



League of Dreams, Inc.

Volunteer Manual

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Introduction

What is League of Dreams?

League of Dreams is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to

- Serving children with physical and developmental disabilities, ages 5-22 in Kern County, which would (sometimes) otherwise be unable to participate in sports.
- Creating an opportunity for children with disabilities to compete in sports programs while fostering relationships, and building team and life skills.

League of Dreams is primarily volunteer run and community funded.

Mission Statement

The mission of the League of Dreams is to give every child a chance to play by providing sports training, team camaraderie and competitive sporting opportunities for athletes with disabilities.

Motto

“Every child should have the chance to play!”

For the sake of the children’s emotional and psychological support, we refer to them as athletes. PLEASE – whenever you refer to the children or to what League of Dreams does, do not use harsh words. Remember, our goal is to lift the children up, not to depress them or take away their hope.

History of League of Dreams

The **League of Dreams** was created and founded in 2007 by Tim Terrio of TERRIO Physical Therapy and Fitness. What started as an idea became reality very quickly in March 2007; the **League of Dreams** started its inaugural year with baseball having less than 50 kids signed up. The league added basketball in the fall of 2007 to keep activities going. The league was then nominated and received the Beautiful Bakersfield Award for All American City Tradition, Civic/ Non- Profit.

In 2012, with the help of county supervisor Mike Maggard and many other donors and community members, the **League of Dreams** opened Abilities Field, the very first adaptive baseball field in Bakersfield at Fruitvale Norris Park.

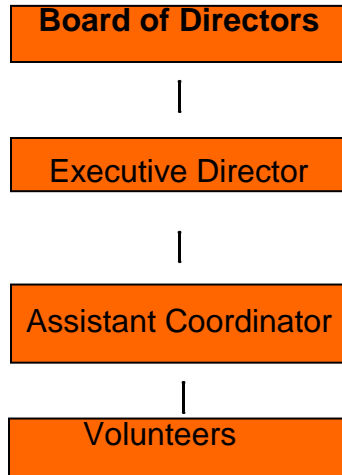
The 2012 **League of Dreams** Baseball season had over 165 registered players after the announcement that the program would be free for all children with disabilities because of the fundraising efforts of former Chicago White Sox third baseman Brent Morel, a Bakersfield native, at the 1st Annual Gala and Auction event.

In 2017, Dance was added as a program in partnership with Kern Dance Alliance.

Code of Ethics

- The primary responsibility of each facilitator (coach, angel, aide, parent, volunteer etc.) is to assist each athlete to reach his/her maximum level of performance and enjoyment of the team athletic experience.
- Each facilitator shall encourage hard work and honest effort that will lead to improved performance and participation
- Each facilitator shall treat all athletes with respect and dignity.
- Each facilitator shall work co-operatively with fellow facilitators.
- Each facilitator shall treat with respect the statements and actions of fellow facilitators and athletes.
- Each facilitator shall provide for the general welfare, safety, health and well being of the athletes.
- Each facilitator will respect the decisions of the referees/officials of all events.
- Each facilitator will set a good example for the athletes by exhibiting good behavior.
- Each facilitator will refrain from behaviors (drinking alcohol, smoking, language, etc.) that are not inherently beneficial to the spirit and intent of **League of Dreams** during events.
- Any conduct considered unethical and generally not in the spirit and intent of the founders for the **League of Dreams** shall be governed and or dealt with at their discretion.

Organization and Structure of the League of Dreams



League of Dreams is governed by a Board of Directors (BOD). The Board consists of:

League of Dreams Board Members

President	Susan Lara
Vice President	Jim Luff
Secretary	Jenee Sakamoto
Treasurer	Tara Tobin
Member	Tabatha Mills
Member	Felicia Schoepfer
Member	Robin Blanquette
Member	Ame Elaiho-Ortiz
Member	Wendi Wanner
Member	Carlos Betancourt
Immediate Past President	Steve Sanders
Executive Director	Jessica Mathews

Responsibilities of a Facilitator (Volunteer)

- a.** Facilitators shall place the health and safety of **League of Dreams** athletes above all else.
- b.** Facilitators shall abide by the letter and spirit of the rules and be responsible for conducting himself or herself in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. Facilitators who do not conduct themselves in this manner, or who are offensive by action or language toward athletes, other facilitators, volunteers, opponents, officials, and/or spectators, may be prohibited from participation.
- c.** Facilitators shall be knowledgeable of all existing **League of Dreams** goals and guiding principles, and prepare their athletes prior to competition in accordance with those guidelines.
- d.** Facilitators must strive to be well prepared and current in order that all duties in the respective discipline are fulfilled with competence.
- e.** Facilitators shall ensure that athletes compete in events within their sport which challenge their potential and are appropriate to their safety and ability.
- f.** Facilitators shall be honest and instruct athletes to compete with the maximum effort that the athlete is capable of in all practices and competitions.
- g.** Team Facilitators shall ensure that athletes of all ability levels on a team participate in every game.
- h.** Facilitators must treat information acquired while volunteering with confidentiality.

Volunteer Opportunities

Throughout the year, League of Dreams hosts multiple fundraisers, attends several community events, and continues to build year-round support to ensure durability of the organization. Due to low staffing, it is vital that volunteers step up to form committees to plan and execute such events.

Committee Chair- Participation as a chair involves: directing committee meetings, planning budget and program details for events, working side by side with the ED* to ensure proper planning, and engaging the committee to properly execute the event.

Committee Member- As a committee member, volunteers are expected to attend meetings, offer ideas to ensure the success of events being planned, work with the Director or Committee Chair through planning and execution, and recruit volunteers for the event. Planning for most events takes 3-4 months, but some require less/more than others.

Special Events- Special events volunteers and committee members help with the planning and organizing of an event. Events may include, but are not limited to the golf tournament, Gala, Autism on the Run and Breakfast with Santa. Duties may be discussed with the committee chair or ED.

Team Parent- Team parents are responsible for being the life line between the ED* or Coordinator and the families and volunteers on their team. They call each player's family and angels (if not directly related to the player) to let them know about game times, opening/ closing day activities, changes in schedules and snack schedules. If for any reason there is a change or something that comes up, the ED or Coordinator will call the team parents. Team parents also have the option to create banners or posters for their team.

Coach- Coaches are responsible for coordinating the players and angels in line-ups and games. They are the main teaching facilitator. Coaches work with team moms to insure that players are at games. Coaches may also give teaching techniques to the angels to follow through. Coaches communicate with other coaches on needs and wants for their games and coordinate time adjustments with Referee/ Umpires

Angel- Angels are our athlete helpers and supporters. Angels' main responsibility is to insure the safety of their assigned athlete. They are also responsible for teaching and carrying out goals and objectives of the sport; teaching athletes the rules of the game. Angels are to be at every game and communicate with their team mom of any needs or changes

Snack Bar Manager- The snack bar manager is in charge of running the snack bar at every game. The SB* manager is to report to the ED and communicate inventories and monies. The SB manager is also in charge of the volunteers helping in the snack bar.

Snack Bar Worker- Snack bar workers are to help in the sales of snack bar items. SB workers are to report and communicate with the SB manager. SB workers are to work the times they are scheduled.

Referee/ Umpire- Referees and umpires are to facilitate and coordinate games and to manage the time and length of games. Refs and Umps are to directly communicate with ED or coordinator if there are any problems or concerns. Refs and Umps are to also communicate with coaches with regard to game times including start, half, & end times.

Timekeeper- Timekeepers are needed for Basketball season to ensure games are run according the rules set forth by the organization. One timekeeper per game is needed.

Information Table (at events) - Information table workers are volunteers that help get information about LoD to the public at special events. Some events may include, but not limited to LoD and non-LoD events.

Game Day Set up/ Clean up- Each season, equipment and supplies are needed for every game. Volunteers arrive one hour before games begin to prepare equipment for play.

Key: ED- Executive Director LoD- League of Dreams SB- Snack Bar

Understanding the Development of Children

This section is designed to help our volunteers understand ages, diagnoses, and developmental stages of our athletes. Please understand that this will only give you a broad description and may not give you all the information you will need for your athlete. It should also be mentioned that many of our athletes may be older, but function at the level of a younger age (e.g. you may have a 13 year-old who functions as a 6 year-old. You would then alter your perspective of that athlete's abilities). The best way to understand a child's needs is to consult the parents/ caregivers and the child him/herself.

Chronological Ages

Age Range: 5-6

Tend to:

- work best in small, non-competitive groups
- aim to please
- have short attentions spans – 20 minutes is ideal
- have difficulty with body control, eye/hand coordination, endurance, sharing, taking turns, making decisions, completing tasks

Age Range: 7-9

Tend to:

- work best in small groups, begin to be interested in sports
- begin to be individual thinkers
- play games with rules
- have memory develop considerably
- have difficulty taking turns, making decisions, completing tasks
- be vulnerable to bullying and can feel lonely and dejected

Age Range: 10-13

Tend to:

- be daring, aggressive, critical, boisterous, argumentative, rough-ready, defiant, less obedient, rebellious or docile to family
- camouflage feelings toward family
- interpret criticism of adults as personal feelings against them
- display fads and extremes in dress, speech, and mannerisms
- feel keen pressure to succeed and may even use dishonest methods to win recognition
- assert themselves better as individuals
- tire easily, but are reluctant to admit it
- have a voracious or "picky" appetite
- be very social or a loner
- be self-absorbed
- be interested in sports/ or not
- typically, females interested in opposite sex more than boys

Age Range: 14-17

Tend to:

- be interested in the opposite sex
- can develop crushes on angels
- females often take lots of time preparing in morning
- very social or a loner
- self-absorbed
- peer sensitive
- interested in sports/ or not
- critical of others

Age Range: 18-22

Tend to:

- crave independence
- prefer to complete a task for him/herself
- want to help
- have a decent understanding of what he/she wants

Diagnoses

The **League of Dreams** encourages volunteers to find out as much as possible about the athlete(s) you serve. To have a clear comprehension of what specific needs he/she has gives you insight into how best you can give them support. We have chosen to list some diagnoses that many of our athletes have, but this does not begin to cover all of the disabilities and diagnoses that we accept into our programs.

Autism and Asperger's Syndrome-

People with autism attend school, work, participate in decisions that affect them, and contribute to society in many wonderful ways. The term autism covers a spectrum of conditions from severe to the highest functioning, which is Asperger's syndrome.

Some ideas of how to interact with a child with autism are:

- Communicate visually if possible. Many people with autism think in pictures, not language. Pictures are often their first language, and words are their second.
- Avoid long strings of verbal instructions. If the child can read, write the instructions down on a piece of paper. Most persons with autism are unable to remember sequences.
- Motivate specific subject matter conversations. Many autistic children get fixated on one subject such as trains or maps. The best way to deal with fixations is to use them to motivate the athlete.
- Offer to write information down for them. Many autistic children have problems with motor control in their hands, which can totally frustrate the child.
- Protect their ears from loud boisterous sounds. Loud sounds often hurt their ears, like hitting a nerve. The fear of a dreaded sound can cause bad behavior.

- Minimize fluorescent light exposure. Some autistic people are bothered by visual distractions and fluorescent lights.
- Provide calming objects and a quiet place. Be sure to check with your athlete's parents or legal guardians for specifics on what that might be for your athlete.
- Provide one type of interactive stimulus at a time. Some nonverbal children and adults cannot process visual and auditory input at the same time.
- Provide structure of rules and guidelines in various places. You may need to go over rules frequently.
- Schedules can be very important, comforting, and necessary for the athletes' feeling of well-being.

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)-

Individuals with ADHD exhibit behavior that is often seen as impulsive, disorganized, aggressive, overly sensitive, emotional, or disruptive. Those with ADHD have a decreased ability to self-regulate their actions and reactions toward others. Their social interactions with others in their environment are often filled with misunderstandings and miscommunications.

Children with ADHD show signs of inattention, hyperactivity, and/or impulsivity in specific ways.

These children:

- Are in constant motion
- Squirm and fidget
- Do not seem to listen
- Have difficulty playing quietly
- Often talk excessively
- Interrupt or intrude on others
- Are easily distracted
- Do not finish tasks

Some behaviors can appear to be ADHD-related, but rather may be caused by medical, psychological or life change issues.

Children with ADHD need consistent rules that they can understand and follow. People often criticize children with ADHD for their behavior, but it is more helpful to seek out and praise good behavior. Volunteers should:

- Provide clear, consistent expectations, directions, and limits. Children with ADHD need to know exactly what others expect from them.
- Set up an effective discipline system. If your athlete is not responding to the cues and rules that are expected during games, you may need to set up and reward appropriate behavior and respond to misbehavior with alternatives such as time out or loss of privileges. Such a behavior plan should only happen in collaboration with the Executive Director and athlete's parents.
- Recognize the energy level of your athlete and be prepared.

People with ADHD are often exceptionally creative. The daydreaming that is a hallmark of ADHD makes a person well-suited to a career in music, art, or entertainment. People with ADHD are very sociable. Others are drawn to

them because of their spontaneity, liveliness, enthusiasm, and flexibility. Although people with ADHD find it difficult to concentrate on mundane tasks, they are exceptionally driven when working on a project of personal interest. This tenacity can be a huge asset later in life. Many people with ADHD have above average intelligence.

Cerebral Palsy-

Cerebral palsy is a disorder of movement, muscle tone or posture that is caused by an insult to the immature, developing brain, most often before birth.

People with cerebral palsy may have difficulty with swallowing and commonly have eye muscle imbalance. People with cerebral palsy may have reduced range of motion at various joints of their bodies due to muscle stiffness.

The effect of cerebral palsy on functional abilities varies greatly. Some people are able to walk while others aren't able to walk. Some people show normal to near normal intellectual function, but others may have intellectual disabilities. Epilepsy, blindness or deafness also may be present.

People with cerebral palsy often have underlying developmental brain abnormalities.

Down Syndrome-

Down syndrome is a genetic disorder caused when abnormal cell division results in extra genetic material from chromosome 21. This genetic disorder, which varies in severity, causes lifelong intellectual disability and developmental delays, and in some people it causes health problems.

Down syndrome is the most common genetic chromosomal disorder and cause of learning disabilities in children.

Better understanding of Down syndrome and early interventions can greatly increase the quality of life for children and adults with this disorder and help them live fulfilling lives.

The following are some of the common behavior concerns reported:

- Wandering/running off—the most important thing is the safety of the child. You may want to keep an extra close watch on your athlete as well as letting other companions within your cabin know to help you.
- Stubborn/oppositional behavior—Oppositional behavior may be due to communication frustrations and/or language problems or triggered by a specific event. Children with Down syndrome often attempt to distract people when they are challenged with a difficult task.
- Attention problems—children with Down syndrome can have ADHD.
- Anxiety disorders, language processing problems and hearing loss can also present as problems with attention.

- Obsessive/compulsive behaviors—Seen more commonly in younger children, examples range from wanting the same chair at the table to repetitive behaviors such as dangling beads or belts when not engaged directly in an activity. While the number of compulsive behaviors is no different than those in typical children at the same mental age, the frequency and intensity of the behavior is often greater in children with Down syndrome.

Epilepsy-

Epilepsy is a central nervous system disorder (neurological disorder) in which nerve cell activity in the brain becomes disrupted, causing seizures or periods of unusual behavior, sensations and sometimes loss of consciousness.

Seizure symptoms can vary widely. Some people with epilepsy simply stare blankly for a few seconds during a seizure, while others repeatedly twitch their arms or legs.

About 1 in 26 people in the United States will develop a seizure disorder. Nearly 10 percent of individuals may have a single unprovoked seizure. However, a single seizure doesn't mean you have epilepsy. At least two unprovoked seizures are generally required for an epilepsy diagnosis.

Even mild seizures may require treatment because they can be dangerous during activities such as driving or swimming. Treatment with medications or sometimes surgery can control seizures for about 80 percent of people with epilepsy. Some children with epilepsy may also outgrow their condition with age.

Intellectual Disability-

Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.

"Developmental Disabilities" is an umbrella term that includes intellectual disability but also includes other disabilities that are apparent during childhood.

Developmental disabilities are severe chronic disabilities that can be cognitive or physical or both. The disabilities appear before the age of 22 and are likely to be life-long. Some developmental disabilities are largely physical issues, such as cerebral palsy or epilepsy. Some individuals may have a condition that includes a physical and intellectual disability, such as down syndrome or fetal alcohol syndrome.

Muscular Dystrophy-

Muscular dystrophy is a group of diseases that cause progressive weakness and loss of muscle mass. In muscular dystrophy, abnormal genes

(mutations) interfere with the production of proteins needed to form healthy muscle.

There are many different kinds of muscular dystrophy. Symptoms of the most common variety begin in childhood, primarily in boys. Other types don't surface until adulthood.

Some people who have muscular dystrophy will eventually lose the ability to walk. Some may have trouble breathing or swallowing.

There is no cure for muscular dystrophy. But medications and therapy can help manage symptoms and slow the course of the disease.

Confidentiality

Only use athletes' first names to protect their privacy. This is especially important when dealing with media and other groups from outside the [League of Dreams](#) organization. Specific personnel have been assigned to handle media coverage. You may not contact the media, nor release any names, photographs, or articles without first securing the written permission of the Executive Director.

Information about any athlete's disability cannot be shared with others. No medical, psychological, or behavioral information regarding any athlete is to be disclosed to others inside or outside [League of Dreams](#). Any information pertinent to you fulfilling your responsibilities will be shared with you by LoD staff.

This is in accordance with the [League of Dreams](#) confidentiality policy and standard practice among professionals.

Code of Conduct

Protect the excellent reputation you have. Protect the athletes and protect the image of [League of Dreams](#).

Please also be aware of the fact that you may need to take the child away from groups for bathroom visits, to get a snack, or for some other reason. If this is the case, be sure that you tell someone else, another volunteer, coach, or team mom, where you are going and what you will be doing.

We also require that you do not swear or use foul language. Your reputation with the parents and with us is surely more important than a bad joke, inappropriate behavior, or the use of bad language.

Despite the fact that you have earned a place with **League of Dreams**, be assured that we will monitor your actions while at **League of Dreams** sponsored activities.

We urge you to be absolutely honest about our rules about smoking, drinking, the use of illegal drugs, swearing, or observation of other rules. If you have any questions about any rules, please do not hesitate to ask us. We ask you that while you are with the athlete and at a LoD event that you act in such a way that you are the best example of moral and ethical conduct, good manners, kindness, and respect for others.

Social Networking Etiquette

Social media sharing (posting pictures or statuses) about your involvement with **League of Dreams** is actually encouraged. The best way to increase awareness about our programs is through word of mouth! However, any social media sharing involving athletes on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, etc. should be approved by your athlete's parents and the Executive Director. There are athletes whose information is to be kept private and not shared on any media source, and if you are paired with one of those athletes, please refrain from any sharing.

Discrimination and Harassment

The following is a portion of the AVOIDANCE OF DISCRIMINATION policy:

LEAGUE OF DREAMS SHALL NEITHER HARASS NOR DISCRIMINATE AGAINST ANY PERSON BECAUSE OF HIS OR HER RACE, COLOR, ETHNICITY, NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION, CREED, GENDER, SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AGE, OR DISABILITY, EXCEPT AS MAY BE REASONABLY NECESSARY TO FULFILL THE NEEDS OF ATHLETES. EXAMPLES OF SUCH NEEDS MIGHT INCLUDE THE NEED FOR AN ANGEL/ VOLUNTEER TO BE OF THE SAME GENDER OR FOR A VOLUNTEER TO BE FREE OF A DISABILITY THAT WOULD IMPAIR SERVICE TO HIS OR HER ATHLETE. A PERSON SHOULD IMMEDIATELY REPORT ANY PERCEIVED HARASSING OR ARBITRARY DISCRIMINATORY CONDUCT TO THE DIRECTOR. ANY INCIDENT REPORTED TO THE DIRECTOR SHALL BE ADDRESSED IN ORDER TO ASSURE A PROMPT AND ADEQUATE RESPONSE, AND ANY CORRECTIVE ACTION.

The Executive Director is responsible to ensure that the spirit and intent of our organization's goals and policies are achieved.

Examples of harassing or discriminatory conduct can include comments, slurs, jokes, innuendoes, cartoons, or pranks that are unwelcome and targeted at one of the groups identified in the **League of Dreams** policy as listed above.

Situations that may be perceived as harassment and inconsistent with acceptable behavior at **League of Dreams** also include:

1. Unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature such as patting, pinching or unnecessary touching.
2. Verbal harassment of a sexual nature, including intimating by way of suggestion a desire for sexual relations or the making of jokes or remarks of a sexual nature to or in the presence of an individual who finds them offensive.
3. Use of sexually suggestive terms or gestures to describe an individual's body, clothing or activities.
4. Displaying, printing, or transmitting offensive sexually suggestive pictures or materials.

Any incidence of perceived harassment should be immediately reported pursuant to the policy listed above.

Being Involved

Application Process and Acceptance

The following steps occur for every volunteer that participates in **League of Dreams**. The order and timing may differ between seasons, but all steps are required to be completed before a position can be granted.

- Complete an application form on the **League of Dreams** website – every season www.ourleagueofdreams.com/mylod.php
- Attend Volunteer Training – (if provided)

Special Events

League of Dreams both hosts and attends many community events throughout the year. We welcome volunteers to attend these events as well. Events such as Autism on the Run require a registration form and waiver, but many events just require commitment and communication. Please make sure you are receiving emails from **League of Dreams** to ensure that you're getting up-to-date volunteer opportunities.

Beyond the Seasons

Staying in Contact

We encourage each of you to maintain your relationships with athletes by staying in contact throughout the year. This particularly applies to Volunteer Angels, but also applies to Coaches and Team Moms that have built relationships with the kids. Maintaining your friendship assures the athlete and the family that there is another source of support for the child, should it be needed. Means of contact include Facebook, email, letters, and phone

calls. If you do not know the address of a child, send the mail to the Director and it will be forwarded as appropriate.

With respect to your continuing friendship with the children after season, please be sure that you keep the parents or guardians of the children aware of your intentions, plans for the child, activities you will attend, gifts you plan to give, or written information you share. If you arrange outings with the child, we recommend that you include their family members in order to provide the most enjoyable and safest experience for all.

Thank you so much for your interest in volunteering with **League of Dreams**. We look forward to working with you and ensuring that **“every child should have a chance to play.”**

For questions, concerns or ideas regarding anything in this handbook or something we may have missed, please email info@ourleagueofdreams.com or call the office at 661-616-9122

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