

**Presentation Transcript**

Topic: Molding the future of children with intellectual disabilities beyond sports with Athletes Leadership Programme

Speaker: Tamil Selvi, Grace Orchard School & Lim Wei Zhi Jimmy, Student of Delta Senior School

Tamil Selvi: Good Morning everyone. My name is Tamil Selvi. I'm the Subject Head in student leadership and the Discipline Mentor of Grace Orchard School.

I'm going to share my journey as a sports volunteer from 2015 until now. In 2015, eight athletes and myself joined Team Nila as sports volunteers. We volunteered to give our support to our two athletes, Mohd Haziq and Mohd Farihin, who were participating in 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Para Games which was held in Singapore. After 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Para Games, my athletes needed more guidance and continuous mentoring. Hence, I decided to join Singapore Disability Sports Council in 2017 as a team manager. I joined Special Olympics in 2018, to know more about their programmes, and to help my athletes who needed more support in athletics, then moved into athletic leadership program. I'm still a volunteer in all these organizations.

I have been volunteering as a mentor, as a team manager and as an athletics coach. I have volunteered in the following events in 2015, as the teacher and mentor, volunteered for my two students who participated in 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Para Games in 400 meters and long jump. In 2017, I went with a team of athletes and coaches, as a team manager for Asian Youth Para Games to Dubai. In 2019, I brought a team of athletes as one of the athletics coach for Special Olympics World Summer Games to Dubai. I also went with team of athletes as a team manager for INAS Global Games to Brisbane. Lastly, as a mentor, I went with a team of athletes leaders and youth leaders for Youth for Inclusion Conference by Special Olympics Asia Pacific, which was held in Singapore.

What do I want to achieve as a volunteer? Through sports, I wanted to develop athletes' character, and other talents like leadership. I wanted athlete leaders to grow in their leadership skills and be a confident advocate for other athletes. Why do I want to be a volunteer? I wanted to spot other talents and to find more opportunities for athletes and athletic leaders to showcase their talents. This can happen only by collaboration with different organizations. Hence, I wanted to collaborate with other organizations.

As a volunteer, I play the role as a teacher, a mentor and a facilitator.

As a teacher, I work with athlete leaders and youth leaders to impart knowledge and values. Firstly, for athlete leaders, we conduct various trainings and emphasize on setting goals, which helps them to have a clear vision on leadership and their life. We conducted different workshops to teach athlete leaders different skills like self-management, time management, public speaking, and other leadership skills, and also provide different platforms to apply the learnt skills. Secondly, teach athlete leaders values such as, respect, responsibility, perseverance, and have courage while speaking out their thoughts during the training, and other platforms. Thirdly, we teach athlete leaders to be a confident speaker and also provide different platforms for them to practice. Last but not least, we also teach social skills. We conducted workshops on communication skills, which helps them to interact confidently with people from different walks of life in the community. Teach them how to respect the opinions of others, and how to be an advocate for other athletes. Most of the trainings are done by youth leaders and myself. Secondly, we train youth leaders in various areas, like awareness on athletes with intellectual disabilities. How to interact with athlete leaders and how to respect athlete leaders' opinions. Guide youth leader on creating PowerPoint slides for different trainings that is appropriate for athlete leaders to understand. Teach youth leader how to present confidently in front of the athlete leaders. And we also provide platforms for youth leaders to practice the learnt skills.

As you look at this picture, it shows online training on event assistance for athlete leaders, we create awareness platforms available in Special Olympics.

This picture shows shown on the screen is an online training for youth leaders on how to present their slides to athlete leaders, we had various skill trainings for athlete leaders and youth leaders in 2019.

What do I do as a mentor?

During my mentoring sessions, I value athlete leaders' opinions and preferences. This helps to build a positive relationship with athlete leaders. It helps me to mold the athlete leaders in their characters and teach them to focus on the vision for their lives. For example, if you look at this picture Siti Nurhayati has a vision. She dreams to become a professional athlete one day.

# INCLUSIVE SPORT CONFERENCE

What do I do as a mentor? Some examples. During mentoring sessions, I make athlete leaders see their own talents and abilities within them. Once I spot other talents in athlete leaders, I will try to provide opportunities with other organizations to allow them to showcase their talents. For example, athlete leader, Jimmy, is a confident speaker, he has a potential to be an emcee. Hence, he was given an opportunity to be an emcee in Prize Giving Day at Grace Orchard School. He received good comments from principal and teachers.

Another example, picture on the left is #NightChatWithSusanNg on Sunday, 24th February, on radio, [toggle.sg/93.8NOW](http://toggle.sg/93.8NOW) and MeRadio. Siti Nurhayati Binte Ali Askar Khan, an athlete leader, was sharing her experiences as an athlete. She was able to speak confidently and interact with Ms Susan. Picture on the right is, Irving Paul, taking an oath during Special Olympics competition.

More examples, you can see on the picture of Salihin, who is an Athlete Leader, speaks confidently at Youth for Inclusion Conference 2019.

To empower athlete leaders and youth leaders with leadership skills, and to provide lots of encouragements and motivations during the sessions. During the sessions, athlete leaders were given chances to ask question and give their comments.

We provide constructive feedback after the training sessions to youth leaders and athlete leaders, so, they can reflect and learn from the feedback given.

As a facilitator, during the sessions, we can encourage them to be a confident presenter, guide youth leaders to be an advocate for our athletes. Our youth leaders are the ambassadors. If you look at the picture, there is a confident interaction with youth leader and athletic leader during Youth for Inclusion Conference 2019.

As a facilitator, guide youth leaders to design, plan and guide youth leaders in projects, and presentations. This is a picture of a focus group discussion workshop on creating awareness with mainstream students. Currently, our athlete leaders and youth leaders are working with us in two new projects. First project is about creating awareness of our athletes with intellectual disabilities and to create awareness to the audience that they are no different from all of us. Second project is on "Stop Bullying". The target audience is mainstream school students who can be our advocate in spreading the message across the community.

# INCLUSIVE SPORT CONFERENCE

This picture is about sharing my opinions during the conference at Special Olympics Asia Pacific Youth For Inclusion 2019.

Last but not least, I would like to end with a quote which synchronize with my thoughts, “A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you, than you see in yourself, and helps bring it out of you”. Written by Bob Proctor.

Let's watch a short video on Athlete Leaders' and Youth Leaders' journey with me.

Tamil Selvi: Hope you have enjoyed the video. I have Lim Wei Zhi, Jimmy, one of my athlete leaders is here. He is 17 years old this year, an athlete leader with autism disorder. He's here to share with us his journey with me as an athlete leader in Special Olympics. Tell me about yourself, Jimmy.

Jimmy: Hi, I am Jimmy. I'm currently studying in Delta Senior School, Year 1. I was a head prefect for Grace Orchard School. My favorite hobby is playing computer games.

Tamil Selvi: How do you know Ms Selvi?

Jimmy: Previously, I was from Grace Orchard School. Ms Selvi was my discipline mentor and in charge of the student's leadership development.

Tamil Selvi: How has Ms Selvi guided you?

Jimmy: Ms Selvi was my mentor at school, she helped and guided me to set leadership goals as well as post school goals. She will ask me every single question, giving a feedback using the strategies to advise and prompt me in terms of my leadership qualities, it potentially helps me to think how to solve my problem in a situation such as a role model, and also to cope my emotions.

Tamil Selvi: How did you join as an athlete leader?

Jimmy: In 2019, Grace Orchard School gave me an opportunity to be part of an athlete leadership program in Special Olympics Singapore.

Tamil Selvi: Tell me more about your leadership experience.

## INCLUSIVE SPORT CONFERENCE

Jimmy: Before joining Special Olympics Singapore athlete leadership program as a prefect, I was asked to lead the school's morning assembly in Grace Orchard School. As I was shy, Ms Selvi encouraged me and practised with me before I gave the command. With her encouragement, I was able to do it. Since then, I started to have more confidence.

Tamil Selvi: Give me an example of your athlete leadership experience.

Jimmy: I was given an opportunity to participate in Special Olympics Asia Pacific Youth For Inclusion Conference, where I was given a platform to interact with youth leaders and athlete leaders from other countries and these opportunities to socialize helped me to speak confidently. I enjoy all the activities in the conference. Furthermore, I was given opportunities to socialize and communicate with others confidently.

Tamil Selvi: Do you have any other example about your athlete leadership experience?

Jimmy: Yes, even though I overcame my fear of speaking during my school's morning assembly, I was too shy to speak in front of a big group. Through Special Olympics Singapore athlete leadership program, I was trained in leadership skills such as public speaking, goal setting, personal grooming, self-management, and self-awareness workshops. Whenever I do not understand something, I am not afraid to ask Ms Selvi for assistance, she will teach and guide me, I grew even more confident. Because of Special Olympics Singapore training, Ms Selvi recommended me to become an emcee for Grace Orchard School's Prize Giving Day. I was selected and gave my best shot through what I learnt from the trainings. My principal and teachers complimented me on my confidence and clarity of speech during the presentation.

Tamil Selvi: Thank you Jimmy for this wonderful journey with me. Thank you!

Tamil Selvi: Teachers, Parents, Corporates, please come in and join us in this beautiful journey of volunteering and empower our athletes with intellectual disabilities with your knowledge and experiences.

Thank you, Special Olympics and Singapore Disability Sports Council for giving me an opportunity to volunteer. Thank you.