

Tip a Cop

LAW ENFORCEMENT
TORCH RUN[®]
FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS
OKLAHOMA

Basics

- Identify an officer to be responsible for all necessary Tip a Cop components
 - Volunteers and shift assignments
 - Communication with restaurant management
 - Handling media
 - Counting money
- Planning is critical to the success of the event
 - Contact restaurant to decide on a mutually beneficial date.
 - Choose dates and times/shifts (e.g. lunch and/or dinner)
 - Meet with the restaurant manager prior to the event.
 - Events held on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings often see larger crowds and more donations.
- Recruit 6-12 officers to volunteer for each shift.
- Law Enforcement “Celebrity Waiters” are introduced at each table by the restaurant servers, and the officers assist the servers with water service, setting tables, etc.
- Officers and restaurant staff explain Tip a Cop, and let customers know they are accepting donations and ask them to place any donations in the provided envelope.

Recruiting Volunteer Servers

- Begin recruiting “celebrity waiters” as soon as the event dates are determined. You will need 4 to 10 officers for each shift, and a couple extra in case someone is unable to attend. Having enough officers to cover the restaurant yields more donations.
- Keep in mind when recruiting that this is a great opportunity to involve retired officers and other personnel who do not participate in Torch Run because they “do not run”.

Recruiting Customers

- Invite family, friends and co-workers attend the event. Part of the fun is serving family and friends, or supervisors serving their subordinates.
- Ask the restaurant to advertise the upcoming event on the reader board in front of the restaurant. Utilize posters, flyers, table tents, etc. to let customers know of the upcoming event.
- Advertise in agency bulletin boards, newsletters, and in your agency’s social media outlets.
- Contact your PIO in advance to ensure maximum media exposure.
- Send out a press release 2 weeks prior to the event, and a media alert 2-3 days prior.

Tip a Cop Event Logistics

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Maximize your efforts

- Experience shows that the most successful events are those that worked multiple shifts.
- Have Special Olympics athletes participate in the event and interact with the officers.
- Create a competition between restaurants in your geographical area.
- Enlist a high profile person (Chief, Sheriff, local celebrity) or Special Olympics athlete to be at the door greeting and explaining the purpose of the evening.
- Officers should be prepared to explain “Tip a Cop” and answer any questions about the Torch Run and Special Olympics Oklahoma.

Other Logistics of the Event

- Volunteers should arrive at the restaurant 30-45 minutes prior to event start.
- Dress can be uniforms, or Torch Run gear with uniform pants.
- Keep server duties for the officers simple, e.g. drink refills, bread or condiment delivery. It is not a good idea to serve alcohol.
- Although the event is called “Tip a Cop” we like to use the verbiage “we are accepting donations” instead of “tips”. That way, there is no confusion about tipping you instead of the server.
- Keep track of donation envelopes. Establish a central drop point/person to secure the cash.
- It’s a good idea to keep track of partial totals throughout the event to keep the officers pumped up and motivated.
- At the end of the evening, have two officers in charge of counting the donations.
- Send the money along with a Remittance Form to your Torch Run liaison at the Special Olympics Oklahoma headquarters.
- Tip a Cop supplies (envelopes, flyers, posters, table fact sheets) may be obtained through your Torch Run liaison.

Have fun! This is a great way for your community to see all the good you do!