



**Special
Olympics**
New Mexico



TIP-A-COP

What is a “Tip-A-Cop”?

“Tip-A-Cops” are fun-filled fundraisers for Special Olympics that bonds the community and develops partnerships. Partnering with a local restaurant, law enforcement agencies provide personnel to serve as “celebrity waiters” with their “tips” donated to Special Olympics. During the course of their duties, the agency personnel educate the customers about the event and Special Olympics, and solicit “tips” as donations for Special Olympics. The “tips” solicited are in addition to those given the regular food servers. The key to a successful event is planning and having fun.

Agency Coordinator Role and Responsibility:

“Tip-A-Cop” events can be some of the most fun filled and rewarding experiences during the torch run fundraising campaign. They are not only profitable for Special Olympics, but provide Law Enforcement personnel an excellent opportunity to have positive interaction with people in their community. ***The key to a successful event is preparation!***

You will need to select a location and coordinate a date and time with restaurant management. Determine the number of law enforcement personnel needed and what their responsibilities will be during the event. Have a financial plan arranged before the event so there is no confusion as to how money will be handled. Arrange for auxiliary activities if necessary such as LETR Merchandise sales, patrol cars, etc. All these issues should be discussed with restaurant management.

Advertising your event is very important. Radio, newspaper and television are all excellent ways of publicizing your event and don’t forget to provide the restaurant with posters to promote the event! Coordinating a “Tip-A-Cop” event can be easy and a highly rewarding process, but planning is everything. Allow yourself eight to ten weeks if you can for effective planning and advertising.

5 Steps For A Successful “Tip-A-Cop”

1) Planning:

A successful event hinges upon proper preparation. There are a variety of issues that must be considered prior to the event such as location, date and time, auxiliary activities, personnel, advertising and a financial plan. First time planners should allow themselves eight to ten weeks for planning and advertising. Assistance is available by contacting other Agency Coordinators, who have held an event, your Regional Coordinator, or the LETR State Office.



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2) Location:

Selecting the proper location is very important to a successful event. LETR for Special Olympics has developed relationships with many large restaurant chains who sponsor these events. The restaurants listed below have been sponsors of “Tip-A-Cops.”

- ◆ The Range Café
- ◆ Applebee’s
- ◆ Red Lobster
- ◆ Red Robin
- ◆ Claim Jumper
- ◆ Texas Roadhouse
- ◆ Chili’s
- ◆ Joe’s Pasta House

Be sure and check with our LETR State Office to see if one of these locations is in your jurisdiction.

Any restaurant can work, however experience has demonstrated that locations with certain characteristics are more profitable. Try to select a location that has an active, lighthearted family atmosphere. Facilities that offer a lounge area tend to draw larger crowds. Pick a location that is normally active and if possible, select a day and time of the week when crowds are at their peak. History shows Thursday, Friday and Saturdays are most popular with consumers; however a good advertising plan can make any day successful. Plan to operate for at least three hours but not more than eight. Some agencies have held multiple events at the same location, or have made a single event an entire day affair. Coordinate these details with restaurant management.

3) Collecting Donations:

- You will receive donations in a variety of ways; checks, cash and credit cards. The LETR State Office has developed a standard process to accommodate ALL types of donations and streamline record keeping while maximizing accountability. ***It is essential that you follow these procedures at all Tip-A-Cop events. Be sure to brief all participants as to the financial procedures.***

Your LETR State Office will provide you with preprinted envelopes to be placed on each table. The donation options offered on the envelopes are the following:

- **Cash:** donations are placed in the envelope and sealed.
- **Check:** Checks should be made payable to Special Olympics New Mexico, placed in the envelope and sealed
- **Credit Card:** The customer simply completes the credit card form to be inserted into the envelope.

All donations should be turned over to your Agency Coordinator who is overseeing the Tip-A-Cop. ALL Special Olympics donations and transactions are kept separate from those of the restaurant. The Law Enforcement Personnel in charge is responsible for ensuring that all funds are given to the appropriate Special Olympics representative or their designee.



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4) Promotion:

Do not rely on word of mouth or the normal activity of the restaurant to make your event a success. Be creative with your promotional efforts campaign but *spread the word, spread the word, spread the word*. Kick off your promotion at least four weeks in advance of your event. Coordinate with the State Office to receive posters and hang them in the restaurant at least four weeks in advance. If you have a PIO in your law enforcement organization, they can be a great help in arranging a full media blitz.

At the event, provide information about Special Olympics and how people can get involved. Consider having Special Olympics athletes hand out information or place table tents on tables explaining the event that is taking place. A few simple facts about Special Olympics and a phone number that people can call for more information goes a long way. Consider having other LETR information, including dates and times of other torch run fundraising activities. Don't forget to have fundraising t-shirts on hand for sale during the Tip-A-Cop!

5) Personnel:

Before recruiting volunteers to work your Tip-a-Cop, consider the size of the restaurant. You want to have as many people as possible working the event, but want to be mindful of the wait staff and patrons who are dining. If you are recruiting for your first Tip-a-Cop you may find it difficult to find volunteers to work the event because they don't like to "sell". They won't have to. Once your volunteers understand that they are there to simply promote Special Olympics AND their law enforcement agency and only need to inform patrons of the "tip" envelopes on the table, they will have a great time interacting with the diners. Public relations is a huge part of the event so good communication skills and a positive professional presence are essential. Look for those people in your organization that could sell oceanfront property in Kansas. We all have them. Public relations officers, press information officers, or community oriented policing officers are all good places to look for the personalities you will want to have present. If you can't find enough officers to participate, don't forget about other department personnel.

The role your staff plays is limited to the number of personnel you find to participate and what the restaurant can accommodate. Roles include, but are not limited to servers, greeters, hosts and hostesses. If you have other activities during your event you will need to arrange for those personnel as well, such as motorcycle units, air units etc. Also, try to line up local celebrities, government officials, sports stars, etc.

Be sure to coordinate the duties and responsibilities of all participants with the restaurant management. Ensure a clear understanding of the responsibilities for servers. Some restaurants prefer to limit the activities of the server. If this is the case, honor the restaurant's request. Remember that they will be partnered with one of the restaurant's regular employees. Do not allow your participants to serve alcohol. This situation can get complicated and is best avoided.



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Summary:

Good planning and a cooperative partnership with a local restaurant will lead to a successful event. Depending on what restaurant you choose to host your event, there may be more detailed instructional information available unique to the restaurant. The primary goals of a “Tip-A-Cop” event is to raise money for Special Olympics but remember to HAVE FUN and the donations will take care of themselves. If you are interested in having a “Tip-A-Cop” event and would like further information, contact your local Special Olympics representative.

Revenue from Tip-a-Cops can be generated from a variety of sources during the event. These sources can include Tips, T-shirt sales, athlete sponsorships or other memorabilia sales such as hats or pins. Financial contributions can come in cash, check, or credit card. The following are procedures to follow depending upon the location of your Tip-A-Cop event. (Note: All check donations are to be made out to Special Olympics New Mexico.)

Financial Protocol:

Officer in Charge (OIC)

Each event should have a prearranged officer in charge. This officer shall be responsible for all funds (in coordination with your Special Olympics representative).

Tip Collection

Patrons donate tips by placing their donation in a “TAC Envelope”, which is placed on each table in advance. Envelopes are available through the LETR State Office. Cash, checks and credit cards can be accepted for tips. Credit card information needs to be completed in the specified place on the TAC envelope. Envelope should be collected as soon as table is emptied by patrons. All envelopes are turned into the officer in charge for tallying.

Revenues other than tips

In all cases, revenues other than tips should be turned over directly to the officer in charge. These include T-shirt sales, athlete adoptions, etc. These purchases are to be maintained separate from the tips. If there are any uncertainties, contact your local Special Olympics representative.

For more information, please contact the SONM Torch Run Liaison at (505) 856-0342.