

**SPREAD THE WORD  
TO END THE WORD**  
**03.07.18**

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# R-WORD CAMPAIGN

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March 7, 2018

2018 TOOLKIT  
SPECIAL OLYMPICS KANSAS  
[kssso.org](http://kssso.org)

***Special Olympics***  
*Kansas*



2018 Spread the word to end the word

**SPREAD THE WORD  
TO END THE WORD**

March 7, 2018

**Special Olympics Kansas**

5280 Foxridge Drive

Mission, KS 66202

Dear School Partner,

Special Olympics Kansas is asking for your help in spreading the word to end the word this year. The word, commonly referred to as the “R-Word,” is retard or retarded. The R-word hurts because it is exclusive. It's offensive. It's derogatory.

Our campaign asks people to pledge to stop saying the R-word as a starting point toward creating more accepting attitudes and communities for all people. Language affects attitudes and attitudes affect actions.

We ask that you use student leaders to create a campaign within your school and we have developed this toolkit to help get them started.

Our goal in Kansas is to get 5,000 online pledges this year, but we need your help to get the word out. This is a great opportunity for all students in your school to get involved in an important cause, take part in a service project, and take the pledge to live unified.

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> year for the R-Word Campaign “Spread the Word to End the Word” and the annual day of awareness is scheduled for March 7, 2018. Campaigns can begin now or can be centered around that date.

**Visit our website [kso.org](http://kso.org) and click the R-Word Campaign tab from the main menu to complete your intent to participate form and see some example PSAs from past years.** On the R-Word page you will find a button you can click to “Pledge Now”.

It doesn't cost anything to participate in this campaign and we hope you will take part. We look forward to seeing how you and your students make a difference.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

**Heather Waters | Sr. V.P. Communications | Special Olympics Kansas**

5280 Foxridge Drive | Mission, KS 66202 | P: [913.236.9290 ext. 112](tel:913.236.9290) | F: [913.236.9771](tel:913.236.9771)

Together, we can achieve. [www.kso.org](http://www.kso.org) | [watersh@kso.org](mailto:watersh@kso.org)

Facebook: Special Olympics Kansas

Twitter & Instagram: @soKansas

## 2018 CAMPAIGN CHECKLIST

### Before Event

	Read R-Word Campaign Toolkit
	Form a committee of students to work on the project
	Decide on type of project
	Submit intent to participate form at <a href="http://kssso.org/r-word-campaign/">kssso.org/r-word-campaign/</a>
	Create project timeline
	Gather needed materials

### Day of / During Event

	Implement plan
	Take photos of your event
	Post photos/testimonials on social media tagging Special Olympics Kansas Facebook: Special Olympics Kansas Twitter and Instagram: @sokansas

### After Event

	Keep the movement going in your community
	Encourage people to take the pledge
	Volunteer at a Special Olympics Kansas event ( <a href="http://kssso.org/volunteer/ways-to-volunteer/">http://kssso.org/volunteer/ways-to-volunteer/</a> )
	Learn about how to begin a Unified sports team at your school ( <a href="http://kssso.org/sports-competitions/unified-sports/">http://kssso.org/sports-competitions/unified-sports/</a> )
	When your certificate of participation comes notify your school leaders and community of your participation

## FACT SHEET

### WHO

Spread the Word to End the Word was founded in 2009 by college students Soeren Palumbo (Notre Dame 2011) and Tim Shriver (Yale 2011) and continues to be led by passionate young people, along with Special Olympics athletes and Best Buddies participants across the United States and in many other parts of the world.

### WHAT

Spread the Word to End the Word is an ongoing effort to inspire respect and acceptance through raising the consciousness of society about the R-word (retard, retarded) and how hurtful and disrespectful words can be toward people with intellectual disabilities.

The campaign, created by youth, is intended to engage schools, organizations and communities to rally and pledge their support at [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org) and to promote the inclusion and acceptance of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

### WHEN

The annual day of awareness is held the first Wednesday of March; this year it is March 7. While most activities are centered on or near that annual day in March, people everywhere can help spread the word throughout their communities and schools year-round through pledge drives, youth rallies and online activation.

### WHERE

All 50 states and around the world. This program is not limited to any specific geographic area as people with intellectual disabilities live in communities around the globe.

### WHY

Respectful and inclusive language is essential to the movement for the dignity and humanity of people with intellectual disabilities. However, much of society does not recognize the hurtful, dehumanizing and exclusive effects of the R-word.

### HOW

Visit [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org) to learn how you can **Spread the Word to End the Word**.

Language affects attitudes. Attitudes impact actions. Make your pledge for #Respect today at [kssso.org](http://kssso.org).

## EVENT AND ACTIVATION IDEAS

**Spread the Word to End the Word®** relies on grass-roots activities to create the majority of the campaign's impact. Here are ideas on how you can participate locally in **Spread the Word to End the Word**.

1. Hold a local pledge event at school or in your community. Set up a laptop or tablet to encourage people to sign the [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org) pledge page on the spot and/or create a banner for people to sign on the spot.
2. Work with local sports teams to participate in a halftime event to promote **Spread the Word to End the Word**.
3. Other Ideas for individuals, small group or large groups:
  - Create leaflets
  - Use talking points from this toolkit
  - Hang posters
  - Create and hand out stickers
  - Send e-mails
  - Text /call your family and friends
  - Create your own **Spread the Word to End the Word Youth Rally**
  - Use your social networks on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn
  - Send an Evite to friends to take the pledge and spread the word online
4. Print and distribute leaflets throughout your community.
5. Notify the press. Call local radio shows and write letters to the editor of your local newspaper using the samples provided in this kit.
6. Post a comment to an online social message board sharing your thoughts about the R-word and its abuse in our society.
7. Create a video speaking out against the use of the R-word, post it online and share it on our Facebook page (Special Olympics Kansas) and tag us on Twitter (@soKansas) so we can add it to the growing list of videos at [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org). Share the link with your friends and family.
8. Post your event's time and location in the community events section of your hometown newspaper or in your school newspaper or Web site. Don't forget to register your event on our website - <http://www.specialolympics.org/RegionsPages/RegisterEvent.aspx> and email [pr@kssso.org](mailto:pr@kssso.org).

## KEY MESSAGES AND TALKING POINTS

It is time we **Spread the Word to End the Word™** and build awareness for society to stop and think about the use of the R-word. The word “retard” or “retarded,” is hurtful and painful and whether intended or not, is a form of bullying. Most people don’t realize this word is a form of hate speech, but that’s what it feels like to millions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and friends. The R-word is just as cruel and offensive as any other slur. Visit [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org) to make your pledge today. Eliminating the use of this word is a step toward respect.

- Young people around the world are taking a stand and raising awareness of the dehumanizing and hurtful effects of the R-word and are helping encourage others to think before they speak.
- *Youth leadership and athlete advocacy is extremely important to our history and our future for the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign. Special Olympics is empowering individuals to speak up about the issue. Over 700,000 people have taken the pledge. Use this tweet-ready text to get the word out: I pledge #Respect through my words & actions. Will you? Pledge now to create communities of inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities at <http://r-word.org>.*
- Did you know the increasing use of the R-word in today’s society further perpetuates the stigma and negative stereotypes that face people with intellectual disabilities?
- *Special Olympics is leading a global youth movement via a new marketing campaign aimed at shifting the public’s misperceptions about the organization and people with intellectual disabilities. Through marketing activations and events, we will be challenging the youth of the world to become the first unified generation – one that champions inclusion and unity through activities where individuals with and without intellectual disabilities participate together. We are empowering youth to make change in their communities. Visit [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org) to see how you can make change.*
- Up to three percent of the world’s population have intellectual disabilities - that’s almost 200 million people around the world. It’s one of the largest disability populations in the world.
- Special Olympics’ Multi-National Public Opinion Study of Attitudes toward People with Intellectual Disabilities, conducted by Gallup, reveals that throughout the world, **over 60 percent of people still believe that people with intellectual disabilities should be segregated in schools and in the workplace.** This is intolerable. We need massive attitude change now to attack and reverse the stigma that is destructive to the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and a barrier to growth.
- In Maria Shriver’s recent national report, titled The Shriver Report Snapshot: Insight into Intellectual Disabilities in the 21st Century, findings reveal that although young Americans have more progressive attitudes toward and expectations for people with intellectual disabilities, **young Americans, especially men, find using the word ‘retard’ acceptable for many when used to tease friends or oneself, not in reference to people with a clear intellectual disability.** Some of the key findings of the snapshot reveal include:
  - 89% of Americans think it is offensive to call someone with a clear intellectual disability “Retarded”
  - 56% of Americans feel it is not offensive to refer to oneself as “Retarded” when they make a mistake
  - 38% of Americans feel it is not offensive to call a friend “Retarded” when they do something foolish
- Language affects attitudes. Attitudes impact actions. Make your pledge to choose respectful people first language at [www.R-word.org](http://www.R-word.org).

### SAMPLE VIDEO MESSAGING SCRIPTS

- I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm asking you to join me to help Spread the Word to End the Word. Language affects attitudes. Attitudes impact actions. So make your pledge now to use respectful people first language and pledge respect at [www.R-word.org](http://www.R-word.org).
- I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and it's time we **Spread the Word to End the Word™** and build awareness for society to stop and think about their use of the R-word. Most people don't think of this word as hate speech, to millions of people with intellectual disabilities, their families and friends, that's what it feels like. The R-word is just as cruel and offensive as any other slur. Visit [www.R-word.org](http://www.R-word.org) to make your pledge today.
- I'm, \_\_\_\_\_ and I want you to join me in taking a stand to raise awareness of the hurtful effects of the R-word. The language we choose affects everyone around us. Help build communities of inclusion by pledging to end the use of the R-word, and then **Spread the Word to End the Word** to your friends. Go to [www.R-word.org](http://www.R-word.org) and pledge now.
- I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and I've pledged to stop using the R-word and pledge respect for everyone. Have you? Visit [www.R-word.org](http://www.R-word.org) and make your pledge now!
- I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and as a fan of respect I'm pledging to not use the word 'retard' because I recognize that my choice of language impacts everyone around me. Join me and 700,000 others by making your pledge to stop using the R-word at [www.R-word.org](http://www.R-word.org)
- I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm pledging to help raise awareness about the hurtful effects of the R-word. Our choice of language affects the attitudes of those around us and shapes how we perceive our fellow human beings. Join me in choosing to use respectful people first language by making your pledge at [www.R-word.org](http://www.R-word.org) today.
- I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and I want to let you know that you can call people with intellectual disabilities a lot of things – a sister, a brother, a friend, a champion, a leader, an athlete, a runner, a singer, an artist, a colleague.....a human being. There are a lot of words to describe people with intellectual disabilities, but the R-word isn't one of them. Join me at [www.R-word.org](http://www.R-word.org) and take the pledge today.

**TEMPLATE LETTER TO MEDIA** (Customize and send this letter to local newspapers)

Dear Editor,

As [publication name] is a leader in driving local culture, we need your support, and the support of your readers, for the **Spread the Word to End the Word™** campaign to help make a stand against a derogatory word. The word “R-word,” otherwise known as “retard,” has found a place in common language. While the use of this word can be casual, is hurtful to millions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities have had to overcome the challenges society has put forth through stereotypes for too long. It is time for a change and you and your readers can help.

Special Olympics Kansas athletes/Best Buddies participants accomplish great things, are members of our local communities and deserve the same respect and dignity that each of us expects from others in return.

Help drive much needed change that will bring acceptance and inclusion to our community – include the R-word into your “Not Fit to Print” publishing guidelines alongside other hurtful and profane words. With your publication reaching a large portion of our community, you have a large influence and can help us get members of the community to take the pledge at [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org). If the role of a local leader like [PUBLICATION] is to inform and effect positive change in the community, what better way than helping us to **Spread the Word to End the Word**? In turn, the support will create communities of acceptance and inclusion for all people. Please support our mission and help us get your readers to pledge at [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org).

Sincerely,

[NAME]