

Special Olympics Board Retreat Notes

On Tuesday, April 26, the board of directors and the staff of Special Olympics Iowa met to go through the Special Olympics International new 2016-2020 strategic plan, and to assess the progress of the current 2014-2018 Special Olympics Iowa strategic plan.

The meeting was used as a way to understand from the board and from the staff which areas of the current plan are going well and which areas need some attention. The tone of the meeting was a positive meeting that expressed desire and support to continue with the overarching pillars of success. The majority of the time was spent focused on identifying areas of improvement within each of the pillars.

The meeting concluded with committee meetings. Each committee needed to determine a single goal of achievement. The committees are responsible for providing an update at the July Board of Directors meeting regarding their progress with these goals.

Pillar 1 – Sustainable Capabilities Rating = 5

Below are areas the board and staff feel like we need to improve:

- Technology at the Office is an issue
 - Speed of the computers is slow.
 - When using remote access, users are getting disconnected while in the middle of a session.
 - Challenge for Area Directors
 - Decision to move server from Grimes building to a Cloud.
- Planning
 - Understand all the current events; create a calendar to foresee what is coming up. Hopefully eliminates over scheduling.
 - Staff needs to do work on desk manuals. This will assist with any potential succession plans.
- Communication
 - Improve communication around strategy, goals and objectives.

Pillar 2 – Movement and Leadership Rating = 6

Below are areas the board and staff feel like we need to improve:

- Coaching
 - We need to make coaching fun and easy.
 - Right now, the regulations/training around coaching are blockers to finding new coaches and to keep existing coaches.
- Training
 - Training is a pain point, too much training for coaches.
 - Traveling to other sites for training.

- Can we bring training to SOIA and present training in a group setting?
- Can we find a way to consolidate training for users to go through one session versus multiple sessions?
- Can we do our own on-line training videos?

Pillar 3 – Connect with the Fans and Funds. Rating = 7

Below are areas the board and staff feel like we need to improve:

- Identify new grant opportunities
- Work with existing and new partnerships to develop sponsorships. Example of Cargill at the Summer Games was a sponsor of some of the events.
- Develop relationships with companies that can provide a name and an opportunity for sponsorships.
- Review list of past corporate and individual donors and start reconnecting with the ones that are no longer financially supporting SOIA.
- Tap into the universities, especially students to drive awareness and a potential newer, younger donor base.
- As an organization, SOIA is very event heavy. We need to work to diversify this.
- Encourage board donations so we can achieve 100% giving.
- Encourage more sponsorships of money-raising events, like OTE.
- Engage new young staff to generate money-raising ideas.

Pillar 4 – Build Communities Rating = 6

Below are areas the board and staff feel like we need to improve:

- We need to continue to extend the reach of SOIA
 - Over 21 year individuals
 - Athletes of Color
 - Different levels of abilities
- What services do we offer to our athletes?
- Key part of being an athlete is “Fun, Friendship and Opportunity”
- Continue to expand our reach via social media.
- Encourage unified sports for all generations
 - Encourage leisure sports through this venue

Pillar 5 – Advance Quality & Sports Competition = 7

Below are areas the board and staff feel like we need to improve:

- Area Diversity

- Weather policy and how to communicate changes to schedules.
- Coaches Code of Conduct
 - The Area Director team needs to have the Coaches Code of Conduct sent to them.
- Quality of Facilities
 - Facilities at times are not up to par or Special Olympics activities get bumped in favor of other sports.
- “Non-Sanctioned” Activities
 - How do we develop an opportunity for athletes to “just go play” and not necessarily have to have a strict competition.
 - Think “open gym” or “open ice”.

Committee Goals

The following are the items each committee will work on over the next two – three months. Each committee is also responsible for providing an update to the Board at the July board meeting.

- **Governance Committee**
 - Continue updating of the SOIA by-laws.
- **Marketing and Communication**
 - Develop/Understand sponsorship levels
 - Create and consistent recognition program
 - Create an agency of record
 - Understand the SOIA Brand
- **Finance**
 - Retain an I/T expert to help resolve technology issues
 - Provide donor calendar of when monies come into SOIA.
- **Athlete Recruitment**
 - Develop an on-line communication platform
 - Bring back the Leadership Conference
 - Improve and increase communication
- **Strategic Planning Committee**
 - Develop accountability measures for committees
 - Share mid-board meeting electronic communication of updates from committees

Parking Lot

Throughout the meeting there were items/ideas brought as ideas that could further expand and improve SOIA. These are captured below:

- Provide a document of all training sessions and their cost.
 - Can SOIA pay for training sessions that have a fee?
 - Can SOIA develop on line training sessions?
- Bring back the Leadership Conference
- Develop agency partnerships.
 - Ted, Stuart, Jill to lead. Ex, UHC and their \$15k donation

- Encourage non-formal participation from athletes
- Expand unified sports and continue to engage the partners of the athletes.
- Improve communication around funding
- Create Coach Focus Groups. Topics include facilities and transportation