



# How to Host a Youth Rally

*Created by: The National Youth Activation Committee - Special Olympics*

## 1. Consider an idea that is an issue of concern.

### Brainstorm

What problems could be improved upon in your school or local community?

What are some ideas for how you could address these issues or concerns?

Think about who may share this concern and write down people who may wish to work with you on them:

## 2. Form a committee.

- **Hold a meeting for people who share your views.**
  - Add siblings of people with intellectual disabilities because they make great advocates.
  - Work with other clubs, organizations, or activities in your school that have a similar mission or wish to be co-partners with your group.
- **Identify at least one teacher, administrator, or activity sponsor who is willing to support the committee's plan.**
  - Get permission for a location where you could hold organizational meetings
- **Create clear and effective communication between all members of the work group including the adult sponsors.**
  - Get phone numbers and email addresses from each individual.
- **Discuss ideas and strategies as a group. It is important to look at all possible ideas. Make sure each individual has the opportunity to share his or her thoughts.**
  - If you see an individual controlling the conversation or group leadership, be sure to pause and ask others (sometimes ask by their name) about their opinion on the topic.
  - Find a meeting time where as many people as possible are able to attend.
  - If this is difficult, consider hosting a conference call. Check out our "How to run an effective conference call" if you wish to do so.
  - If some people cannot attend a meeting, make sure you get the information to them as soon as possible in order for everyone to feel as if they are involved and a contributing member.
  - Email or Facebook everyone involved with the notes of the meeting and action items to be carried out.
  - Discuss your group's development or plans with your school administration and faculty.

## 3. Present your ideas.

- **Remain professional and have a well thought out and organized presentation.**
  - Use notes and visuals (PowerPoint, handouts, etc.).
  - If you face push back from the school administration or other key individuals, ask your sponsor or advisor for help. Sometimes it can feel that school administration is slowing down progress. They are actually trying to follow school policy. It is important to respect those issues while working together to overcome obstacles. Your sponsor or advisor will be able to provide suggestions or ideas in overcoming obstacles in order to promote collaboration with your school administration.
- **Ask what role the school any personnel may offer.**
  - What a school can offer will vary. They may include announcements or student postings, letters sent home with students, school webpage space, and marquee space for time and date of events, locations/time to have speakers, assemblies, provide a Public Service Announcement (PSA) for informational purposes, etc. Seek support in terms of venues, speakers, logistics, information, etc.
  - See what additional support you can get from local programs, clubs, organizations, media, and community members.

#### 4. Make a plan!

- **Make a time frame** for all things your group needs in order get everything done in a structured timely manner.
  - *Planning in advance leaves room for unexpected issues to occur.*
  - *Develop the event plan and select a day and time.*
  - *Finalize details before releasing the date to others. Make sure the place where the event is being held is okay with the date and time.*

#### 5. What the event should include.

- **Plan several events** for the day of the rally/ summit to maintain interest.
  - i. Personalize parts of the rally/ summit for your local community.*
- **If planning a summit**, make it informative and have the sessions cover topics such as R-Word Campaigns, fundraising, networking, Special Olympics Unified Sports ® and Programs, youth leadership, Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools ® , etc.
- **If planning a rally**, make sure to get every- one involved, ensuring that the event is as fun and memorable as possible.
  - *Have music for fun dancing.*
  - *Have a speech or a skit to inform the attendees about your topic.*
  - *Use media that may interest youth.*
  - *Have a motivational speaker as your host.*
- **Identify and use** people who can lead parts of the rally/summit that will educate, motivate, and activate participants while being fun and enthusiastic.

#### 6. Fundraising may be a key issue in the development of your event.

- **Determine what funds** you have available, what the event will cost, and how much you need to raise to meet the pay for the entire event.
  - *Consider looking online to apply for grants*
- **Make a fundraising project** that can be done in a unified group to promote the same values as your conference and help with teambuilding for your committee.

#### 7. Advertise

- **Inform** as many people as possible about your event.
- **Make posters and signs** for the event in unified groups.
- **Contact** the local newspaper, radio station, and school announcements to advertise. Make sure to have the permission of your school and all involved beforehand.
- **Use social media** and other online resources to get the word out about the event.



### Check It Out!

Check out our “How to Make a State YAC” for more ideas on topics and activities for summits and rallies.

<http://www.specialolympics.org/hsplaybook-resources>