



## 2010 SPECIAL OLYMPICS NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

### **Purpose:**

The 2010 Special Olympics National Education Conference will provide an opportunity to engage educators while increasing their knowledge and skills to motivate, educate and activate students with and without intellectual disabilities. To that end, in collaboration with Dr. Mike Messerole, University of Nebraska-Omaha, Special Olympics Project UNIFY will host an Education Conference for special education and general education teachers and pre-service teachers.

### **Where and When:**

- Sunday, July 18 - Wednesday, July 21, 2010
- University of Nebraska-Omaha

### **Design:**

The National Education Conference builds on similar convenings offered by Dr. Messerole in past years and enhances these conferences with a focus on all teachers and all students. The four-day Education Conference will engage teachers in large and small group sessions focused on building their knowledge, skills and attitudes to motivate and educate students with and without intellectual disabilities.

The National Education Leadership Conference will also examine how Special Olympics Project UNIFY is an effective youth engagement, school climate and sports-oriented set of strategies that will identify future leaders of the movement.

The following topics are part of the curriculum and are consistent with the principles of equity, justice and effective teaching and learning:

- **Project UNIFY** (how this program can serve as a catalyst to create a movement where youth become agents of change)
- **40 Developmental Assets** (focus on students' gifts, talents and capabilities)
- **Social Networking** (understanding common communication strategies used by youth that can be employed in schools)
- **School Climate** (consistent manifestation of values and habits that create quality teaching and learning environments)
- **School and Community Collaborations** (maximizing community contributions to quality education experiences)
- **Youth Engagement** (effective strategies to engage students in education and leadership activities)
- **Physical Activity for Children of All Abilities** (use of sports to strengthen bonds between all youth in schools)

Among the unique Education Conference components are (1) interactions with students with and without intellectual disabilities in shared experiences focused on effective youth engagement and advocacy; and (2) teachers' peer exchanges to share and learn effective teaching and learning strategies.

The Education Conference faculty includes university faculty, national education and social leaders, current teachers and students. Education Conference registrants will be able to secure continuing education units of credit for their participation and successful completion of follow-up assignments.

**Outcomes:**

The measurable outcomes of the Education Conference are increased teacher knowledge and skills to:

- Effectively motivate, educate and activate students with and without intellectual disabilities;
- Create and sustain quality equitable school climates;
- Create sustainability school-community collaborations that benefit students, school and communities;
- Build a network of practitioners and a national conversation among educators and youth regarding the ability of Special Olympics and Project UNIFY to improve school climate, producing more engaged students who are achieving greater academic success;
- In addition to these impacts on individuals, the Education Conference will showcase the launch of the new SO Get Into It™ curriculum for adoption by schools.