

Welcome to Special Olympics Healthy Athletes!

The purpose of this day is to enjoy and have fun supporting an important health promotion initiative with Special Olympics athletes.

Special Olympics is one of today's most exciting movements, combining sports with the opportunity to interact with athletes who have intellectual disabilities and, in some cases, other disabilities. While all of us vary in our experience level with Special Olympics athletes, the following brief suggestions might be helpful:

- Remember, people with and without intellectual disabilities are more alike than different. If you are unsure how to respond to a person with intellectual disabilities, ask yourself how you would want someone to treat you. If you follow through, you can't go wrong.
- Both children and adults compete in Special Olympics events. Use age-appropriate language with athletes. If you need help when working with an athlete, ask someone.
- Most people you will meet at Special Olympics events are enjoyable. Just like anyone else, sometimes an athlete will not want to engage in conversation; respect that decision.
- Enjoy the warm interactions that are a part of the Special Olympics experience, but don't be afraid to establish limits. Inappropriate behavior is the same for everyone regardless of their intellectual ability. If you see an inappropriate behavior, ask for assistance from a coach or manager.
- The most important thing you can do as a volunteer is to treat everyone you meet with respect and dignity – especially athletes.

Dress: You will be working hard (as well as having fun) during your volunteer time at Special Olympics Healthy Athletes, so you should dress comfortably.

Timing: Please arrive at the site on time, if not early. Allow yourself extra time to get familiar with the site and for an orientation before your work begins. If you are scheduled in the early morning, there may be more work to be done before the athletes start arriving. If your shift is in the afternoon, remember that there are people who have been working all morning who cannot leave until you arrive.

The Healthy Athletes Event will be May 25th in Searcy at the Ganus Athletic Complex on Harding University Campus. All disciplines will begin setup at 7:00am. Athletes will begin arriving by 9. The clinic will end approximately 3:00pm. Lunch will be provided. **Please report directly to the Ganus Complex**

Sincerely,

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