

# **Networking Questions/Answers**

## **Agency Annual Conference Area 3 September 18, 2010**

### **1. How can you get families involved in your program?**

- An expectation that families be involved
- Social events should include family members
- Invite new families to social events/fundraisers
- Get families involved in parades/floats
- Have a family coordinator on your AMT
- Ask family members individually about helping with specific tasks
- Write personal invitations/thank you notes
- Concern: finding roles for family members that would like to be involved but don't have the capability.
  - Partner with strong person
  - Redirect them to new role
- Make the ask!
- Sometimes you have to step aside and say that someone new should take task over or it won't happen
- Have a family mentor that will talk to new family members
- Family to family communication (specific family newsletter) or a "family corner" in the Agency newsletter
- Family fun night
- Fundraisers
- Time and talent survey to family members
- Concern: How do you get lower functioning/independent athletes' families, guardians or caretakers involved?
  - Start a unified league
  - "Adopt" an athlete by volunteers that are already involved or would like to be involved

### **2. How do you keep volunteers interested and engaged?**

- Thank you/recognition/pep rally for volunteers
- Fun night for athletes and volunteers

- Newspaper article thanking volunteers by name
- Have athlete deliver gift certificate to volunteer at their place of work
- Thank you and recognition is one of the most important things
- Awards and prizes
- Incentives
- Keeping it fresh and fun and that it's not mandatory
- Knowing that if they don't do it, may lose opportunity
- Recognizing them in newsletter
- Have athletes write thank yous
- Changing their roles so you don't overload them (ex. used to coach but no longer able to and now does finances)
- Using Facebook and post a picture or thank you
- Getting service groups involved (Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts)
- Think of it as an opportunity or gift, not job
- Recognizing them publicly or privately
- Let them know it's no cost to volunteer
- Match their talent with their task
- Get enough volunteers so you avoid burnout
- Different Head Coaches for each sport so one person isn't doing it all
- Have an automatic rotation of volunteer roles so they don't always do the same thing
- Each one teach one

### **3. Advice for a new Agency/Agency Manager**

- Send newsletters to sheltered workshops
- Aging and Disabilities Newsletters
- Make sure you don't start too big
- Let people know you're there (church newsletters, local TV station for schools, doctors offices, group homes)

#### **4. Concern: Athletes being affected by budget cuts through Northern Bridges and can't afford practices/transportation**

- Taxi services
- Ask parents of other athletes to help with transportation
- Check into County Volunteer Driver program (through MA or senior services)
- Have athletes ask their caregivers or guardians for help

#### **5. What did you learn today?**

- Excited about in-house finances
- The conference—revival of all-state one
- How to get more volunteers
- Good to network
- Schools don't run into same issues
- Ways to get families involved
- Fund Raising ideas
- I'm not alone
- Calendar of Events is the most important thing to have on hand
- No matter how big or small we all have some of the same problems
- We can learn from each other
- You can work together to help not be overwhelmed anymore
- Volunteers/Finances: ASK
- Thankful our Agency is doing well
- Networking
- SOWI is a member of the Tavern League
- Reminded that the Agency can't solicit individuals
- It's good to delegate more
- Networking gets me motivated
- Northern State Bowling
- Thank you to Andrea and Patti :)