

# THON™ 2022 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Transparency Report

## 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:

The following report outlines the steps that THON took in 2022 to improve upon our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is essential to creating a safe, welcoming community for all volunteers, supporters, and families. We recognize that our efforts are not perfect. We are not experts in DEI, but we are actively taking actionable steps to transform our organization.

To see how our efforts continue to expand, please visit the THON 2023 Action Plan when published in Summer of 2022.

## THON 2022 Actions

### THON Action Plan:

- The THON 2022 Action Plan outlined goals and actionable items to improve equity within the THON Community. It was presented to all Directors, Captains, and Committee Members.
- The THON 2022 Action Plan can be found [here](#). A new version will be released each summer with an updated outline of goals and visions.

### Accessibility:

- A variety of service options for Deaf and hard of hearing volunteers were explored at events leading up to THON Weekend, including closed captioning and American Sign Language interpreters.
- Accessibility of available resources improved.
  - A DEI Resource Tab was created on THON.org. Resources under the tab include the THON 2022 Action Plan, Financial Aid Request Form, and the Discrimination/Harassment Reporting Form.
  - A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resource Packet was created and uploaded to THINK.THON. Volunteers were made aware of how to access these resources.

- THON Weekend accessibility improved through the usage of auto-generated captioning systems, assistive audio devices, and accessibility signage (such as signs for ADA seating, bathrooms, and elevators).
- An accessibility guide was created by the Entertainment Committee, which will inform spectators of any potentially triggering events (such as loud noises or flashing lights). Spectators, volunteers, dancers, and families can receive texts about upcoming events in the BJC during THON Weekend.

### **Accountability:**

- The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Focus Group, made up of one to two Captains from each committee, met bi-weekly to discuss actionable items in the THON Community.
- The Executive Director, Communications Director, and three Communications Captains met bi-weekly to report on current DEI projects and establish future ones.
- All THON Volunteers were required to sign and upload the THON Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct outlined appropriate and expected behavior, as well as potential consequences in a failure to uphold the Code.
- Committee meetings continued to be capped at two hours per week to ensure a reasonable time expectation for volunteers. If a captain violated this expectation, Committee Members could report them using a virtual form.

### **Applications and Interviews:**

- New Committee Member applications were name-blind to selecting Captains.
- Messaging surrounding the application process emphasized that all PSU students are capable of being THON Volunteers.
- All THON Volunteers selected in the fall were asked a DEI-related question in their interview.
- There was no business casual dress expectation for interviews

### **Community Relations:**

- THON leaders held a Community Roundtable that any PSU student could attend to share honest opinions and stories on THON and its culture.
- Relationships between THON and Student Resource Centers/Multicultural Organizations were strengthened by meeting with interested student leaders and staff.
- PSU community events were advertised throughout the year using the THON Chair Update, the THON Volunteer Update, and bullets in committee meetings.

### **DEI Focused Positions:**

- Three new Communications Captain positions were created for THON 2022 to focus on DEI initiatives: DEI Programs Coordinator, Volunteer Development Liaison, and University Relations Liaison.

- A new position for Committee Members known as a “DEI Committee Member” was established. Each committee had a DEI CM who attended facilitator trainings and led monthly conversations.
  - There were three facilitator trainings in total: one held by the Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity on identity/intersectionality, one held by Communications Captains on mental health, and one held by the Paul Robeson Cultural Center on bias and inclusive excellence.

### **Equity Programming:**

- THON Captains attended a mandatory racial bias training.
- Educational discussions relating to DEI-issues were held bi-weekly in all Captain meetings, led by the DEI Focus Group Captain.
  - These discussions focused on various topics such as why diversity, equity, and inclusion are important, gender and sexual diversity, and prejudice.
- Educational discussions relating to DEI-issues were held monthly in all Committee Member meetings, led by the DEI CM.

### **Engagement:**

- Large and small/new organizations fostered relationships through the Organization Shadowing Program, allowing for collaboration within the THON Community.
- THON recognized small organizations for their efforts and impact through Organization of the Month nominations, as well as a shoutout video during THON Weekend.
- DAR Alumni Engagement created an incentive program for alumni that was not based on financial contribution.
- R&R Fundraising Safety continued to create incentives for volunteers that were not based on financial contribution.

### **Financial Support:**

- Accessibility to financial support for mandatory materials (including, but not limited to on-shift shirt and committee retreat) improved by regularly sharing the resource. Financial support could be accessed through an online form on THON.org, think.thon.org, or by talking to a Captain/Director.
- Costs of being a THON Volunteer were upfront and transparent, with enough time to apply for and receive funding.
- THON no longer expected Captains with Committees to front the cost of committee merch by having Committee Members order their shirts independently.
- Committee retreat costs were capped at \$20 per semester and on-shift shirt costs were kept at \$10.
- Supply Logistics initiated a project to collect old clothes/common objects from THON weekend to resell at a reduced/free price.

## **Recruitment:**

- Recruitment materials such as the Welcome Week PPT and Recruitment Pamphlet were approved by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs Coordinator.
- Public Relations focused on including all family stories on THON's Instagram, regardless of what the family looked like.
- An expanded effort was made to reach diverse communities within the PSU community.
  - A THON informational video was shown at International Student Orientation.
  - Recruitment materials were distributed in various areas of campus such as the HUB and on-campus dining halls.

## **Reporting:**

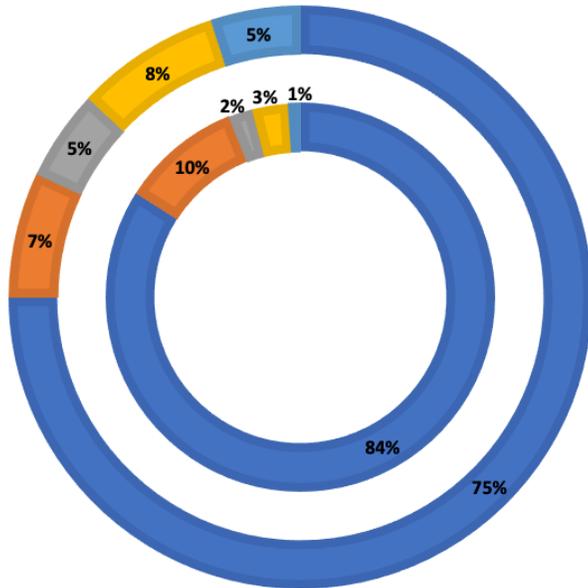
- Several modes for submitting reports were provided to volunteers: an online reporting form, an email, a phone call, or directly speaking to any THON Captain or director. This information was presented to all Directors, Captains, and Committee Members.
- Reporters had the option to remain anonymous or give their name. All reports were approached the same regardless of if they were anonymous or not.
- All reports were reviewed within 3 academic days of submission. Reports were only viewable by the Executive Director, the Communications Director, and the THON Staff Advisor.
- THON implemented a plan to report acts of bias or hate during THON Weekend that would warrant immediate response from Captains, Directors, staff, and police.

## **Transparency:**

- This Transparency Report was published with information on what DEI Progress has occurred and the demographic information of our volunteers.
  - Demographic statistics were collected from volunteers on a voluntary basis. Individual stats were not viewable to Captains or Directors. The stats of those who chose to disclose can be found on the following page.

## RACE, ETHNICITY, AND ORIGIN OF PSU UP STUDENTS VS THON VOLUNTEERS

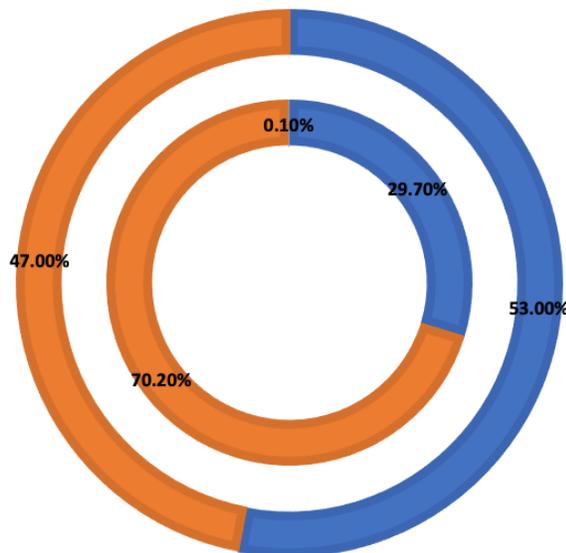
■ White 
 ■ Asian 
 ■ Black or African American 
 ■ Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin 
 ■ Other race, ethnicity, or origin



**Outer Circle = PSU University Park Students**  
**Inner Circle = THON Volunteers**

## GENDER IDENTITY OF PSU UP STUDENTS VS THON VOLUNTEERS

■ Male 
 ■ Female 
 ■ Other/Not Listed



**Outer Circle = PSU University Park Students**  
**Inner Circle = THON Volunteers**