

Explanation of Project UNIFY® Initiatives



Special Olympics
Wisconsin
Be a fan.

Project UNIFY.



*Project UNIFY's goal is to **activate** youth, **engage** educators, and **promote** school communities of acceptance and inclusion where **all young people are agents of change**. – fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for people with cognitive disabilities by utilizing existing Special Olympics programs and initiatives in combination with schools*

A **Project UNIFY School** hosts a combination of at least three Project UNIFY components; sports, youth leadership/advocacy, and a school-wide activity. In a “Project UNIFY School” there is an understanding that Project UNIFY is not just an incident or event that happens for one day, or a single experience, but rather year-long or seasonal activities. In a Project UNIFY school there is an expectation that acceptance and inclusion are everyday occurrences that change entire schools and impact the whole student body.

Unified Sports® is an initiative to create inclusive sports training and competition through Special Olympics and other school-based programs. An example would be an after-school club where students with and without disabilities practice volleyball for several weeks and then compete against another team from their school or a neighboring school with a similar program. The school may match the sport selection and season to fit their students’ needs, but it must contain elements of both training and competition and include students with cognitive disabilities as well as students of other abilities.



Young Athletes Program™ is an inclusive sports play program designed to promote skill development rather than competition. The activities are designed to develop social, cognitive, and physical skills of 2-7 year-olds with and without cognitive disabilities. Each activity challenges athletes through learning the skills of sports, as well as learning to follow instructions, taking turns, color recognition, and encouragement.

Camp Shriver is an inclusive week long day camp that offers both sports training and enrichment activities for youth campers. It serves as a venue for youth to have fun while focusing on their similarities and forming friendships through them.

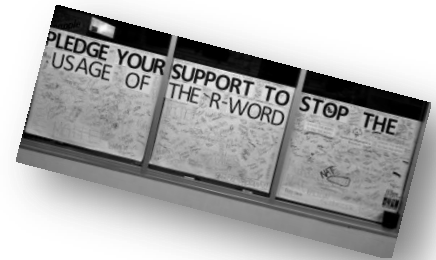
Get Into It™ is a curriculum designed for the mainstream classroom to teach about Special Olympics and people with cognitive disabilities. The lessons are on all levels, from kindergarten to college, and can be acquired from the Special Olympics website for use in the classroom. In addition, there is a condensed version called “Get Into It Active” that is perfect for recreational settings and a video series called “Movies that Move” that teaches lessons through video clips.

Fans in the Stands is a program designed to encourage students to get a group of friends together and make posters, banners or organize a pep rally for the Special Olympics athletes at their school. It also encourages those students to attend a Special Olympics event to cheer on their classmates. This promotes unity and acceptance as well as teaches these students the true meaning of being a friend.



Be a Fan™ is a fully integrated marketing campaign designed to send a powerful message that resonates with the general public, tapping in core values and attributes that everyone can appreciate-unity, acceptance, empowerment, dignity, courage, strength, pride, confidence and fun.

Spread the Word to End the Word™ campaign is designed to raise the consciousness of society about the dehumanizing and hurtful effects of the “R-word” (retard or retarded) and urges people to resolve to stop using it as an insult, casual or intended comment.



Fans Clubs for Project UNIFY are unique school-wide clubs that are designed around empowering youth with and without cognitive disabilities to build friendships and promote social justice through a variety of projects and activities. Fans Clubs will be encouraged to design their own projects involving Spread the Word to End the Word activities, Be a fan campaigns, Fans in the Stands, Unify Day, Sports Day, etc. Fans Club meeting schedules will be determined by supporting faculty members and the club members.

School Coordinating Teams are comprised of one special education teacher, one general education teacher, one athlete, and one youth without cognitive disabilities, as well as some involvement from a school administrator. This group of individuals will work together to serve as project leaders for their school's Project UNIFY program, and Be a fan and/or R-Word campaigns.

They are encouraged to meet locally at least 3 times during the course of the grant project year.



Youth Activation Summits (YAS) are gatherings of youth leaders from around the state, with and without cognitive disabilities, coming together to learn about youth leadership and social justice through Special Olympics sports and activities. SOWI aims to host two YAS each school year organized by the Statewide Youth Activation Committee.

Wisconsin Youth Activation Committee (YAC) for Project UNIFY is a select group of middle and high school student athletes and partners from across the state that have demonstrated great leadership and compassion for our athletes. They will serve as youth liaisons to the SOWI Project UNIFY Staff in planning and implementing Project UNIFY in schools and communities throughout the state. They will also play an important role in the planning and execution of the youth summits. The Wisconsin YAC will meet face-to-face twice a year and have conference calls monthly.

Wisconsin Education Leaders Network (WIELN) is a professional advisory board that will be comprised of current PU administrators, special education teachers, PE teachers, general education teachers, school district representatives, and representation from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. This group will not only be an advisory board to SOWI and PU school coordinators but they will also serve as PU promoters in the school community and statewide. The WIELN will meet a minimum of twice a year to discuss planning of grant programs and finally the results of the grant year.

