



LAW ENFORCEMENT
TORCH RUN[®]
FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS
MINNESOTA

Tip-A-Cop Event Logistics

Basics

- Identify a police officer to be responsible for all necessary “Tip-a-Cop” components, including volunteers, shift assignments, liaison with the participating restaurant management and the Special Olympics office, handling media, counting money. That designated officer in charge can delegate out these duties if needed.
- Planning is critical to the success of the event. Contact the restaurant managers immediately to mutually determine dates for “Tip-a-Cop.” Meet with the restaurant manager prior to the event dates to ensure both of you are prepared.
- Recruit 3-6 officers to volunteer for each shift.
- The participating restaurant staff and Law Enforcement volunteers explain the “Tip-a-Cop” event. Law Enforcement officials act as “Celebrity Waiters” are introduced at each table by the restaurant food servers. They assist the servers with water service, setting tables, etc. After the guests have been seated and their orders taken, they ask customers to support the event by placing a special “tip” for Special Olympics in the envelope on their table. Cash, check or credit card may be used. Donations by credit card can be accepted by manually writing in the information or by using an ipad/square devise provided by SOMN.
- However, it must be stressed that the “Tip-a-Cop” donation is in addition to the “real” server’s tip.

Recruiting Volunteer Servers

- Begin recruitment of law enforcement “celebrity waiters” as soon as the event dates are determined. You will need 4 to 6 officers for each shift, but recruit one or two extra in case someone is unable to attend.
- Keep in mind when recruiting that this is a great opportunity to involve retired officers, reserves and cadets and officers who do not participate in the Torch Run because they “do not run.”
- One method of promoting within the agency is to announce that you are recruiting volunteers at meetings/role calls, etc. and share information on any positive outcomes from the previous years “Tip-a-Cop” in your program.



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Recruiting Customers

- Encourage the volunteer “servers” to have their friends, families, and co-workers attend the event. A lot of fun from the event comes from having the officers serve their own families or the supervisors serve their subordinates.
- Ask your local restaurant to advertise the upcoming “Tip-a-Cop” event on the reader boards (if they have them) in front of the restaurant. Hang posters, when supplied.
- Advertise the event in police agency bulletin boards and newsletters and your social media channels if possible.
- Contact your Public Information Officer in advance to ensure maximum media exposure. Send a press release out 2 weeks prior to and the week of the event. SOMN can assist.

Bringing in the Bucks

- Have Special Olympics athletes participate in the event and interact with the officers. SOMN can arrange.
- Enlist a high profile person (Chief, Sheriff, local celebrity, pro-athlete) or Special Olympics athlete to be at the door greeting and explaining the purpose of the evening.
- Some programs had success playing up the law enforcement angle. For example, a department mascot such as “Trooper Bear” could greet customers. You may do fingerprinting on site. Badges, handcuffs, uniforms, police cars, and other law enforcement items keep customers’ interest.
- You may want to give Torch Run pins or T-shirts for very large donations over a certain amount. It is recommended not to sell T-shirts at this event, but instead, give a Torch Run T-shirt or hat (when available) as a gift to anyone who makes a contribution of \$20.00 or more. SOMN will provide.

Other Logistics of the Event

- Have your law enforcement volunteers arrive at the restaurant 30 minutes prior to the event. Dress for the event should be a uniform, Torch Run T-shirt/Agency Polo, uniform pants or dockers and comfortable shoes. Senior law enforcement officials in full uniform as greeters can have a strong impact on results.
- Keep the server duties for the officers simple. Suggested duties include drink refills and condiment delivery, or greeting.
- Keep careful track of the donation envelopes. Establish a central drop point to secure the cash.
- At the end of the evening, have the officer in charge count the donations with one other officer. Have both parties sign a receipt form agreeing to the amount collected and send a copy of this form to your state Special Olympics Program office and Torch Run liaison. It is also good to determine partial totals during the course of the event to keep the officers pumped up and motivated.

The most important element is to HAVE FUN and remember the event is to support Special Olympics!