COSI On Wheels Exploring Ecology Coordinator Packet

Welcome to the world of COSI On Wheels!

THANK YOU for taking the time to read through this information in order to make your COSI On Wheels experience run as smoothly as possible. We are coming to your school to excite your students and everyone involved about the science that surrounds us. In order to best facilitate the program we will need your assistance with the following things:

VOLUNTEERS:

15 to 20 Volunteers at all times (at least 16 years of age or older) for the duration of your program day(s).

The most critical aspect of every COSI On Wheels program are the volunteers who assist with the hands-on sessions. It is very important for them to be present in order to provide a quality hands-on science experience for the students. These volunteers need no science background, only ENTHUSIASM and ENERGY for a great day. Prior to your COSI On Wheels day they need to each receive a copy of the Volunteer Letter. The Volunteer Letter is a separate document on the program website.

Guidelines to assist you in your efforts recruiting this valuable resource:

- Always recruit more volunteers than you need. 15 volunteers per hands-on session is a minimum for our shows to run well; the shows can utilize 18 to 20, providing more one-on-one learning for the students. Remember, it is inevitable that last minute sicknesses and emergencies will prevent people from volunteering.

- Establish a recruiting timetable. It is best to begin your search for volunteers four weeks prior to COSI's visit. Phone calls work best. Copies of the Volunteer Letter and the short descriptions of the hands-on activities should be sent to the volunteers as a reminder of the day's commitment. Remember to confirm with phone calls the night before to eliminate challenges the day of the program.

- Be flexible in your scheduling. Scheduling 15 to 20 volunteers for the whole day may be difficult. Having groups work only in the morning or afternoon is perfectly fine. However, all volunteers must attend the Educator's volunteer orientation. This may be accomplished by having the orientation the evening before COSI's visit instead of the morning of the program. All volunteers should also attend the assembly in order to get an overview of the program's content and science concepts.

- **No experience necessary.** The volunteer's main job is to have FUN! Many people think they must be experts in science to lead a COSI activity. The COSI Educator is there to help them understand the science. It is meant to be a learning experience for all: students, teachers and volunteers.

- **Let them know they are appreciated.** The COSI On Wheels program could not happen if it were not for those fabulous volunteers. The volunteers are donating their time and a great deal of effort. While the COSI Educator will have the students thank them for their hard work, something more tangible is often a nice gesture. Providing coffee in the morning or ordering out for lunch are great ways to say thank you for making the day a success. Many schools have tried potluck lunches with great results.

SETTING UP THE SHOW:

- Set up takes place in the late afternoon or early evening prior to the event.
- We are no longer able to schedule a set-up after 7pm and we must be out of the school by 8pm. Federal Regulations for Commercial Motor Vehicle drivers now require our Educators to have a 10 hour break between driving that evening and the next morning. If you have questions about how this impacts your school's set up time, please contact the Manager of COSI On Wheels Outreach Programs, Nicole Rife, at 614-629-3144 or nrife@cosi.org.
- A contact person **must be present** during the set up to assure proper equipment placement for the event.
- The COSI Educator will be arriving with a 14 foot box truck full of equipment.
- **We require** three to four adults (age 18+) to assist in unloading and loading the truck. They will need to stay for about one hour to help set up the show's stage and hands-on equipment. Be aware that COSI On Wheels equipment is not easily moved once it is in place.
- If there is a stairway barrier between the truck and set up location, we require four to six strong volunteers to assist in unloading and carrying the materials to the set-up location.
- The Exploring Ecology program needs 10 6'-8' long tables and 2 electrical outlets.

ORIENTATION:

- The COSI Educator will lead a 45-minute orientation session prior to the event for **all volunteers participating**. If volunteers will be coming in shifts it would be ideal to have all shifts present at the orientation.
- The orientation will include background and "how to" information for all of the hands-on activities. In addition, the Educator can answer any and all questions the volunteers may have about the day.

SCHEDULING THE DAY:

Due to safety considerations, necessity requires the following participation limit for hands-on sessions:

- 62 students or less per session
- Each hands-on session may last 30 to 45 minutes (the more students participating in each session, the more time required)

SAMPLE SCHEDULE:

Here is a sample schedule of a COSI On Wheels event. This outline is our **suggestion** for planning your daily schedule; you may choose to schedule differently based on the number of students you have or your hours of operation. You can have as many or as few hands-on sessions as you need. Keep in mind the preceding comments and adapt this schedule to fit the needs of your school.

7:30 - 8:15	Volunteer Orientation
8:15 - 9:00	Assembly
9:00 - 9:15	Break
9:15 – 9:45	Hands-on Session #1 (max 62 students)
9:45 – 10:15	Hands-on Session #2 (max 62 students)
10:15 - 10:45	Hands-on Session #3 (max 62 students)
10:45 – 11:15	Hands-on Session #4 (max 62 students)
11:15 - 12:00	Lunch
12:00 – 12:30	Hands-on Session #5 (max 62 students)
12:30 – 1:00	Hands-on Session #6 (max 62 students)
1:00 – 1:30	Hands-on Session #7 (max 62 students)
1:30 – 2:00	Hands-on Session #8 (max 62 students)
2:00 - 2:30	Clean-up with volunteers

SAMPLE

- The COSI Educator is the sole representative from COSI and is an integral part of both activities. It is not possible to have an assembly program and a hands-on session at the same time.
- You can schedule up to two assemblies per day, if necessary. If you require a second assembly you can do one in the morning, and the second one in the afternoon.

COSI is continually training our Educators on the best way to serve all students and to make sure they have a positive and engaging experience. To help with that goal, here are some tips and information that hopefully will be beneficial for your school.

- Teachers are welcome to come in before their students' session to observe the activities and stage pieces. This can be during set up the night before, before, during, or after the orientation, before or after the assembly, or even during another hands-on session or lunch.
- If your student uses a personal hearing amplifier, please let the Educator know before the assembly. The Educator can either wear it or attach it to a speaker and test to

make sure the audio level is okay for the student. During the hands-on session, the student can either wear it or hand it to the volunteer at the station.

- If there is a sign language interpreter, the interpreter is welcome on the stage during the presentation if that works best for the student. Please direct the interpreter to speak with the Educator before the assembly begins. The Educator will be able to talk through the assembly so the interpreter is able to best serve the student.
- Our Program Information Packet has great information to prepare students about what they will do during the day.
- If a student needs to leave the room during the assembly or hands-on session, that is absolutely okay. To make it easier for the student and teacher, we encourage them to sit in the audience where they are closest to an exit so they can come and go as needed.
- During the assembly, our Educator will prepare students for any loud noises.

We are currently working on providing adjustments to hands-on activities so all students can actively participate. These adjustments will be implemented throughout the 2013-2014 school year. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with your Educator during the school call about different strategies that will work best for your students.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Please remit invoices, schedules and school information to:
COSI
Attn: COSI On Wheels
333 W. Broad St.
Columbus, OH 43215

COSI's phone number is 614-228-COSI or toll free 888-819-COSI. You may also fax schedules and school information to: 614-629-3226 Attn: Outreach Coordinator.

If you need general information about COSI On Wheels you can visit our web site at www.cosi.org, or e-mail us at COSIOnWheels@cosi.org.

If you have specific questions about your event please give us a call at these extensions:

- Try First: Jessica Robusto-Salmons, Call Center Supervisor - Outreach Programs, at Ext. 1702 or COSIOnWheels@cosi.org.

- Then Try: Nicole Rife, Manager of COSI On Wheels Outreach Programs, at Ext. 3144 or nrife@cosi.org.

COSI On Wheels: FAQ's

How many students can be in one assembly?
If the school's gymnasium/multipurpose room can accommodate the entire school (up to 500 students per day) seated on the floor or in bleachers for an assembly, you are welcome to do just one morning assembly and use the afternoon period for hands-on sessions. Do keep in mind that COSI will have tables and equipment set up around the perimeter of the room which will reduce the number of students that will fit.

We don't seem to have enough time for everyone to participate.
You can have more hands-on sessions than are listed on the schedule sheet that was included in this packet. Another option is to include everyone in the assembly and limit hands-on sessions to certain grades. You may wish to secure COSI On Wheels for two days in order to accommodate all of your students. Feel free to contact the Outreach Coordinator at 614-228-COSI or toll free at 888-819-COSI, ext. 1703 with specific concerns.

We are having a tough time finding enough volunteers. What can we do?
As you can see from the enclosed information, COSI On Wheels depends on the assistance of the adult volunteers. Most often these are the school's PTA/PTO members and other parents. Despite your best efforts, sometimes you cannot find enough adult volunteers. Here are some other options you may wish to pursue:

- Grandparents - Usually retired and at home, and what grandparent is going to say "no" to their grandchild?
- Retired teachers – What teacher wouldn't love a fun filled day with the students?
- High school honor students – (Ages 16 and older) Science clubs, Key Clubs, honor societies, etc., in your local high schools are another resource. Be sure to choose responsible students, however, because they will be role models for your students all day.
- Local universities - Education and science students and even professors often like the break in routine. These college students would be receiving practical field experience in education. Also, sororities/fraternities do service projects.
- Local service groups - There are many groups such as Kiwanis, the American Legion and church groups that give a certain amount of volunteer hours each year.
- Active older adult organizations - Check with your local YMCA or community center.
- Local corporations - Many larger corporations have volunteer programs that their employees are involved with in the local communities.

Are there any activities that the students can do in the classroom or at home that will continue the COSI On Wheels experience?
Extension activities (formerly known as Teacher Previsit Activities) for each program are located on our website at www.cosi.org. Simply locate the COSI On Wheels section and click on the 'Program Information Packet ' and 'Extension Activity' buttons for your scheduled program, and you will be able to continue the experience.

The only large room available is the cafeteria. What do you suggest we do about lunch?
Because of all the equipment involved in the hands-on sessions, the tables needed for these sessions cannot be used for lunch tables. Many schools have students pack their lunches or pick up their lunch and eat in the classroom.

We have sent in our information packet. When will we hear from someone?
The COSI Educator will be contacting you on the Monday of the week prior to your event to answer questions, go over your schedule, and confirm a set up time.

When can we reserve for next year?
Reservations begin on the first Monday of February. A request can be submitted over the phone at (614) 228-2674 or online at www.cosi.org. You will need to give us your top two program choices, a large span of dates that you are available to do the program, and any impossible dates within that specified time frame. The more available dates you give the Coordinator to work with, the more likely you are to get your first choice of program. In March and April the travel calendar will be built, and in early May the deposit invoice will be mailed informing you of the program and date your school has been reserved for.

Who do we contact if we have questions?
In your coordinator packet you will find a page that has contact information. If you need general information about COSI On Wheels you can visit our web site at www.cosi.org, or e-mail us at COSIOnWheels@ cosi.org. You can also contact COSI's Call Center at 614-228-2674 or toll free 888-819-2674.

We hope this information will help you provide the best possible COSI On Wheels experience for your students and teachers. Please feel free to contact COSI with any questions or concerns.