



Commitment of Support Resources

Coaches know that you can have a great team, with everybody doing his or her best, improving their skills and having fun ... but if there is no commitment at all levels of the program, a Unified Sports program isn't going to be successful. The final building block to a successful experience is the commitment of resources and support.

At the **Program level**, raising funds to support to coaches' trainings and Unified Sports program needs is necessary; people are needed to manage competition events; and staff members are responsible for coordinating registrations, pre-event information gathering, committees and game officials, on-site divisioning and non-competitive activities at the culminating event.

In the spirit of shared responsibility, the local community program has its own role in showing support. The **Local Program** is responsible for training athletes and partners, as well as recruiting coaches. Additionally, it provides equipment, uniforms, and volunteers, as well as finding and securing practice facilities and competition venues.

Support also comes from the skilled **Unified Sports Coach**. The coach's responsibility rests with safeguarding and executing the philosophy and policies of Special Olympics and of Unified Sports. A coach must recruit the most appropriate athletes and partners for the team and impart onto them the principle of meaningful involvement that is essential.

As a coach gets to know his or her players through an understanding of each of them, the coach will discover new ways to motivate and encourage. Additionally, a coach needs to identify opportunities for camaraderie off the field to achieve the desired outcome of social inclusion.

The **role of the spectator** is far more important than most people think. The fans of Unified Sports teams provide the spark to fuel enthusiasm, engagement and achievement. Teams of all types appreciate an active fan base and actually improve their performance by tapping into energy flowing from the stands. Whether players are on the court, in the field or in the stadium, having cheering fans in the stands can be crucial to the motivation of a team, especially a Unified Sports team.

In a school environment when cheering for their teams, classmates gain a new perspective and admiration for the abilities of all people, not their disabilities. Project UNIFY's "*Fans in the Stands*" is a student-lead initiative which can engage the entire school in support of their teams. Building on the philosophy of social inclusion, *Fans in the Stands* can ensure that every team is cheered at every event, rain or shine, win or lose.