

TIP-A-COP EVENT LOGISTICS

BASICS:

- Identify a police officer at each restaurant location to be responsible for all necessary “Tip-a-Cop” components, including volunteers, shift assignments, liaison with the participating restaurant management and the Special Olympics office, handling media, counting money. That designated officer in charge can delegate out these duties if need.
- Planning is critical to the success of the event. Contact the restaurant managers immediately to mutually determine dates for “Tip-a-Cop.” Meet with the restaurant manager prior to the event dates to ensure both of you are prepared.
- Pick dates and shifts (e.g., lunch/dinner). Programs who held their event on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights often saw larger crowds and more funds.
- Recruit 3 - 5 officers to volunteer for each shift.
- Law Enforcement “Celebrity Waiters” are introduced at each table by the Restaurant food servers and the officers assist the servers with water service, setting tables, etc.
- The participating restaurant staff and law enforcement volunteers explain “Tip-a-Cop” and ask customers to support the event by placing a special “tip” for Special Olympics in the envelope on their table (if cash or check or credit card) – Special Olympics will provide these materials.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEER SERVERS

- Begin recruitment of law enforcement “celebrity waiters” as soon as the event dates are determined. You will need 3 to 5 officers for each shift, but recruit one or two extra in case someone is unable to attend.
- Keep in mind when recruiting that this is a great opportunity to involve retired officers and to recruit officers who do not participate in the Torch Run because they “do not run.”
- One proven method of promoting within the agency is to announce that you are recruiting volunteers at meetings and pass out newspaper articles from the previous years “Tip-a-Cop” in your program.

RECRUITING CUSTOMERS

- Encourage the volunteer “servers” to have their friends, families, and co-workers attend the event. A lot of fun from the event comes from having the officers serve their own families or the supervisors serve their subordinates.
- Ask your local restaurant to advertise the upcoming “Tip-a-Cop” event on the reader boards (if they have them) in front of the restaurant. Utilize posters, if supplied by the restaurant.
- Advertise the event in police agency bulletin boards and newsletters and your Special Olympics newsletter.
- Contact your Public Information Officer in advance to ensure maximum media exposure.
- Send a press release out 2 weeks prior to the event. See enclosed sample press releases.
- Once date is determined, send in a calendar announcement for publications who run local events.
- Send a media alert 2-3 days prior to the event. See enclosed sample media alert.

BRINGING IN THE BUCKS

- Experience shows that the most successful restaurants are those that had multiple shifts of “Tip-a-Cop”--more than one lunch or dinner shift.
- Have Special Olympics athletes participate in the event and interact with the officers. Athletes can pass out information about upcoming events- see page 24 for local Special Olympics contact info.
- Create a competition between the restaurants in your geographic area.
- Enlist a high profile person (Chief, Sheriff, local celebrity, pro-athlete) or Special Olympics athlete to be at the door greeting and explaining the purpose of the evening.
- Some programs had success playing up the law enforcement angle. For example, a department mascot such as “Trooper Bear” could greet customers. You may do fingerprinting on site. Badges, handcuffs, uniforms, police cars, and other law enforcement items keep customers’ interest.
- The officers should be prepared to explain the “Tip-a-Cop” program and answer any questions about the Torch Run or Special Olympics.

OTHER LOGISTICS OF THE EVENT

- Keep the server duties for the officers simple. Suggested duties include drink refills and condiment delivery.
- After the guests have been seated and their orders taken, the officers will present a server card and envelope for a “Tip-a-Cop” donation to Special Olympics; however, it must be stressed that the “Tip-a-Cop” donation is *in addition to* the “real” server’s tip. The envelopes will be used for cash or check donations. If pre-arranged with the restaurant manager, you may also accept donations by credit card with the assistance of your server.
- Keep careful track of the donation envelopes. Establish a central drop point to secure the cash. You may wish to have a bucket at the front of the store and ask customers to seal the envelope and drop it in whether they choose to donate or leave it empty so that they feel like their anonymity is guaranteed.
- At the end of the evening, have one officer in charge count the donations with one representative from the restaurant. Have both parties sign a receipt form agreeing to the amount collected and send a copy of this form to your state Special Olympics Program office and Torch Run liaison. It is also good to determine partial totals during the course of the event to keep the officers pumped up and motivated.

The most important element is to HAVE FUN and remember the event is to support Special Olympics.