign off on report form at the end of the season.

Optional: Complete Skills Certification.

Athletes as Coaches Resources:



➤ Athletes as Coaches Q&A:

[http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/Athletes as Coaches - Frequently Asked Questions.pdf](http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/Athletes_as_Coaches_-_Frequently_Asked_Questions.pdf)

➤ Athletes as Coaches Report

Form: [http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/Athletes as Coaches Report Form doc.pdf](http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/Athletes_as_Coaches_Report_Form_doc.pdf)

Other Athlete Leadership Resources:



- **Athlete Leadership YouTube Channel:**
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeygE6DmG7Xi3_XMGdu9QJg
- **Special Olympics Athlete Review Newsletter:**
http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/SOAR_Newsletter_Winter_2016.pdf
- **Athlete Leadership Tab on SOPA website:**
<http://specialolympicspa.org/special-programs/initiatives/athlete-leadership>

For more information, please contact:



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➤ Video's of SOPA Athlete Leaders:

http://youtube.com/channel/UCeygE6DmG7Xi3_XMGdu9QJg

➤ Additional SOPA Athlete Leadership Information:

<http://specialolympicspa.org/special-programs/initiatives/athlete-leadership>