Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan for THON™ 2022

Mission:

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.

Introduction:

This document serves to hold THON 2022 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 indefinitely. The most up-to-date version of this document can be found on THON.org/documents. As edits are made, notifications will be sent via the THON Volunteer Update.

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

DEI Definitions

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 re sources 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.

Previous Actions Made:

Please view the THON 2021 Impact Report for previous actions taken related to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

THON 2022 Goals and Actions

Accessibility:
- Ensure that THON is accessible to all people in the community.
    - THON will work with an ASL interpreter to provide services for Deaf and hard-of-hearing volunteers at events leading up to THON Weekend.
    - Any meeting or interview held virtually will be available with closed captioning.
    - Important THON documents will be translated in several languages and large-print versions and readily available for student volunteers.

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 and will meet bi-weekly to discuss actionable items in the THON Community.
    - Future versions of the Transparency Report will include statistics on the effectiveness of DEI initiatives, and a DEI Impact Report will be made at the end of THON 2022.
    - All THON Volunteers will be required to sign the Code of Conduct which outlines consequences for inappropriate behavior, including potential removal for egregiously inappropriate behavior.
    - Committee Member meetings will be capped at two hours each week. If a Captain is violating this expectation, Committee Members can report here.

Applications and Interviews:
- Utilize volunteer applications and interviews to continue THON's DEI initiatives.
    - New Committee Member applications will be name-blind to Captains.
    - Before Captains select Committee Members, we will emphasize the notion that all PSU students are capable of being THON Volunteers, in any committee.
    - All THON Volunteers will be asked a DEI-related question during their interviews.
    - Virtual interviews will continue to be an option for THON Volunteers.
    - Volunteers will not be asked to wear business casual for their interview.

Community Relations:
- Build and strengthen relationships between THON and the community, with a specific focus on multicultural organizations and organizations serving underrepresented students.
    - THON leadership will meet with interested student leaders of other organizations to hear how to best amplify their voices and to learn more about their perspectives.
    - THON will advertise community events through the THON Chair Update, the THON Volunteer Update, and committee meetings, with a specific focus on events highlighting Penn State's diversity.
    - Guided conversations with the State College community will be held throughout the year through events such as the THON Community Roundtable.

Equity Programming:
- Reduce implicit and explicit bias among THON volunteers.
    - Mandatory bias trainings from Penn State will be provided to the Executive Committee and Captains.
    - Educational programs and discussions relating to DEI will be held biweekly in Captain meetings, and monthly in committee meetings.
    - All committees will have a DEI-liaison that will help to facilitate conversations in meetings.
    - Designated Communications Captains will participate in the Establishing Equity Through Conversation (EETC) Focus Group to educate themselves on DEI initiatives and to serve as a source of information for THON Volunteers. Resources consumed by the EETC will be made public to the entire THON Community.

Engagement:
- Strengthen engagement between organizations, with a specific focus on incorporating new organizations into THON.
    - Pairings between large and small/new organizations will be created to foster community.
    - Incentives unrelated to the total fundraised will be created for new/small organizations to participate in the future of THON.

Financial Support:
- Provide financial support for THON Volunteers who need funding to participate.
    - Access to financial support for mandatory materials (including, but not limited to the on-shift shirt and committee retreat) will be discrete and easy to locate.
    - Note that on-shift shirts are $10 and committee bonding/retreats are capped at $20 per semester. Requests for funding can be made here
    - Cost of being a THON Volunteer will be upfront and transparent, ensuring enough time to apply for funding.

Recruitment:
- Distribute appropriate recruitment materials beyond the communities that THON has previously reached.
    - Recruitment materials will be approved by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs Coordinator, ensuring that it appropriately exemplifies THON Volunteers, without tokenizing students of diverse backgrounds.
    - Recruitment materials will be distributed throughout the PSU community, with a focus on diverse communities.

Reporting:
- Ensure that reporting is accessible to volunteers and reviewed by the appropriate people.
    - Misconduct reports can be made here or directly to any THON Captain or Director via email, phone call, or face-to-face meeting.

- A page on THINK will be dedicated to DEI resources, including a link to report incidents to THON and/or Penn State, and resources to help with the after-effects of incidents.
- Reports will be reviewed within 48 hours.
- Anonymous reports will only be viewed by the Executive Director, Communications Director, and Advisor.

Transparency:
- Create and publish a transparency report that discloses statistics related to DEI.
  - THINK will ask for volunteers' race/ethnicity/origin.
    - Note that this data will not be viewed by the captain nor director reviewing the application.
  - A report will be generated on the statistics found, so that we can better understand the makeup of our volunteers, and to see if our DEI initiatives are working over the years.
  - This report will be made public by March 1st, 2022.