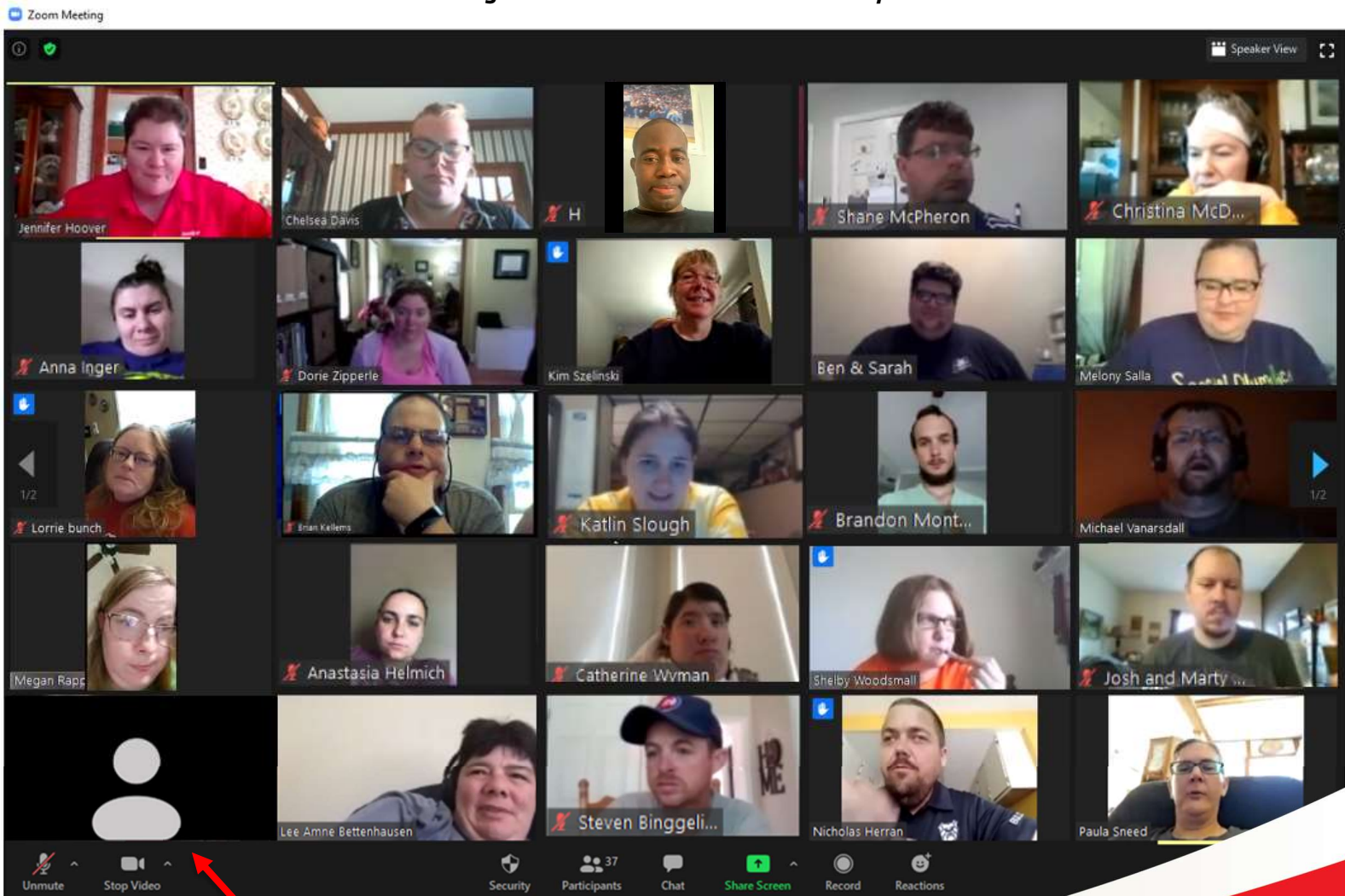


## Leaders attending a session of the *Athlete Leadership Webinar Series*



Could this be you?

# Handbook for Athlete Leaders

## Athlete Leadership

December 2020

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**Special Olympics**  
Indiana





## **The Vision of Special Olympics**

Our vision is an inclusive world for all, driven by the power of sport, through which people with intellectual disabilities live active, healthy and fulfilling lives.

## **The Mission of Special Olympics**

To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

## **Definition of Leadership**

Leadership is the relationship through which one person influences the behaviors or actions of other people to achieve goals. Leadership is the ability to guide, direct, or influence people.

## **The Purpose of Athlete Leadership**

To empower athletes to develop leadership skills and utilize their voices to assume meaningful leadership roles, influence change in the Special Olympics movement, and educate communities around the world that results in positive life changes.

## **The Purpose of Athlete Leadership University**

Athlete Leadership University exists to enhance the lives of athletes with ongoing leadership training and experience in the areas such as governance, sports, and global messengers; it brings together talented athletes in an atmosphere of sharing, knowledge, trust and respect.

## **Guiding Principles of Athlete Leadership**

- Allowing athletes to choose HOW and in what ROLE they participate in Special Olympics.
- Encouraging athletes to take meaningful positions of influence and leadership throughout the organization to help determine policy and set direction.
- Providing training for coaches, volunteers, and parents as they welcome athletes in their new roles.

## **Basic Athlete Leadership Philosophies**

- Respect athletes as equal partners in your Special Olympics experience.
- Value athlete opinions and preferences.
- Athletes can improve your program TREMENDOUSLY!
- Listen! Take the time to be sure you understand when athletes speak to you.
- Whenever possible, involve athletes in your work via leadership positions that are meaningful.
- Athletes make excellent volunteers if you let them.
- Global Messengers are the best fundraisers you can possibly have.



## Roles for Athletes

**Athlete Input Council Member** — You can improve your local program by making suggestions and discussing problems. Become a participating member in your county program or area input council or start one if they do not have one. YOUR INPUT IS VALUABLE AND IS NEEDED!

**Athletes on Board of Directors or Management Teams** — You can become a representative of athletes on these very important groups. Training prepares athletes to participate in Special Olympics programming and policy meetings. Learn listening skills and how to read financial reports. Indiana has had several athletes on its Board of Directors. The current athletes are Heather Himes and Mitch Bonar.

BECOME A BOARD MEMBER; MAKE IMPORTANT DECISIONS!

**Athletes as Global Messengers** — Do you like to talk? You can learn presentation skills to become an expert speaker. We will even teach you to use PowerPoint to give presentations to groups and organizations in your community.

GIVE A TALK & GET NEW PEOPLE INVOLVED IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS!

**Athletes in the Media** — You can get the Special Olympics WORD out. You can write articles, do television, radio shows, or work with the newspapers. Some athletes in Indiana are involved in their county's Facebook pages. Special Olympics athletes in Indiana produce and host their own weekly podcasts on YouTube. In 2014, Wes Hartwell from White County was one of the official photographers for the National Games.

JOIN US AND HELP GET THE WORD OUT TO EVERYONE!

**Athletes as Coaches** — You can become a coach or assistant coach if that is your dream! You will need to make a commitment to attend certification training by the Indiana State Office then apply your training. Many Special Olympics athletes in Indiana have become coaches.

BECOME A COACH IF THAT IS YOUR DREAM!

**Athletes as Officials** — You can become an official if that is your dream! Special Olympics provides athletes information so they can participate in sport National Governing Body certification programs as an official or other skilled sport personnel. At the 1995 World Games in New Haven, Connecticut, there were 39 officials who were Special Olympics athletes!

BECOME AN OFFICIAL IF THAT IS YOUR GOAL!

**Athletes as Technology Specialists** — Do you like to use your computer or mobile device? You can train with Special Olympics in various technology skills to become an expert in several subjects. We will teach you to use PowerPoint, email, the Internet, search engines, photography and videography, or social media. All these can help your local program be better and more effective.

BECOME AN EXPERT IN A TECHNOLOGY SUBJECT AND SUPPORT YOUR PROGRAM!



**Athletes as Health & Fitness Advocates and Messengers** — Do you have a passion for promoting a healthy lifestyle? You can help your fellow athletes improve their fitness, make healthy food and drink choices, and form healthy habits.

BE A HEALTH MESSENGER AND HELP YOUR TEAMMATES BECOME THE BEST THEY CAN BE!

**Athletes as Visual Storytellers** — Do you like to create through visual media to share your message? You can share stories, inspire, and spread messages about Special Olympics through visual media. BE A LEADER THROUGH VISUAL ARTS AND HELP TELL OUR STORIES!

**Athletes as Special Olympics employees** — Someday you might be employed by Special Olympics. Several state Programs, including Indiana, and the international office, have athletes on their payroll as employees.

WORK FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND BE A MEMBER OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM!

**Athlete Congress Member** — Congresses exist in several states (not Indiana) and there is a World Congress. It provides a formal, deliberative process and place for athlete input on programming, policy, and other processes of Special Olympics. Indiana athlete leaders have attended four world congresses. Six Indiana athletes have attended the World Congress and Athlete Leadership summits in the past.

WANT TO KNOW MORE, ENROLL IN A GOVERNANCE COURSE!

**Athletes as Instructors or Teaching Assistants at Athlete Leadership University** — Do you feel you have the skills to teach other athletes? You can teach or support courses at Athlete Leadership University or even design and write new courses. Most of our instructors are athletes.

BECOME AN INSTRUCTOR IF THAT IS YOUR DREAM!

**Athletes as mentors or advocates** — You can help fellow athlete leaders by being their mentor at Athlete Leadership University or advocating for their rights when they have sports or leadership problems. We encourage athletes who graduate from Athlete Leadership University to mentor other athletes on their journeys through Athlete Leadership University.

PASS ALONG YOUR KNOWLEDGE AS AN ATHLETE LEADER!

**Athletes as volunteers, fundraisers, or donors** — Many of you already have done this maybe without realizing it. You may have helped with candy sales in the past. Perhaps you helped chaperone other athletes for a little while. Many of you have done these leadership roles for Special Olympics when you are not competing.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS WILL ALWAYS NEED VOLUNTEERS!

**Athletes on event or management teams** — You can be a valuable asset on a Special Olympics Games management team. Some athletes are filling important roles in their counties, areas, and the State Office helping plan and conduct the games that you compete in. More than half the management teams have an athlete representative.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE AND HELP MAKE SPECIAL OLYMPICS COMPETITIONS EVEN BETTER!



## Common Courses to All Majors

### Course requirements for all majors

- Introduction to Athlete Leadership (this MUST be the FIRST course)
- SOIN Class A volunteer, complete the 5-step process to complete this training
- Understanding Leadership (recommended as second course) **(NEW for 2020)**
- Courses specific to the major
- Electives not specific to the major
- Leadership Capstone (this MUST be the LAST course before graduation)

### Introduction to Athlete Leadership

**Goal:** Provide you with the skills and knowledge necessary to begin developing as an athlete leader. You will develop a personal mission statement to guide you in choosing the role you want to fill and the major you want to pursue in Athlete Leadership University.

**Description:** The course includes an overview and history of Athlete Leadership, and the basic definitions; the role of the mentor; the leadership roles available for athlete leaders; potential road blocks and barriers; Athlete Input Councils; and the development of each athlete's personal mission statement of what he or she wants to do as a leader.

### Understanding Leadership

**Goal:** Teach you basic leadership and discussion skills so you can effectively lead and engage others in meaningful discussions. You will develop your leadership story and identify the skills you want to continue to develop.

**Description:** The topics and activities in the course puts leadership theory into practice. The leadership and discussion skills you learn in this course help you begin to recognize your own potential as a leader. The course uses group activities, simulations, and practice to help you build these skills.

### Leadership Capstone

**Goal:** Provide you with the advanced leadership skills necessary to plan and complete a capstone project that fits with your leadership vision.

**Description:** Focuses on helping athletes determine what kind of leader they want to be. Athletes revisit their personal mission statement, apply their skills to goal setting, and project planning. Includes determining project scope, developing a communication plan, and identifying resources.

### Course Order and Availability

You may take courses in any order from the curriculum chart (page 15) with the exception of those with prerequisites. You may take courses outside of your major and repeat courses.

Most courses (e.g., Global Messenger I and II and the two Governance courses) are offered once a year. Be sure to check the course offerings and register for the course you are ready and eligible to take. Failure to do this will mean you wait an entire year for that course.

Work with our academic advisors to plan your schedules.



## Communication Major

### Goal

Provide you with the skills necessary to become an effective representative for Special Olympics at a variety of events and at a variety of levels (County, Area, State, or National).

### Course requirements

- Introduction to Athlete Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Understanding Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Global Messenger I and Global Messenger II (each offered once/year)
- One of the Elective Courses
- Leadership Capstone (see Common Courses)

**Note:** You must take Global Messenger I *before* Global Messenger II.

### Global Messenger I

Review basic facts about Special Olympics and Special Olympics Indiana; Special Olympics Mission Statement. Learn how to write a speech and what parts to include in a speech. Discuss ideas on opportunities for giving speeches and making contacts. Work with a mentor who offers support in arranging speaking opportunities.

### Global Messenger II

Discuss and practice advanced skills and ideas on speech writing. Learn to adapt to specific types of speaking engagements, including emceeding an event, accepting a gift, and introducing speakers.

### Elective Courses

- **Health & Fitness:** Introduction to Health & Fitness
- **Governance:** Boards and Committees
- **Governance:** Athlete Input Councils
- **Technology:** Internet Communications
- **Technology:** Digital Media
- **Technology:** Basic PowerPoint
- **Visual Arts:** Leadership through Visual Arts I
- **Events:** Event Planning
- **Events:** Event Management

### Communication Leadership role examples

- **Public Speaker:** Give speeches to prospective athletes, schools, service clubs, management team, etc.
- **Emcee:** Host a local, area, state, or national event
- **Special Olympics Ambassador:** Speak to the Board of Directors, at State Games, at Area Management team meeting, or to prospective donors at events
- **National Global Messenger:** Become a public speaker at the national level for Special Olympics



## Governance Major

### Goal

Provide athletes with the skills necessary to become an effective board and committee member or Athlete Input Council representative. Learn basic skills to become a member of a decision-making group.

### Course requirements

- Introduction to Athlete Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Understanding Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Governance: Boards and Committees and Governance: Athlete Input Councils (each offered once/year)
- One of the Elective Courses
- Leadership Capstone (see Common Courses)

**Note:** You may take Governance courses in any order.

### Governance: Boards and Committees

Review the Special Olympics Mission Statement and Special Olympics county, area, state organizational structure. Learn the definition of governance and policy setting as well as how to read a financial statement. Practice board and committee meetings.

### Governance: Athlete Input Councils

Review the Special Olympics Mission Statement and organizational structure of Athlete Input Councils. Learn about the roles and responsibilities on an input council. Provides athletes with the additional skills necessary to establish and conduct Athlete Input Councils at local, area, and state levels. Practice in input councils and committee meetings.

### Elective Courses

- **Communication:** Global Messenger I
- **Health & Fitness:** Introduction to Health & Fitness
- **Technology:** Internet Communications
- **Technology:** Digital Media
- **Technology:** Basic PowerPoint
- **Visual Arts:** Leadership through Visual Arts I
- **Events:** Event Planning
- **Events:** Event Management

### Governance Leadership role examples

- **Input Council Representative:** Participate in a local, area or state Input Council
- **Area Athlete Representative:** Participate on a Management Team, committee, or fund raise
- **State Athlete Representative:** Participate on the Board of Directors, state management teams, committee, or fund raise
- **National Athlete Representative:** Participate in a Congress, committee, task force, or fund raise



## Sports Major

**NOTE:** This major will change for the **2021 academic year**.

The following are requirements for degrees started in **2019 only**.

### Goal

Provide athletes with the skills necessary to become an assistant or head coach. Learn the coach's role during both practice and competition and in the planning process.

### Course requirements

- Introduction to Athlete Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Understanding Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Athletes as Coaches
- Coaches Education Program Level 1 "Core Coaching Knowledge"
- Introduction to Health & Fitness **OR** Coaches Education Program Level 2 "Sports Specific Knowledge," plus a practicum of 10 coaching hours
- Leadership Capstone (see Common Courses)

**Note:** You may take sports-related Athlete Leadership University courses in any order. You must take the Coaches Education Program levels in the order outlined in the PIG.

### Athletes as Coaches

Prepares athletes to pursue coaches' certification at the level they desire. Provides experience working with athletes as a coach; introduce athletes and mentors to the process of working together as a team; discuss the various roles of a coach; teaches coaching by practicing many skills during class time.

### Level 1 Coaches Education Program

This entails taking two online courses that all Sport Assistants (Class A volunteers) must take to become a Level 1 coach. These courses are: *Coaching Special Olympics Athletes* and *Coaching Unified Sports*.

### Health & Fitness: Introduction

Presents basic concepts and information on SO Healthy Athlete topics. Provides experiential learning activities to apply concepts, and meet the course goals and objectives.

### Level 2 Coaches Education Program

This entails taking four online courses that all Level 1 coaches must take to become a Level 2 coach and be eligible to coach at USA Games. The online courses are: *Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment*, *Sports Nutrition*, *Sportsmanship*, and one sport-specific course. The sport-specific course may be taken in person, free of charge from Special Olympics Indiana at the SOIN State Conference or online through the NFHS Learning Center for a fee.

### Sports-specific Skills Course

This is a sport-specific, two- to four-hour, instructional program sanctioned by Special Olympics, Inc. The course contains information on fundamental skills, practice planning, events and rules. These courses are NOT offered at Athlete Leadership University, but are offered at SOIN State Conference.

### Sports Leadership role examples

- **Coach:** Act as an assistant coach or head coach at a local, state, or national level
- **Team manager:** Help manage and organize a local or state team
- **Timer or Scorer:** Help at local or state sporting events with timing and score keeping





## Technology Major

### Goal

Provide athletes with the skills necessary to use technology to become better communicators and athlete leaders.

### Course requirements

- Introduction to Athlete Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Understanding Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Two of the Technology courses
- One of the Elective Courses
- Leadership Capstone (see Common Courses)

**Note:** You may take Technology courses in any order.

### Technology: Internet Communications

Learn how to use email, search engines, the internet, and social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to promote Special Olympics and communicate with our audiences.

### Technology: Digital Media

Learn techniques in photography and video editing as well as how to use photo and video equipment.

### Technology: Basic PowerPoint

Learn how to use Microsoft PowerPoint features and practice completing a presentation.

### Elective Courses

- **Communication:** Global Messenger I
- **Health & Fitness:** Introduction to Health & Fitness
- **Governance:** Boards and Committees
- **Governance:** Athlete Input Councils
- **Technology:** remaining technology course
- **Visual Arts:** Leadership through Visual Arts I
- **Events:** Event Planning
- **Events:** Event Management

### Technology Leadership role examples

- **Social Media Manager:** Create a county Facebook page, maintain the Twitter or Instagram account for your delegation, or create a podcast to share stories and information
- **Media Producer:** Create slide shows or videos for your Sports or Awards Banquet, or assist a Global Messenger's by creating her/his presentation
- **Data Assistant:** Help Athlete Leadership University by entering the evaluation results into survey software or Healthy Athletes data at Summer Games
- **Photographer or Videographer:** Capture memorable moments and history at a local or state event through photography or video



## Health & Fitness Major

### Goal

Learn the concepts and skills covered in the SO Healthy Athlete disciplines needed to become a health and fitness advocate. Through experiential learning activities, athletes apply concepts to meet the course goal and objectives.

### Course requirements

- Introduction to Athlete Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Understanding Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Introduction to Health & Fitness and Health & Fitness Advocates (each offered once/year)
- One of the Elective Courses
- Leadership Capstone (see Common Courses)

**Note:** You must take Introduction to Health & Fitness *before* Health & Fitness Advocates.

### Introduction to Health & Fitness

Introduces basic health and fitness information. Participants learn the skills and knowledge to make incremental life style changes through experiential learning activities and practicums.

### Health & Fitness Advocates

Practices advanced skills and builds on participant experience gained from Introduction to Health & Fitness course and practicum assignment. The course further develops advocacy and mentoring skills and helps participants use their personal experiences from the Introduction course to inspire peers and their communities.

### Elective Courses

- **Communication:** Global Messenger I
- **Governance:** Boards and Committees
- **Governance:** Athlete Input Councils
- **Sports:** Athletes as Coaches
- **Technology:** Internet Communications
- **Technology:** Digital Media
- **Technology:** Basic PowerPoint
- **Visual Arts:** Leadership through Visual Arts I
- **Events:** Event Planning
- **Events:** Event Management

### Health & Fitness Leadership role examples

- **Health Ambassadors:** Social media contributor, public speaking, speaking to Input Councils, Management Teams
- **Healthy Athlete Volunteers:** Support Healthy Athlete screening activities at various events
- **Health & Fitness Coach:** Support your fellow athletes by peer-to-peer mentoring on health and fitness topics



## Health Messenger Certificate

Any athlete who has earned a degree at Athlete Leadership University may enroll in the *Introduction to Health & Fitness* course to earn a *Health Messenger Certificate*. The certificate is intended to complement an athlete's leadership degree and activate the athlete as a promoter of health and fitness in her/his community. The athlete is expected to incorporate health and fitness messages into her/his leadership work, for example:

- **Communication degree:** Add a message about the importance of health and fitness for Special Olympics athletes to a speech given at an event.
- **Sports degree:** Promote healthy choices at a team practice or a fitness club meeting.
- **Governance degree:** Offer ideas to promote health and fitness for athletes at an athlete input council or Area Management Team meeting.
- **Technology degree:** Post messages about health and fitness on social media.
- **Visual Arts degree:** Create artwork that inspires athletes to exercise and eat healthier.

Practicums for the certificate will incorporate the athlete's existing degree area. Certificate recipients commit to becoming active ongoing Health Messengers in their communities.

### Certificate requirements

- One completed Athlete Leadership University degree
- Introduction Health & Fitness (offered once/year) and practicum
- Health Messenger practicum that compliments previously earned degree (practicum **MUST BE** approved by course instructor)



## Visual Arts Major

### Goal

Develop necessary skills such as confidence, collaboration, and self-discipline that prepare athletes for any leadership role and apply to all aspects of life. Present opportunities to co-create artwork and experiential learning activities to apply concepts to meet the course goals and objectives.

### Course requirements

- Introduction to Athlete Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Understanding Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Leadership through Visual Arts I & II (each offered once/year)
- One of the Elective Courses
- Leadership Capstone (see Common Courses)

**Note:** You must take Leadership through Visual Arts I *before* Leadership through Visual Arts II.

### Leadership through Visual Arts I

Introduction course designed to provide basic knowledge about visual arts. The course provides participants with skills and knowledge to begin creating artwork that inspires through experiential learning activities and practicums.

### Leadership through Visual Arts II

Advanced course designed to build on participant experience gained from Visual Arts I and practicum assignments. The course further develops leadership skills through visual art and teaches athletes how to convey their message to peers and their communities.

### Elective Courses

- **Communication:** Global Messenger I
- **Health & Fitness:** Introduction to Health & Fitness
- **Governance:** Boards and Committees
- **Governance:** Athlete Input Councils
- **Technology:** Internet Communications
- **Technology:** Digital Media
- **Technology:** Basic PowerPoint
- **Events:** Event Planning
- **Events:** Event Management

### Visual Arts Leadership role examples

- **Visual Artist:** Inspire others with Special Olympics messages through works of art
- **Social Media Contributor:** Post visual content to county and Athlete Leadership social media
- **Digital Storyteller:** Tell stories of Special Olympics through visual media



## Events (new for 2021)

### Goal

Provide basic knowledge about the tasks required to plan and management events. The course prepares athletes to participate on event planning and management teams. Experiential learning activities and practicums give athletes opportunities to apply needed skills to meet course goal and objectives.

### Course requirements

- Introduction to Athlete Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Understanding Leadership (see Common Courses)
- Event Planning and Event Management (each offered once/year)
- One of the Elective Courses
- Leadership Capstone (see Common Courses)

**Note:** You may take Events courses in any order.

### Event Planning

Develop necessary skills such as organization, communication, and problem solving that prepare athletes for a leadership role in event planning.

### Event Management

Develop necessary skills such as task management, communication, and problem solving that prepare athletes for a leadership role in event management.

### Elective Courses

- **Communication:** Global Messenger I
- **Health & Fitness:** Introduction to Health & Fitness
- **Governance:** Boards and Committees
- **Governance:** Athlete Input Councils
- **Technology:** Internet Communications
- **Technology:** Digital Media
- **Technology:** Basic PowerPoint
- **Visual Arts:** Leadership through Visual Arts I

### Event Planning Major Practical experience examples

- **Planning Committee Member:** Contribute to the planning of a local, area, or state event
- **Management Team Member:** Participate as a member of the team that manages a local, area, or state event as it happens
- **Event Lead:** Lead and manage a specific activity or station at a local, area, or state event



## Athlete Leadership University Prerequisites, Practicum, and Credit

### Curriculum chart and first courses

The curriculum chart (later in this handbook) outlines the plan of study for Athlete Leadership University. The first course for all Athlete Leadership University students is “Introduction to Athlete Leadership” (INTRO). After completion of this course, athletes can choose a major and take courses as outlined in the chart.

### Practicum work for credit in a course

Each course requires the completion of a practicum in order to get credit for the course. The practicum certification must be sent to SOIN within five months of taking the course. The official deadline is four weeks before the next Athlete Leadership University. Some leeway is given for the “Athletes as Coaches” course if the sport the athlete is interested in does not happen within six months. The practicums are monitored and tracked by the instructors. Instructors will inform SOIN when an athlete completes the practicum.

### Prerequisites for advanced-level courses

In only a few courses have prerequisites as described below.

**Note:** An athlete cannot take any second course unless he/she first takes the INTRO course and completes the practicum of 10 hours volunteering for Special Olympics, watches the divisioning video, and becomes a Class A volunteer through the five-step application and online training process.

### Other prerequisites

- Global Messenger I plus practicum must be completed before taking Global Messenger II.
- Introduction to Health & Fitness plus practicum must be completed before taking Health & Fitness Advocates.
- Leadership through Visual Arts I plus practicum must be completed before taking Leadership through Visual Arts II.
- Coaches Education Program levels must be completed in the order outlined in the PIG.
- Courses as outlined in the major, Understanding Leadership plus practicums before Leadership Capstone.

### Earning additional degrees

Once an athlete leader completes his or her first degree, s/he may wish to earn additional degrees. All additional degrees require the three (3) courses outlined for the major, Understanding Leadership if not taken previously plus retaking Leadership Capstone.

**Note:** Credit for a course may be applied to one degree only.

### Continuing Education

Athlete leaders are encouraged to retake courses periodically to update their leadership knowledge and skills. Class content changes over the years as new concepts are introduced.



## Practicum Requirements At-a-Glance

All practicum work must be completed **after** the Athlete Leadership University class is finished. Practicum Forms must be received by due date **before** the next Athlete Leadership University. Presentations and time spent in class **do not** count toward the practicum.

### Introduction to Athlete Leadership

- Complete 10 hours of volunteer activities for Special Olympics. Watch SOI video on Divisioning. Complete the Class A volunteer application and training process.

### Understanding Leadership

- Complete reflection assignments on your leadership development.

### Global Messenger I or II

- Make five presentations to any group about Special Olympics. One presentation must be about Athlete Leadership.

### Athletes as Coaches or Athletes as Officials

- Complete a full season as a coach or assistant coach. Submit a coaching diary with the practicum form.

### Level 1 Coaches Certification

- Nothing in additional.

### Level 2 Coaches Certification

- Complete a minimum of 10 hours as a coach, assistant coach, or official in addition to the courses required to become a Level 2 coach. Submit a coaching diary with the practicum form.

### Governance: Boards and Committees

- Attend five meetings at a county, area or state level. Submit a report with the practicum form.

### Governance: Athlete Input Councils (AIC)

- Attend five Athlete Input Council meetings or start an AIC if your county or area does not have one. Submit a report with the practicum form.

### Health & Fitness (Introduction and Advocates)

- Determined and assigned in collaboration with the course instructor.

### Leadership through Visual Arts I

- Visit a place with artwork and write about a selected piece. Create a Special Olympics inspired artwork of your own. Submit reflection worksheet with practicum form.

### Leadership through Visual Arts II

- Research and write about three artists who are, or were, leaders in their community. Complete at least two (2) works of art inspired by your Special Olympics experiences and include Artist Bio and Artist Statement about the work.

### Technology: PowerPoint

- Make two new PowerPoint presentations to any group about Special Olympics.

### Technology courses: (Internet Communications and Digital Media)

- Complete specific technology-related exercises using the computer, send work to the instructors.

### Leadership Capstone

- Complete a significant project related to your major that benefits Special Olympics. Project plan must be approved by the instructors.

### Health Messenger Certificate (Completed degree and Introduction to Health & Fitness)

- Complete a significant project related to your existing degree area with a focus on health and fitness topics. Commit to remaining active in your community as a health and fitness advocate. Project plan must be approved by the instructors.

**Event Planning and Event Management** – to be determined.

## Athlete Leadership University Curriculum Chart

COURSE CURRICULUM FOR ATHLETE LEADERSHIP UNIVERSITY						
Introduction to Athlete Leadership						
Understanding Leadership						
Communication Major	Sports Major	Governance Major	Technology Major	Health & Fitness Major	Visual Arts Major	Events Major
Global Messenger I	Athletes as Coaches	Governance: Athlete Input Councils	First Technology course	Introduction to Health & Fitness	Leadership through Visual Arts I	Event Planning
Global Messenger II	Level 1 Coaches Certification	Governance: Boards & Committees	Second Technology course	Health Advocates	Leadership through Visual Arts II	Event Management
One Elective Course	Intro to Health & Fitness <b>OR</b> Level 2 Coaches Certification & practicum	One Elective Course	One Elective Course	One Elective Course	One Elective Course	One Elective Course
Leadership Capstone						
<p>Each class is a 7-hour course. <i>Introduction to Athlete Leadership</i> is the required first course; <i>Understanding Leadership</i> recommended a second course. <i>Leadership Capstone</i> is the required final course. Courses in the athlete's area of concentration require participation in the class and completion of a practicum within five (5) months. Exceptions to the five (5)-month rule are granted if an athlete chooses to coach a sport that does not take place within that timeframe.</p>						





## **Athlete Leadership University Rules and Policies**

### **Curriculum chart and first courses**

Special Olympics Indiana has provided training in athlete leadership since 1997. The training program was formalized and expanded in 2003 and 2006 with the introduction and expansion of Athlete Leadership University, which provides education for Special Olympics athletes in a variety of leadership topics.

The program uses a university model, where athletes receive credit for attending classes and completing practical experience requirements. Athletes can earn degrees in Communication, Health & Fitness, Governance, Sports, Technology, Visual Arts, and Events.

### **Eligibility**

Athletes who sign up for Athlete Leadership University must be at least 16 years old.

Each athlete must be accompanied by a mentor (volunteer), who works with the athlete during each class and locally during the required practical experience.

### **Facilitator certification**

Area and County Programs that seek to involve athletes in leadership roles (coaches, volunteers, management team members, speakers, etc.) are required to certify their Athlete Leadership facilitator through a two to three-hour certification session. During this training, the program's Athlete Leadership Coordinator will learn the various roles available for athlete leaders and the expectations of volunteers (mentors) in successfully meeting these requirements.

The program certification course is offered annually at the State Conferences and in home communities as requested.

### **Mentors (i.e., helpers)**

Each athlete attending an Athlete Leadership University class must be accompanied by a mentor (volunteer) who works one-on-one with the athlete during each class and locally during the required practical experience. Parents can serve as mentors to their son or daughter on a trial basis. New mentors are asked to complete a one-hour training provided at the start of an Athlete Leadership University session.

Mentors should agree to a six-month commitment to work with his/her athlete.

## **Athlete Input Council**

The State Athlete Input Council, originated in April 2004, gives input to the State Office on a variety of subjects. Members develop recommendations for Special Olympics Indiana and respond to proposals from other parts of the organization. For more information on State AIC read the handbook at:

[https://editor.ne16.com/soindiana/AIC\\_HANDBOOK.pdf](https://editor.ne16.com/soindiana/AIC_HANDBOOK.pdf)



## Athlete Leadership University Alumni Association

Graduates of Athlete Leadership University become members of the University Alumni Association. This special group of athlete leaders promotes the organization through numerous leadership roles in various projects and management teams. The association newsletter, Athlete Leadership Alumnus, is published quarterly. For more information, contact the association at [ALPsAlumni@gmail.com](mailto:ALPsAlumni@gmail.com).

## Athlete Leadership University Management Team

The Athlete Leadership University Management Team is organized around focus areas. The team consists of four (4) committees each with two (2) co-leaders and 2 – 3 additional members. The committees are:

**Instructors.** Explores how to recruit and train instructors as well as develops the criteria for becoming an Athlete Leadership co-instructor or teaching assistant.

- *Co-Leaders:* Ken Melvin and Carla Knapp
- *Members:* Brent Bowgren. [One opening available](#)

**Mentors.** Explores how to recruit, train, and support mentors to ensure needs of the athletes are met.

- *Co-Leaders:* Lorrie Woycik and Danielle Oehlman
- *Members:* Mike Furnish and Kristin Schoonveld. [One athlete opening available](#)

**Athlete Leadership University Alumni Association.** Communicates ongoing leadership opportunities for graduates and Athlete Leadership University students working on practicums. Provides academic advising to athletes working on degrees.

- *Co-Leaders:* Heather Himes, Lyn Doyle and Mike Doyle
- *Academic Advisors:* Mike and Lyn Doyle
- *Members:* [One athlete opening available](#)

**Curriculum.** Reviews athlete, mentor, and instructor feedback on current courses to improve course offerings and identifies opportunities for new courses.

- *Co-Leaders:* Elesia Yoon and Jennifer Hoover
- *Members:* Wes Hartwell and Chelsea Davis.

Please contact Elesia Yoon ([ALPsUniversity@gmail.com](mailto:ALPsUniversity@gmail.com)), Athlete University Management Team Director, if you are interested in serving on one of the management team committees.

**Feedback.** If you have any praise, concerns, suggestions, or questions about your experience at Athlete Leadership University you may submit your comments to the Athlete Leadership University Management Team through the Athlete Leadership University Feedback Form at:

<https://goo.gl/forms/DdMO1EW74jfLLD262>



## Athlete Leadership University Management Team Members

The following individuals are serving on the management team:

**Jeff Mohler**, SO Indiana President & CEO  
(800) 742-0612  
jmohler@soindiana.org

**Elesia Yoon**, Area 8 & State Volunteer  
[Athlete Leadership University Director; Curriculum Committee](#)  
Instructor (Health & Fitness)  
(317) 293-3507  
ALPsUniversity@gmail.com

**Jennifer Hoover**, Tippecanoe County  
[Curriculum Committee](#)  
Instructor (Technology)  
(765) 714-3248  
SOJenniferMary@gmail.com

**Wes Hartwell**, White County, Technology Coordinator  
[Curriculum Committee](#)  
Instructor (Technology)  
(574) 270-8273  
waha1ps@hotmail.com

**Chelsea Davis**, Johnson County  
[Curriculum Committee](#)  
Instructor (Intro, Governance)  
(317) 938-8560  
cedswimmer1@yahoo.com

**Lorrie Woycik**, Porter County  
[Mentors Committee](#)  
Instructor (Athletes as Coaches)  
(219) 462-2695  
blwoycik@gmail.com

**Danielle Ohlman**, Porter County  
[Mentors Committee](#)  
Instructor (Athletes as Coaches)  
(219) 309-0440  
dgarfield99@yahoo.com

**Michael Furnish**, State Volunteer  
[Mentors Committee](#)  
Instructor (Governance)  
(317) 260-8247  
Mfurnish10@gmail.com

**Brian Glick**, Tippecanoe County; Past BOD member  
[Athlete Input Council Liaison](#)  
Instructor (Governance, Intro)  
(765) 418-8404  
Bglick82@gmail.com

**Heather Himes**, Marion County – East; Current BOD member  
[Athlete Leadership Alumni Association](#)  
Instructor (Intro, Governance)  
(463) 206-4731  
hhimes508@gmail.com

**Mike Doyle**, State Volunteer  
[Athlete Leadership Alumni Association; Academic Advisor](#)  
Instructor (Technology)  
(765) 807-5431  
wmd723@gmail.com

**Lyn Doyle**, State Volunteer  
[Athlete Leadership Alumni Association; Academic Advisor](#)  
Instructor (Intro, Governance)  
(765) 807-5431  
Lynd12345@gmail.com

**Ken Melvin** Montgomery-Parke County; Past BOD member  
[Instructors Committee](#)  
Instructor (GM, Intro, Capstone)  
(765) 376-8065  
alship2000@gmail.com

**Carla Knapp**, State Volunteer  
[Instructors Committee](#)  
Instructor (Global Messenger)  
(765) 566-2352  
cknapp@indyzoo.com

**Brent Bowgren**, Porter County; Past BOD member  
[Instructors Committee](#)  
Instructor (Governance, Intro, Capstone)  
(219) 309-1102  
alpsjack1@gmail.com

**Kristin Schoonveld**, Washington Township (Marion)  
[Mentors Committee](#)  
Instructor (Visual Arts)  
(317) 691-6073  
kristinschoonveld@yahoo.com

IF YOU NEED HELP WITH ATHLETE LEADERSHIP, CONTACT THESE PEOPLE!



## SO Indiana State Office Staff

The following people work at the Special Olympics Indiana State Office:

### Staff Members

Jeff Mohler	President & CEO	jmohler@soindiana.org
Nathan Barne	Manager of Grants and Communications	nbarnes@soindiana.org
Lindsay Blythe	Volunteer Services Coordinator	lblythe@soindiana.org
Tori Cox	Manager of Middle School Programs	tcox@soindiana.org
Janet Davies	Database Manager	jdavies@soindiana.org
Kathy Elliott	Unified Champion Schools Coordinator	kelliott@soindiana.org
Cathy Elzinga	Associate Director of Sports	celzinga@soindiana.org
Scott Furnish	Vice President of Development & COO	sfurnish@soindiana.org
Itzel Graber	Manager of Health & Fitness	igraber@soindiana.org
Lisa Graham	Unified Champion Schools Consultant	lgraham@soindiana.org
Mike Hasch	Director of Unified Champion Schools	mhasch@soindiana.org
Jodi Houghton	Office Services Coordinator	houghton@soindiana.org
Karen Kennelly	Chief Financial Officer	kkennelly@soindiana.org
Patrick Kozlowski	Manager of Sports Programs	pkozlowski@soindiana.org
Lee Lonzo	Champions Together Consultant	llonzo@ih saa.org
Stephanie Manner	Director of Special Events	smanner@soindiana.org
Mary McClamroch	Office Assistant	marym@soindiana.org
Scott Mingle	Director of Sports and Competition	smingle@soindiana.org
Tracy Mortensen	Associate Director of Development	tmortensen@soindiana.org
Kelly Ries	Director of Donor Engagement	kries@soindiana.org
Maureen Rumer	Accounting Coordinator	mrumer@soindiana.org
Danielle Smith	Manager of Community Partnerships	dsmith@soindiana.org

### Regional Managers

Buzz Lail	Director of Programs, Northwest Indiana	blail@soindiana.org
Kevin Aders	Central Indiana	kaders@soindiana.org
Julie Burkholder	Eastern Indiana	jburkholder@soindiana.org
Francie Smith	Southern Indiana	fsmith@soindiana.org

To see what region your county is in, here is a link to Regional map of Indiana:

<http://tinyurl.com/ycyp8jsz>



## Roles of the Mentor

Mentor roles are multi-dimensional and may include, but are not exclusive to, the following:

- Commit to a partnership in making the athlete leadership experiences and roles as meaningful as possible.
- Adapt to new role from being a helper, speech coach, facilitator, advisor, confidant, teacher, and friend to athlete's needs as athlete leader becomes more independent.
- Monitor progress of practicum work and follow up as needed.
- Ensure there are adequate opportunities for practicum experiences.
- Always value the athlete-leader's opinions.
- Provide constructive and honest feedback.
- Advocate at all times.
- Help athlete understand minutes of meetings, after action notes and to do lists.
- Ensure the athlete knows about training opportunities within and outside of Special Olympics.
- Work with parents, caretakers, and Special Olympics volunteers to ensure they understand Athlete Leadership.
- Help work through transportation challenges.
- Help athletes with medical or diet needs.
- Commit to being a short-term mentor(s) to assist the athlete's initial learning of a desired new role if the mentor's expertise or experience does not meet the need of the athlete at that time such as becoming a coach or an official.

During the class and other Athlete Leadership University activities, it is the responsibility of the mentor to make sure the athlete leader is getting the most out of the experience. This may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Monitor the athlete leader during the class to ensure s/he is engaged and understanding the course content.
- Provide clarification of difficult concepts.
- Do not speak for the athlete, give only necessary help.
- Help the athlete leader develop and express **his or her** opinions. (***Do not express your opinions.***)
- Assist athlete with technology and paperwork if needed.
- Be energetic, positive, cheerful and attentive during class. Model great student behaviors.
- Help the athlete leaders identify adequate opportunities for practicum experiences required by the course s/he is taking.
- Help athlete understand homework, action items and to do lists both during Athlete Leadership University weekend and when s/he returns home.
- Ensure the athlete follows the schedule of events for the weekend, knows locations, and arrives on time for meals and athlete activities.
- Work one-on-one during each class and monitor follow up tasks such as practicum work.
- Consult with Athlete Leadership Coordinator for your county if assistance is needed to motivate an athlete leader to finish her/his course work or practicum.
- Pushes athlete a bit. Athletes may not fully realize what they're capable of if no one in their life has ever really let them blossom.



## History of Athlete Leadership University in Indiana

1997	September	Eleven athletes attend an Athlete Empowerment Workshop presented by Billy Quick and Laura Doucette at the annual SO Indiana state conference
1998	February	First Athlete Leadership courses offered: Introduction to Athlete Leadership, Making a Presentation (now called Global Messenger)
	June	Athlete input sessions begin at State Games
	October	Athlete Leadership 101 offered at State Conference. 26 athletes attend; 12 athletes recognized for leadership in their local programs
1999	April	Governance, Global Messenger two-day workshop held
	October	At State Conference; Athlete Leadership-trained athletes present sessions
2000	June	Athlete Leadership booth debuts at State Games, providing information on Athlete Leadership to athletes at the Games
	July	New Area Input Councils presented at Annual Leadership Retreat
	September	Athlete Leadership 101, Athlete Council sessions at State Conference
2001	February	Meeting of Athlete Input Council mentors
	June	Athlete Leadership Task Force meeting in New York
	July	Two-day meeting of athletes to discuss future of Athlete Leadership in Indiana
	October	Athlete Leadership 101, Athlete Leadership 201, Global Messenger, Athlete Leadership Business Meeting
2002		Courses held around the state in Introduction to Athlete Leadership, Global Messenger, Developing Input Councils, and Governance
	October	Three athletes attend Picower workshop in San Francisco
2003	April	First Athlete Leadership University session held at St. Vincent New Hope, using a university model where athletes receive credit for attending class
	Fall	Four Athlete Leadership courses offered at the State Conference
2004	April	Second Athlete Leadership University session, moved to its new home, Christian Theological Seminary
	Fall	Three one-day Athlete Leadership courses offered around the state
2005	April	Third Athlete Leadership University session
2006	February	First year of Athlete Leadership program certification for counties and requirement for athletes to complete practicums to receive credit
	Fall	Three one-day Athlete Leadership courses offered around the state
2008	April, Nov.	First two-session Athlete Leadership University year; first graduate with the new format of required practicums
2009	August	Eight Special Olympics leaders from programs around the world attend Athlete Leadership University to observe courses and Input Councils
2011	November	Eighteen Special Olympics leaders from across the US attend Athlete Leadership University to observe courses and share experiences
2012	April	Fifty-four athlete leaders are enrolled in a record eight courses
2012	November	Eight athlete leaders are featured speakers at the International Law Enforcement Torch Run Conference. Many more serve in meaningful leadership volunteer roles
2013	April	Athlete Leadership University is 10 Years Old! A record 56 athlete leaders are enrolled in seven courses and 37 athlete leaders have earned 55 degrees.
2014	November	A new record of 64 athlete leaders are enrolled in six courses
2016	October	Athlete Leadership University surpasses the 100 <sup>th</sup> degree-mark, awarding a total of 107 degrees so far.
2017	April	Athlete Leadership University moves to Butler University after 13 great years at CTS.
2017	April	Two new majors are introduced: Technology and Health & Fitness
2017	April	A new record of 65 athlete leaders are enrolled in eight courses
2019	April	New major introduced: Leadership through Visual Arts
2019	April	A new record of 24 new athlete leaders enroll in Introduction to Athlete Leadership
2020	April/May	SOIN offers the first virtual Athlete Leadership Webinar Series to provide information and engagement for athletes during the COVID-19 "stay at home" order
2020	October	SOIN offers the first virtual Athlete Leadership University!



## Indiana Athlete Leader Accomplishments

1998	April	Athlete Brian Glick creates first Area Input Council in Indiana
1999		Tippecanoe County Athlete Brian Glick elected interim chair of the first Global Athlete Congress
2000		Drew Metzger, Porter County, attends the second Global Athlete Congress in Puerto Rico
2001	June	Brian Glick attends Athlete Leadership Task Force meeting in New York, working on the various targeted initiatives: Governance, Global Messenger, Athletes as Coaches, Media, Athletes as Officials
2002	October	Brent Bowgren, Jan Griepenstroh, and Brian Glick attend Picower Workshop in San Francisco, which introduces leadership training courses for athletes
2006	October	Jessica Crook, Cass County, named one of 12 Sargent Shriver Global Messengers from around the world; she attended the 2007 World Games in Shanghai, China
2010		Brent Bowgren, Porter County, and Ken Melvin, Montgomery County, attend the Special Olympics Global Congress and Global Athlete Congress in Morocco, where participants crafted a new Strategic Plan for Special Olympics
2011	June	Ken Melvin attends the Special Olympics World Games in Athens, Greece, as part of the U.S. Presidential Delegation that includes Jill Biden, wife of the U.S. Vice President
2011	July	Brent Bowgren and Lee Anne Bettenhausen, Porter County, attend Athlete Leadership Task Force meeting in Vancouver, Canada, that developed the Mission Statement for Athlete Leadership
2011	Fall	Wes Hartwell creates Photography and Videography course for AL University
2012	November	Ken Melvin teaches the Special Olympics 101 course to those attending the International Law Enforcement Torch Run Conference in Indianapolis to educate them about the Benefits of the organization the officers support
2013	July	Ken Melvin attends the Special Olympics North America Leadership Conference in North Carolina
2014	June	Wes Hartwell, White County, serves as an official photographer for Special Olympics National Games in New Jersey
2015	April	Wes Hartwell is commissioned to produce a video promoting Athlete Leadership by Special Olympics called "Beyond the Vision"
2015	July	Ken Melvin attends the World Games in Los Angeles as a military representative who participates in Special Olympics
2015	Fall	Jennifer Hoover, Tippecanoe County, creates Social Media course for AL University
2016	August	Wes Hartwell introduces his "Beyond the Vision" video to representatives from Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio and Ken Melvin moderates the athlete meeting during the Special Olympics Great Lakes Regional Conference in Indianapolis
2016	December	Kevin Callahan completes the first National Health Messenger Training in Washington D.C.
2017	January	Danielle Oehlham completes the National Health Messenger Training in Indianapolis.
2018	April	Wes Hartwell creates Advanced PowerPoint course for Athlete Leadership University
2018	July	Jason Plante serves as the emcee for the Special Olympics 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in Chicago, IL
2019	September	Kendra Franklin selected to attend SOI national training on Unified Leadership
2019	October	Karen Kerr and Teala Raetz are selected to attend SOI national Health Messenger training
2020	May	Chelsea Davis completes the first virtual National Health Messenger Training.

Past and present Athlete Leadership members of the SOIN Board of Directors: Brent Bowgren, Porter County, Brian Glick, Tippecanoe County; Ken Melvin, Montgomery County; Heather Himes, Marion County East; Mitch Bonar, Hamilton County

Past and present athletes leaders who serve as Athlete Leadership University faculty in Indiana: Mike Baker, Steven Benson, Lee Anne Bettenhausen, Andrea Boling, Michael Byerly, Brent Bowgren, Chris Bowling, Brittany Brown, Jessica Crook, Chelsea Davis, Brian Glick, Scott Gross, Wes Hartwell, Anastasia Helmich, Paul Hicks, Heather Himes, Jennifer Hoover, Brian Kellems, Katy Kelly, Ryan Kempf, Sam McNew, Charlotte Miller, Ken Melvin, Danielle Oehlman, Penny Peterson, Jason Plante, Jimmy Richardson, April Robertson, Melony Salla, Shannon Williams, Tanner Wills



## Athlete Leadership Athlete Contract

Renewed each Athlete Leadership University session

By signing below, each **Athlete Leader** agrees to the following:

1. Follow the Special Olympics Code of Conduct, and practice respect, courtesy, and good sportsmanship.
2. Attend Athlete Leadership University to obtain a degree in one of the major subject areas offered ~ Communication, Sports, Governance, Technology, Visual Arts, or Health & Fitness.
3. Attend any additional Athlete Leadership presentations that will complete the Athlete Leadership University degree program.
4. Attend scheduled Athlete Leadership meetings (local, area, state) as needed. I will let my Mentor know if I need transportation.
5. Read over meeting materials with my Mentor ahead of time so that I will be able to offer my comments and suggestions at the next meeting.
6. Work with my Mentor ~ ask them questions if I do not understand something and offer my comments and suggestions that might improve the Special Olympics athlete experience.
7. Recognize that as an athlete leader, I am a representative of Special Olympics at the local, area, state and national level.
8. In order to become a successful athlete leader, I agree to a two-year commitment to Athlete Leadership.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Athlete Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Program

\_\_\_\_\_  
Athlete Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Area number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dates of commitment





## Athlete Leadership Mentor Contract

Renewed each Athlete Leadership University session

By signing below, each **mentor** agrees to the following:

1. I am a Class A volunteer in good standing.
2. My athlete leader is an equal partner in our Special Olympics experience.
3. I will always help my athlete leader develop and express **his or her** opinions, **not my** opinions.
4. I will be encouraging, supportive and cheerful.
5. I will value my athlete leader's opinion.
6. I will be attentive in the classroom and be prepared for any questions or discussion that may arise.
7. I will help my athlete leader stay on task and assist with understanding material.
8. I will **listen** and take the time to understand what my athlete leader is asking and what other athlete leaders share in the classroom.
9. I will work in a one-on-one relationship with my athlete leader during each Athlete Leadership University class and locally during the required practical experience.
10. I will advocate for my athlete leader and help the others understand the significance of the mindset to the athlete.
11. I will ensure my athlete leader has transportation to and from Athlete Leadership events.
12. I will help my athlete leader find meaningful positions of influence and leadership.
13. Agree to a minimum 6-month commitment to partner with my athlete leader to make her/his Athlete Leadership experience as meaningful and educational as possible.

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Mentor Name (Printed)

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County Program

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Mentor Signature

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Area number

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Dates of commitment