DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

FOR THON™ 2024

THON™

THON is committed to **improving the culture of our organization** and **removing inherently discriminatory practices** through education, outreach, and structural changes. We aim to create a **more diverse and inclusive environment with equitable opportunity** for every Penn State student and community member.

Kids Fashion Show, (pictured is the Regalado Family)

THON Weekend 2023

This document serves to hold THON 2024 Volunteers to a higher standard in their commitment to enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Updates will be made throughout the year as more action and/or changes are needed to keep this initiative and conversation going indefinably. The most up-to-date version of this document can be found HERE. As edits are made, notifications will be sent via the THON Volunteer Update.

To contribute to these continued efforts, please email communications@thon.org.

Previous Actions Made: Please view the THON 2023 Transparency Report for previous actions taken related to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

DIVERSITY: All the ways in which people differ, including but not limited to race, gender, age, national origin, self-identification, religion, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, and language.

EQUITY: The practice of acknowledging barriers and providing resources intended to overcome biases and imbalances, with specific recognition that not all people require the same accommodations.

INCLUSION: The creation of environments in which all people can be involved, valued, and respected.

ACCESSIBILITY:

Ensure that THON is accessible to all in the community.

- The **Entertainment Committee** will update and republish a *Spectator Accessibility Guide* detailing points of access and necessary information for THON Weekend attendees.

- THON Leadership will leverage expertise from the **Penn State Student Disability Resources Office** to assess the level of accessibility for THON Volunteers and supporters related to facilities, language barriers, sensory experiences, and available accommodations.

- Special Events and DEI Captains will meet to increase the accessibility of **special events** held before THON Weekend, such as the THON 5K.

- Any meeting held virtually will be available with **closed captioning**.

- **Dancer registration materials** will be reviewed by THON Leadership, ensuring all necessary information is gathered in an accurate and sensitive matter.

- A question will be added to the **CM Application** to request any accommodation needed for a student to carry out the duties of a position on given committee. Leaders on the committee will work with DEI Captains to provide any reasonable accommodation.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Hold THON's Leadership accountable for DEI initiatives.

- The **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Focus Group** will be made up of captains from each committee. This group has a project-based approach, with leadership creating change within their captain committees and will meet bi-weekly to discuss actionable items in the THON Community,

  ◇ The **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Projects Focus Group** is where captains from each committee who are working on DEI related tasks meet bi-weekly to discuss various projects and actionable items to implement within their captain committees. These meetings will be open discussion to further DEI initatives and create change in the THON Community.

  ◇ The **DEI Programs Focus Group** is a focus group that is *new to THON for THON 2024*. Its purpose is to implement programs across all THON Committees that will provide resources to Captains and Committee Members to improve awareness and knowledge about diversity, equity, and inclusions

- All THON Volunteers will be required to sign the **Code of Conduct** and will be held to outlined expectations.

  ◇ For THON 2024, the Code of Conduct will be rewritten, working to effectively protect volunteers and reframe expectations.

- **Feedback** from the Penn State and THON Communities will be requested throughout the year in various forms of communication, such as community meetings or surveys. Individuals can also submit feedback at any time through the anonymous feedback form.

- Committee Member **meetings will be capped at two hours each week**. If a captain is violating this expectation, committee members can report HERE.

APPLICATIONS & INTERVIEWS:
Utilize volunteer applications and interviews to continue THON's DEI initiatives.

- New committee members applications will be **name-blind** to captains during the application review process

- All THON Volunteers will be asked a **DEI-related question** during their interviews.
  - ◇ For THON 2024, these questions will be developed by the Diversity Equity, and Inclusion Lead and the Communications Director.

- **Specific attire** will NOT be an interview requirement for any position and attire will NOT impact an applicant's chances of becoming a THON Volunteer. Clear and consistent messaging regarding attire for interviewees will be provided.

- **Pronoun options** for applications and volunteer forms will be expanded. All forms will explicitly state what gathered pronoun information will be used for.

  All interview will take place in a **building and location** that is accessible to all.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS:
Build and strengthen relationships between THON and the community, with the understanding that THON has a significant impact on the Penn State Community at large.

- THON Leadership will meet with interested **student leaders** from other Penn State organizations to discuss how to amplify their voice and foster relationships with mutual benefit.

- THON Leadership will continue to develop mutually beneficial relationships with **resource centers at University Park.**

- THON will advertise **community events** through the THON Chair Update, the THON Volunteer Update, and committee member meetings, prioritizing events that are educational in nature and focus on DEI at Penn State.

EQUITY PROGRAMMING:
Reduce implicit and explicit bias among THON Volunteers.

- **Committee specific programming and training** will be implemented when possible.

- **Guest speakers** who are experts in their field will be consulted for input on relevant programming.

- **Educational programs and discussions** relating to DEI will be held bi-weekly for captains and monthly in committee meetings.

- All committees will have a **DEI liaison** who will help facilitate conversations in meetings.

- Captains and Committee Members will receive guidance in selecting a DEI liaison committee member.

ORGANIZATION RELATIONS:

Provide additional support for cultural, new, and/or smaller organizations by promoting inter-organization collaboration and developing additional resources.

- Relationships between established and new organizations will continue to be created to foster a greater sense of community through the ==New Organization Mentorship Program==.

- Increased support will be given to both cultural and new organizations interested in joining THON, with the goal of ensuring a sense of belonging and success.

- Support may come in various forms such as increased communication from a liaison, mentoring from established organizations, and sharing available resources.

- Incentives unrelated to the total fundraised will be created for cultural, new, and small organizations.

- ***Beginning for THON 2024*** there are liaisons specific to new and multicultural organizations. They will work to ensure that new and multicultural organizations are prepped for success. These captains will also facilitate the New and Multicultural Organization Program.

  ◇ The ==New Organization Mentorship Program== is dedicated to providing additional resources and advice from larger organizations to new organizations.

  ◇ This program partners each new mentee chair with a mentor chair from a larger organization. The mentor chair will act as a guide and additional resource to the mentee chair.

  ◇ The New Organization Mentorship program will also meet as a large group periodically throughout the year.

  ◇ The goal of the New Organization Mentorship Program is to ensure that new organizations feel welcomed as they enter the THON Community and find success in reaching their goals.

    - NOTE: ***As of THON 2024,*** many of the new organizations are also multicultural organizations. The New Organization Mentorship Program will therefore also serve as an additional resource for many multicultural organizations.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

Minimize barriers to entry by providing financial support for THON Volunteers who need funding to participate.

- Access to financial support for mandatory materials will be easy to locate and requests will only be viewed by the Finance Director and Executive Director.

  ◇ Requests for funding can be made HERE. This form is also available in the Committee Member and Captain Teams channels, on THON.org and THINK.

- The cost of being a THON Volunteer will be communicated in advance of when payments are required, ensuring enough time for volunteers to apply for funding.

  ◇ **2023 Committee Member Mandatory costs:**

    - On-Shift shirts- $15

    - Committee Bonding/Retreats- $20 per semester

    - Committee Member retreats will no longer take place out of the State College area and will not be overnight to further minimize cost.

◇ **2023 Captain costs:**
   ◆ Mandatory captain expenses will be published by early September. Optional costs/purchases will be included, as well as differences in cost between Captains and Captains with Committees.
◆ Minimizing the cost of being a THON Volunteer will be a priority in THON's leadership's yearlong decision-making.

RECRUITMENT:

Provide all community members with the opportunity to further their involvement in THON.

◆ A survey will be sent to captains about how much time per week is expected within their position. This information will be used to increase the **time commitment transparency**.
◆ Additional time commitments will vary by committee, but specific dates and times will be communicated in advance.

Develop a recruitment strategy that effectively reaches populations of students who may not have been previously.

◆ Recruitment materials will be approved by a member of the DEI Team, ensuring there is an **appropriate exemplification of THON Volunteers** without tokenizing students of diverse backgrounds The THON Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Lead will participate in Recruitment Focus Group.

REPORTING:

Ensure that reporting processes are effective and accessible to those in the THON Community, with information and concerns viewed by the appropriate people.

◆ THON Leadership will re-examine the **THON Weekend Bias Response Plan.**
   ◇ There will be a focus on the education of all volunteers and spectators regarding details of the plan to ensure that incidents of bias are properly reported.
◆ **Misconduct reports** can be made HERE or directly to any THON Captain or Director via email or, face-to-face meeting. Reports will be reviewed within 48 hours.
   ◇ Reporters have the option to report **anonymously.**
   ◇ Those who report do not have to be involved in THON in order to report. There will be improved communication with the public about the location of the reporting form and other reporting options.
   ◇ Reports will be viewed by the Executive Director, Communications Director, and THON Advisor.
   ◇ THON Captains will be required to report any information about a situation witnessed or reported to them by Committee Members to either the Communications Director or the Executive Director. This expectation will be made clear in the **Code of Conduct.**
   ◇ Reports can be made at any **THON event** via a texting service which will be clearly advertised to THON Volunteers and spectators attending.

TRANSPARENCY:

Create and publish a Transparency Report that discloses informational statistics related to DEI.

- THINK will ask volunteers' race/ethnicity/origin.
  - ◇ This data will not be available to leaders reviewing applications at any point.
  - ◇ This data will only be used by the DEI leadership team or to further THON's DEI efforts.
- An annual report will be generated on the statistics found to evaluate THON's volunteer demographics and track progress in DEI initiatives.
- This report will be made public by April 2024.