

Special Olympics New Jersey

Event Volunteer Informational Session

August 15, 2024, 10:03PM

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RE Rylee Evans 0:00

So, good evening everybody.

My name is Rylee Evans and I am the volunteer manager with Special Olympics New Jersey.

I get to work with all of our wonderful volunteers for the organization.

Hopefully some of you will be new volunteers as well.

A little bit of my background is I got involved with Special Olympics, New Jersey as a unified partner through college unified sports at Rutgers University.

I was able to play on an inclusive team of individuals with and without intellectual disabilities, and ultimately I was able to coach and run the club as president for two years of my college career.

This opened the opportunity for me to intern with SONJ as a program intern and eventually start my career as a volunteer manager, Unified Sports and SONJ were honestly the best things I was involved in in college and even changed the whole trajectory of my career.

So I am very happy that I get to be here today to share more information with you about how you can get involved.

Hopefully, as a volunteer now.

So first I want to thank you for taking this time out of your evening and your busy lives for being here on this meeting and for your interest in volunteering with Special Olympics New Jersey.

I will say volunteers are truly the backbone of our events.

We do have over 300 events throughout the state throughout the year and we rely on thousands of volunteers to really help us run the show.

Our volunteers are out there practically running the events as scorekeepers, timers, officials, photographers, the health professionals.

They're out there coaching teams and so much more. Volunteers really play an integral part and all of our events.

Without them, we really could not do what we do for our athletes.

The time commitment for volunteers varies from a few hours per year at specific events to working several hours a week, year round.

Whatever your interests are, whatever your talents, your background, your availability, how much time you can offer there, there is something out there for all of you.

So in this session tonight, we hope to give you a little bit of a better understanding about Special Olympics, New Jersey and an introduction to the community we serve, as well as how you can get involved as a volunteer and what we have with available for you.

So it is my pleasure to first introduce one of our longtime athlete leaders, who recently has got involved in a lot more raise, Bobby Fredericks.

He's going to kick it off and tell you a little bit more about his experience as an athlete and about Special Olympics, New Jersey.

Bobby, give it away.

RF **Robert "Bobby" Fredericks (SONJ)** 2:56

Now hey guys, so help my name.

Hello everyone.

Projects and global Messenger for Special Olympics, New Jersey.

Uh.

As a global messenger, I have the opportunity to give speeches to help raise awareness for people intellectual disabilities.

I also get to spread the word about Special Olympics and how it has influenced my life and many other lives around the state.

I been participating in Special Olympics since 1986, so that's close to 40 years now.

For those of you who came through the math, I participate in soccer floor hockey, basketball, and track and field.

I love team sports because I enjoy training and working at my friends and teammates.

Because of Special Olympics, I have had a lot of opportunities to do some really cool things.

I, as a member of the SONJ track team at the USA Games in Lincoln, NE, where I've won gold and silver in my individual events and a team golden, my favorite event.

The four by 100 relay.

I was also a member of Team New Jersey's track team at the 2014 Games held in

Princeton.

You jersey and was on the Board of directors for those games and I was able to contribute ideas from the athletes point of view to help make the games a success.

I'm Member and former chairperson of the Special Olympics, New Jersey Athlete Leadership Council, where I work with other athletes on issues in programs that benefit thousands of athletes across New Jersey.

When I was younger, I was bullied a lot and it didn't feel so good because of my disabilities.

I was made fun of called the letter names and as a result there were many times that I was afraid to go to school.

I always had to work hard at trying to gain respect and make friends.

People didn't understand that even though I different, I was the person that had feelings just like everyone else.

I went to Booten High School and joined the cross country and track teams.

I was the first athlete with disabilities that the high school coach ever had on their team.

I worked really hard and was determined to be on the team and even though I never wanna race, I always did my best to finish the race.

I was at every practice and never missed an event and was always stated help the team put the equipment away.

A turning point for me was when my high school track coach included me in the Varsity Awards program so that he could present me with my 3 gold medals from track and field that I earned at the SONJ Summer Games that year, and the so called because the next thing I had students that I didn't even know, and even those who had called me names high fiving me in the hallways.

It's amazing that something as simple as sports can bring out the best in people.

After that day, people saw me differently and I made a lot of friends and finally felt respected.

It felt great to be included regardless of my disabilities.

Special Olympics has changed my life.

It gives me the chance to prove that I can do the things that others told me I couldn't do.

I wouldn't be the person I am today without it.

There's sports.

I have improved my confidence and I'm not afraid to try new things.

I've learned that being a team player and treating others respect can affect my life in a positive way.

What are the most important things that I've learned is to never give up, no matter what the score is or how far behind you are in the race, or how others treat you.

I have learned that in the words of Special Olympics founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver, I have a different ability, not a disability.

Because it's Special Olympics, I not only get the opportunity to play competitive sports, but I also get the chance to make friends and be part of a community.

Their programs have taught me how to work with others, not only on the playing field but also in everyday life.

In addition to being an athlete, I have had opportunities to volunteer in the office and that competitions.

Volunteering has been a blast.

The support of our volunteers truly makes a difference in my life and in the lives of my fellow Special Olympics athletes throughout New Jersey.

RE **Rylee Evans** 7:36

Alright, thank you so much Bobby, for your meaningful introduction and for talking about your experience.

We also love having you in a volunteer as a volunteer, and Bobby has been a pleasure to have in our office helping us out late free.

I am now going to play a short video that is our 2023 review year video.

This really overviews the organization and provides a pretty good snapshot of everything we offer in a year.

Legendary.

There you will get to see a lot of our different state competitions like Winter Games over there with the snow or Summer Games opening ceremony there.

This video really highlights a lot of our different sports competitions.

See bowling our young athletes programs.

We all phone our law enforcement torch run, which has a lot of police officers in around them, like uh.

Just different fundraising opportunities.

Yeah.

Lot of our different 22 sports in this video too.

And exactly how hard our athletes work.

You know polar bear plunge?

That's a big one that people might already know about.

I felt the athletes programs.

Just waiting.

And things.

You're going to be.

And.

What is?

They only talk about me.

Where?

They're going to talk about me.

Just wait, wait and see.

But they don't talk about me.

I'm going to be very legendary.

Phone you know.

Uh. Opening.

Ceremonies that our winter views.

I mean that video really shows kind of just everything we offer in a year from the competition side for our health events, our young athletes LETR, which is our law enforcement torch, run everything we offer in a year.

So one thing I want to mention from there is for our athletes, everything that we offer, all of the competitions, those health events are young athletes, programs that is all completely free of charge for our athletes, for Special Olympics, New Jersey. It really is.

It's a four life program for our athletes.

We offer a young athletes for children ages 2 to 7 to develop motor skills such as running, kicking and jumping, and then to register as an athlete to compete in our competitive sports.

They must be at least eight years old and there is no upward age limit to competing.

Our athletes can compete as long as they are able and willing to.

So all of our all of the efforts that you're putting in towards our events are going towards directly to our athletes completely to allow this to be free of charge for them.

So how do you actually start getting involved?

You're probably like at this point.

Wow, all of this sounds and looks really great, but where?

Where do I start?

Where do I fall under this possible and how do I actually register and and come out to these events so the best place to get started is our website where you will see categories listed on this slide.

So all of our commitments that we have available range from day of volunteering, which would be one day or several days a year or you could dedicate time towards coaching which includes 8 to 12 weeks of working with the team, training, attending competitions.

There really is based off of the time commitment that you're willing and able to put in.

There's something out there for everyone.

There's something out there of those 300 events that we have a year all throughout the state, you will find something.

Your home we have Area meets that lead into regional competitions and State Games that are kind of scattered all over the state and we have something hopefully right in your backyard.

But to start getting involved as a volunteer, you must be at least 14 years old.

For most of our event, volunteer positions and some positions require volunteers to be a little older at 16 or 18 years old.

These will be specified as you're registering to get involved.

As a coach, you have to be at least 18 years old.

So if some people on here might have kids or know some people who aren't quite at that age requirement yet, we do also encourage anybody that they're always I'm more than welcome to attend events as fans in the stands and cheer on athletes at competitions.

So now that you've been to our website, you've seen all of these great things.

Now what?

How do you actually get involved?

So for the purposes of this presentation, we're going to focus heavily on the types of opportunities for event volunteers.

But if you are interested in learning more about coaching or officiating, volunteering your professional services, working with a young athletes program, etc.

Please feel free to shoot us an email or emails up there.

It will be several points in this presentation.

Uh, if you're emailing us related to getting involved in one of these topics, it is very helpful to let us know what county you live in and what your interests are for coaching.

If you could let us know what sports you'd be interested in, or you might already have experience and we do have 22 different sports that you can view on our website too.

P paulaanne 15:02
You.

RE Rylee Evans 15:11

So if you're interested in what we offer, if you're wanting to offer other types of professional services and you're reaching out to us, please feel free to share useful information, such as if you're a nurse and you potentially be interested in the medical team, or if you're a photographer looking to volunteer those services.

If you happen to be a certified basketball official, any of that interest can help us to help you to get placed in a role that utilizes your skills and also benefits us and benefits our athletes.

So but moving forward, this presentation is going to focus more on how to register as an event volunteer.

So first you might be wondering, OK, but what is an event volunteer?

What are the different types of volunteers on our website?

You will see that there are two different types of volunteers listed with different requirements.

These are a class, A volunteer and a Class B, and one of our most frequently asked questions is what do these two things mean?

What are the differences and how are you supposed to know which forms you should be doing?

So I'll start with a Class A which is our more intensive role that mostly falls under coaches and chaperones, unified partners who are playing alongside Special Olympics athletes and medical team Volunteers.

This Class A requirement has to be done every three years and it includes a class, A form, a background screening and protective behaviors.

Training and coaches also are required to do a concussion training, so most of you though this Class A is really just.

You will know if you have to be a class, A volunteer, because we will let you know that that role requires a Class A.

The majority of our volunteers per year are going to fall under a class fee, which is just a form that has to be done every three years.

These are for all of our event volunteers, such as the ones that are coming out to competitions, helping it.

Day of fundraisers, working alongside other coaches such as for our young athletes program and just being their day of so this is just a form that you have to fill out.

You only have to fill it out once every three years.

You don't have to fill it out for every event you're going to.

You do have to be at least 14 years old and some required.

Some require older as we stated previously, but also if you are under the age of 18, a parent or legal guardian must fill out this form on your behalf, so most of you in here will be doing this class.

Steve volunteer form.

So I want to focus on the rest of this meeting.

We're going to overview the different types of event volunteer roles that are available to register for because they kind of fall under some different categories.

So the first one we're gonna overview is competition volunteers.

So I'm actually going to introduce one of our long time Volunteers, Natalie, to speak a little more about competition volunteers and what that is included with.

HN **Hatrak, Natalie** 18:12

Thanks, Riley, and I am Natalie Hatrak and I've been a volunteer with Special Olympics, New Jersey for a little over 20 years, and I helped to run the Volleyball League, which is one of the winter sports, and I also help year round with mostly the regional and the state events.

Umm.

For those that have volunteered, you probably see me at the awards events, or else you'll also see me checking in the volunteers as well.

Umm for the competition side, Special Olympics, New Jersey offers 22 sports starting in September and ends in June for the sports competitions, you can do a variety of things.

We have both sport and non sport related.

Experience and knowledge are definitely not required unless it's stated in the

volunteer position that you are signing up for.

We do provide orientation on site.

Once all the volunteers are registered for the day, we'll gather you all together and we will tell you what your assignments are.

Umm most roles will have a description posted on the registration site so that you can at least go through and see what all of the different roles are and what you would be most interested in signing up for.

As Riley has already stated, you do have to be 14 in order to sign up, and there are some positions that require you to be 16 or 18.

Umm, most of our team sports that we have, they have what we refer to as a league competition, that league competition is held for 6 to 8 weeks before we go into a regional or a state competition.

Then I know some of you are asking about the area events.

We have three sports that actually hold area events and those area events are going to be bowling, track and field and swimming.

So if you are interested in staying more local to your area, you would be able to look at the area map.

I know that Riley has a link to it in this slide presentation and you can contact that particular area and they would be able to give you a list of the events that are taking place and when you would be able to sign up for those if you would like to be more on a overall state level, our sports competitions, events, holds, events in the northern, the southern, the central and the east part of New Jersey.

And though those you'll be able to see a regional event which would take place after the leagues take their 6 to 8 weeks to play, and then we go on to a regional competition and then finally on to a state competition, the state competition you'll see referred to as the fall games, the Winter Games, the Spring Games and the Summer Games.

Umm for the league competitions, those are more of our smaller events.

Those are going to be more just one sports specific and those types of volunteer opportunities are going to be something like a scorekeeper or a timer or a linesman. We also have certain sports like volleyball or flag football bocchi.

We also have for softball that are look for referees for those sports if you're interested in that, we can always, you can contact the volunteer at sonj.org and we would be able to put you into the correct contact person for that.

Then we when we move on to the regional and the state competitions, you're going

to see more of a different type of role.

You're going to see all of those sport event competitions, but then you're also going to see other positions like the venue setup or souvenirs, the volunteer management site.

We have an information desk.

At those events, you're also see awards because at the regional and this state competition level, you're going to get the awards presentations for all of the athletes, all of the athletes that compete do get in a medal in their either a first.

Gold.

Silver, bronze or we also have 3rd through 8th.

If it's an individual and we also have participation, and so I can tell you that I've been involved in most different, probably the most different roles across.

The board I started with just being a regular volunteer.

And then I became a referee.

I then moved on to helping with the awards.

I helped with the volunteer management side, so there's always something that you're going to be able to find, whether it's something that you like, help organizing for an event or even the simplest things that some of our events, we need people to help hand out water after an event is complete.

And I always tell my Volunteers, uh, during the orientation that if you find that the role that you had signed up for is not what you thought it was, we will find something else for you.

We want you to get the most out of the opportunity that you signed up for and that you have fun with all of the athletes.

Umm, I think that covers everything Riley.

RE **Rylee Evans** 23:57

Right, awesome.

Thank you, Natalie.

Yeah, you can find Natalie at our events throughout the year.

A lot of different places.

You might see her on the volleyball court if you come out doing awards.

Natalie is our guru, but I did wanna point out one thing that Natalie did mention was about the local events and finding that area director map that is on that VOLUNTEER near home part when you click the contact your local area director, our page is going

to come up where you can select what county you live in and then they'll come up with the area directors contact for those local events that Natalie mentioned.

This would be the perfect place to reach out.

Some of them are on this meeting too.

So hello, all of our lovely area directors, but I did wanna just point that out and highlight it so that you can go back and find it later.

But thank you Natalie so much for speaking about the competition volunteers.

So a lot of you may or may not be interested in sports, and if you are not interested in sports but you're still there and you wanna help us out and you like our mission and you wanna serve the community, we also look for volunteers to assist with our annual fundraisers.

So some of these are the polar bear plunges, which you might be familiar with, where people go and plunge into the ocean down in Seaside and Wildwood twice a year.

There's a Jingle all the way, fun and festive 3K, and there's a ton of golf routings.

There's really a lot of different other events that you can get involved in aside from the sport competitions, so all of these roles kind of vary by the specific event.

It could be a whole monitor.

If it's a golfing event, it might be of course Marshall for the races really varies, but I do want to just know and keep in mind that a lot of the fundraising goals do require volunteers to be at least 18 years old due to responsibilities such as handling money, but there are there are a lot of fun and you don't need to have any knowledge going into the roles, just like for the competition roles orientation is provided on site.

Another category of event volunteers is our healthy athletes, volunteers.

So healthy athletes is a Special Olympics program that provides free health screenings to Special Olympics athletes.

These screenings are offered in eight different health areas, and we do recruit volunteers for each of the healthy athletes disciplines.

On the slide, you will see all 8 disciplines as well as what area they're looking for volunteers for.

So this may include needing optometrists and ophthalmologists for opening eye screenings, dentists and hygienists for special smiles, or we also recruit non clinical roles such as individuals that help with athlete check in for these events and data collection services.

The roles that are needed for each event are posted on the registration sites accordingly, but you can always connect with us to talk with our staff that oversee

our healthy athletes, events.

We always encourage you to reach out if you are a dentist and your dentist office would be interested in coming out.

Shoot us an email and I'm happy to connect you with our healthy athletes.

Staff to talk about how you can get involved throughout the year, so those are the three major categories that we have Volunteers fall under and that might all sound great and you might be so interested in what you can do.

So now you're probably thinking at this point.

OK, Class A, Class B events competitions fundraisers.

How do I actually do this?

So now we're gonna talk about how to actually register and what this will look like for you on our website.

So on the slide now you'll see how to register for an event.

So on our page which is also linked several times and we will send out more information after this.

So you don't have to remember any of this stuff.

You will see a whole calendar list will pop up with everything that we have coming up there should be filters on the side that you can filter it by certain fundraisers or competitions, but using the link right from our volunteer page will show a list of all of our events that we are actively seeking volunteers for.

So an example that I put up here was for fall games, which is one of our events coming up for our fall season.

So when you click on an event page, you will see these buttons here.

So for fall games as a state competition, there happens to be a volunteer orientation.

So if there is a volunteer orientation, you can view that first.

That will provide you a lot of information about the specific event.

You can learn more about the type of event that it is a little background the requirements.

So if there is an orientation, we definitely recommend overviewing that prior to registering and then you will get to actually register for the event.

So when you click that button, it'll pull you up to our registration platform which is called TRS.

It will show you this home page which has all of the information for the event, including the locations what we have available telling you about how to register for your shift, again stating the age requirement and the need for a Class B form.

We'll all be on this page, so then you can actually go in and register for your shift. So for these purposes, we're going to go through the registration as an individual, but if you are a group of 10 or more interested individuals, we work with a lot of different corporate groups, community groups, school groups.

We're happy to work with our groups for our larger events and and get you all included together, so if you do have a group that's interested, you would shoot us an email.

It's listed on that page and we would go through there through registration process for you.

So I'm more than happy to talk search through this process on an individual basis, but for now and for timing purposes, we're gonna focus on individual registrations, which will be through our general registration.

So once you click register you will see all of those events that we have for any given event.

So you'll hit the plus sign on something you're interested in, and this is where you can view what we were talking about before the age requirements, the role descriptions, so that you know what you're registering for.

So for example, a soccer scorekeeper, linesman, or announcer role, you can see if you hover over the information for the requirements that this position requires volunteers to be at least 14 years old.

The little question mark, we'll pull up a description in the role.

So you can see that as scorekeeper is going to keep scores for both teams, alignment assists and retrieving the soccer balls being kicked out of bounds.

So you can see more about what you were registering for and a lot of our different roles will all have the age requirement.

And if there's any other requirements for the role, such As for golf, we we prefer that golf experience is had by the scorekeepers.

So you can see that so that you can understand what you're registering for, you're able to see the time commitment of the slot, the location, the day it takes place.

Everything is is on this hub, but if you did have any questions before registering and make sure you know what you're signing up for, please feel free to shoot us an email.

So we'll go through and I'll show you what this looks like.

You'll make sure to click your slot, so this will create.

You'll it'll prompt you to either create an account or log in.

If you have an account already have one, so I'm gonna log in with mine.

You don't ask you for some basic information, including your name, your address, your T shirt size.

If you're with a company or organization and then you'll wanna make sure to click all the way through all of these confirmation buttons, this is where it'll make you confirm that you meet the requirements of the role that you're at least 14 years old, and then you can confirm you'll make sure you hit confirm.

And so this is how you know that you were successful in registering it, give you a registration ID.

It should also send you an automatic email confirming your spot.

From there, it'll tell you to complete the Class B volunteer form.

If you did already complete this once in the past three years, you do not have to do it again.

But this is what our system looks like and then this is also where if you did have a group of less than 10 and you wanted to add another person to your registration, you can use the add another group member feature and that allows you to type in an additional person and go through the same process.

So that is how you actually register for the shifts.

So then once you are registered, you can now relax and look forward to your show.

P **paulaanne** 32:39
Umm.

RE **Rylee Evans** 32:41

I will ask that you ensure at this point that you're able to commit to the full volunteer role that you registered for because volunteers are required to remain for the full duration of their shift.

If you do need to cancel for whatever reason, you can always log back into your TRS account to cancel or edit your registration.

Or if you're having any difficulties, you can email us and we'll help you out.

So now what do you expect?

You're registered.

You're ready.

You're pumped.

You're getting fired up and now you can relax.

Now you're good as long as you got your confirmation email from TRS, but you can

also expect an additional confirmation email from us.

It will come from volunteer@sonj.org.

That'll come out the week before your registered shift, so if you're registered for an event taking place on the weekend, you can probably expect a confirmation email that Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday leading up to the event.

This will just include a lot more information that will be helpful for your event, such as confirming the event location, your check in location, the check in time, approximate end time, whether or not lunch is going to be provided, what you should wear, etcetera.

Kind of just answering all of those frequently asked questions so that you are prepared and ready to go for the day and you know where you're going, what time you're going and you're all set.

So now that we're registered, you're all set.

You're ready?

I'm gonna hand it over to another one of our longtime Volunteers, Cindy, and she is going to talk about what you can expect showing up as a volunteer to events.

C **Cindy** 34:19
Thanks, Riley.

RE **Rylee Evans** 34:19
Thanks, Riley.

C **Cindy** 34:20
Hi everyone.

I'm Cindy.

I've been a volunteer with Special Olympics, New Jersey for over 20 years and I'm a member of the volunteer committee at volunteer check in will greet you with a smile and and a request to see your ID.

Once you've checked in, you'll receive your volunteer name tag and will let you know when the volunteer and where the volunteer orientation will take place for the day's events.

You may also be given AT shirt and a lunch ticket, depending on the event.

We are always happy to answer any questions you may have.

Once all the volunteers have been checked in and orientation will be given to

provide you with the information you'll need for your assignment and an overview of the day's events, please don't hesitate to ask questions.

Volunteers will be guided to their positions by the sports directors.

The sports directors will also provide you with information as to when you can take lunch or any other needed Event needed breaks during the day.

They'll let you know when your assignment will conclude and when you're able to go for the day, feel free to bring water or snacks with you for your for your day, and if you need a volunteer letter certifying your hours, come back to volunteer, check in at the end of the day and we'll be able to provide you with one.

If you'd like to have one sent to you digitally, you can also obtain 1 by emailing volunteer at sonj.org.

RE **Rylee Evans** 35:47

Thank you, Cindy.

Cindy is also one of those smiling faces on our volunteer management team that you might get to see personally checking you in at the events.

C **Cindy** 35:49

You're welcome.

RE **Rylee Evans** 35:57

I guess you'll have to register for some to for the chance to see her over there.

C **Cindy** 36:00

Good.

Yes.

RE **Rylee Evans** 36:05

So now it is my pleasure to pass it over to Paula Ann, who is going to speak about the broader volunteer experience as an SONJ volunteer as she is another one of our longtime volunteers.

P **paulaanne** 36:19

Thank you, Riley.

My name is Paula Anne and I am an events volunteer for Special Olympics, New

Jersey as well as part of the volunteer management team.

The presentation you are or have been watching and shows you what Special Olympics is all about how to register to become, to become a volunteer, fill out the necessary forms to be a volunteer.

Read and agree to the Code of Ethics, along with anything else needed to get you on the road to volunteering for Special Olympics.

You're probably wondering.

I did all that was required to volunteer.

Now, what is volunteering for Special Olympics going to do for me?

Let me tell you what volunteering for Special Olympics will do for you in return.

Before I got involved with Special Olympics, I think it was the company proper, Proctor and Gamble, that ran a commercial on television of a Special Olympics track and field event.

The event the athletes were nearing the finish line when suddenly one of the athletes tripped and fell.

The other athletes stopped, turned around, helped the athlete to her feet.

Then they all linked arms and crossed the finish line together.

I thought the producers did a fabulous job staging the commercial.

Not soon thereafter, I became a Special Olympics volunteer and learned rather quickly the commercial on TV was not staged.

Special needs athletes have spirit, energy, camaraderie and possess empathy and kindness.

Once you arrive at the event, you signed up for to volunteer, you automatically will be drawn into the enthusiasm and excitement caught up in the cheering for the athletes who in return will try even harder to score a point for you.

And we'll share their win or their loss with you.

The bond that is quickly formed between the athlete and the VOLUNTEER is amazing and it stays with you for a long time.

Many of you will register to volunteer by yourself, some with others.

You try to assign those that come together together, but that is not always feasible.

So you are stuck volunteering with complete strangers, but once orientation is completed and you make your way to your assignment for the day and you meet the others with the same assignment, you suddenly realize that you were all here for the same reason.

And the strangeness fades away.

By the end of the day, new friendships will be formed and Special Olympics volunteer and their Special Olympics volunteer manager will receive requests to please allow the one strangers to be allowed to volunteer to together again next year as a result of volunteering for Special Olympics.

I have made many lifelong friends with other Volunteers, coaches, officials and Special Olympics employees.

Volunteers are very important.

Make a big impact impact on what Special Olympics tries to achieve for the athletes at fall, winter, spring and Summer Games.

Look around you and you will see hundreds of volunteers in their volunteer shirts assisting and running the events.

Sure, Special Olympics can run the event with limited volunteers, but the event would not be what the the athletes have earned come to expect and deserve.

Volunteers make events happen.

Finally, the very first Special Olympics event I volunteered for was floor hockey at Winter Games.

When I signed in the lady behind the desk asked me if this was my first time volunteering.

I answered yes.

I wanted to see what it was all about.

She started laughing and said you'll be back.

I didn't see what was so funny, but Oh well, she was right.

I've been back every year for the past 20 years, 20 plus years and hope you will too.

Thank you.

RE **Rylee Evans** 40:08

OK.

Thank you, Paula Anne.

Paula Anne is running the amazing people I've had the pleasure to meet in my time here so far.

P **paulaanne** 40:11

You're welcome.

RE **Rylee Evans** 40:17

Amongst all of those in the wonderful community, and I always tell people the same as Paula and just come once, just come once and I almost guarantee you will be back. But.

Onto more information.

After a wonderful speech about the experience, I do just want to say that included in this presentation, we do have the volunteer Code of conduct and a slide about working with our athletes.

These highlight some really important guidelines and pointers, and about the behaviors that are expected from our volunteers, as well as how to work with the population of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

One of the biggest things I would highlight out of all of this information is at the end of the day, treat all individuals with respect, treat all of the coaches, the spectators, the other Volunteers, the athletes, treat them with all of the same respect as you would want yourself so.

But if you did have any questions about either the volunteer code of conduct here, or about how to work with our athletes, please feel free to reach out and learn more than happy to talk with you about what to expect and what would be encouraged and the type of behavior.

But at the end of the day, we really just want you to come with enthusiasm.

Come with a smile on your face.

A positive energy and an open mind, and really just taking the day because the energy is contagious, whether it's out of fundraiser or a competition, no matter who you're working with, whether you're at an event with all athletes that are competition and you're also trying to cheer everybody on, or if you're at a fundraiser, that could be a race, it could be a polar plunge.

It could be a health event where everybody is getting health screenings.

You wanna make it a welcoming and happy environment for all, and that starts with just one person being very positive.

So we really hope that you will bring your positivity and your enthusiasm to some of our future events and we will also pass on our same positivity and enthusiasm and just really make it a very fun community and a very valuable experience volunteering not just coming out for the hours or coming out for a certain amount of time, but coming out and really just truly being in the moment and and cherishing the time that that we have putting on these events and doing it all for our appetites.

But I hope that this meeting did not bombard you with too, too much information

and that you're scared now.

We really hope that this was helpful information.

You learned how to register, how to get involved in that.

You'll join us at future events?

We really simply cannot do everything we do for all of our athletes without the support of our volunteers or thousands of volunteers year round that help run the show and we hope that not only is it benefit or athletes and and allow us to run these events, but we hope that you have a truly valuable experience volunteering with us.

So I will point out that on this slide, we have our volunteer Facebook group, which is the perfect way to join, talk with other volunteers and really create that community.

We hope that people join and they share their pictures, volunteering, they chat back and forth with Volunteers.

You'll get to see our posts about what we have coming up and it's a really good way to stay involved other than just kind of waiting for emails.

But if you do have any questions, you are more than welcome to also

● **Rylee Evans** stopped transcription