

Opening Ceremonies Plan

This should be something you and your committee create together to make your race unique. Opening Ceremonies should be limited to 30 minutes OR less! We KNOW this is an overwhelming time & our goal is to offer guidelines, suggestions & tips to make your 9/11 Heroes Run ceremony both awesome AND easy for you to organize :-)

*Opening ceremonies should be inspirational, patriotic and not too long! It can be elaborate or very simple, have 1 guest of honor or 3, but at the very least it needs to include (in any order):

1. Welcome Statement thanking everyone for coming & thanking the volunteers (without them the event wouldn't be possible) This statement will be written by you and can include what your connection is to TMF or what it means to you personally! Call out top teams! Let participants know there are opportunities to stay involved in TMF throughout the year (Op Legacy, chapters etc). If there is a TMF tent & staffer, encourage runners to stop by the tent and remind everyone that there will be an awards ceremony shortly after the run!
2. **MANDATORY** Read Thank You Letter on behalf of the Foundation and the Manion's (this will be supplied to you around August & shorter than in year's past) *If a TMF employee is at your race, they would be happy to read this OR speak for a minute or two if you prefer.
3. Moment of Silence
4. Guest of Honor speech(s) (*guest of honor should not speak more than 5 minutes and if you have more than one guest speaker - limit to 2-3 mins a piece*) *see below about guidelines for Guest of Honors and speeches*
5. **MANDATORY** Mention and thank all of the national sponsors and any local sponsors
 - Gold/\$2500 and above get mentioned directly
 - Local Presenting/\$5000 and above get a chance to say a few words
 - Title Sponsor/\$10,000 get to start the race
6. **MANDATORY** Recognize and thank the Peer 2 Peer Fundraisers
 - Remind participants there is still time to fundraise to receive their cool incentive gear
 - Call out the names of anyone who has raised \$500. Anyone raising \$1000 or more should be called onstage for a round of applause (any little token or prize can be given too if your race does that ... ie: you had donations of dinner at a local restaurant or baseball tickets)
 - Reminder: all P2P monies of someone running your race gets counted towards YOUR race!
7. Rules regarding the race (and explain the route)
8. National anthem

NOTE: your opening ceremony should start PRIOR to the time advertised as your race start time (Ex: race starts at 8am, then your opening ceremony should start at 7:30am or 7:45am...and this time will also be noted on your website for participants)

POST RUN

Closing Ceremony / Awards: This does not need to be extremely formal, but racers will expect prizes for winning. This should be done within the hour of starting the race.

1. Thank your volunteers. Thank everyone for coming out and participating
2. Announce awards - hand out medals
3. Raffle off Fun prizes: If you have a lot of in-kind donations from companies than a good way to determine who will receive these would be by awarding participants in misc. categories such as most patriotic, who traveled the farthest to be in attendance, an actual raffle with tickets, etc

Thank everyone for coming

Additional Suggestions/Information:

- Guest speaker - can be someone connected to the foundation, military member (MOH recipient), First Responder, Mayor, someone inspirational, etc --if you have multiple speakers, limit them to 2-3 mins
 - **NOTE:** we prefer someone connected to the foundation and who can speak about character. This can be YOU :-) *or we can look to find a motivated spartan in the your area* that could speak and tell more about the narrative of TMF and share the character strength of a hero. Our mission is to bring character back into our communities and there is no better way to do this than by having a Gold Star Family member or Veteran talk about the character of a buddy, their loved one or hero! Sure it's nice for the mayor to welcome people but, what participants remember is the inspirational story of that veteran or Gold Star family member... we want to inspire the runners and telling a story of character is what TMF is all about. On our new website (which will be coming soon) we will have stories of character from veterans and Gold Star Families and you are more than welcome to use one of those and tell their story! This message of character is what we want to share! We want to motivate your participants to be engaged in TMF year long, join/start a local chapter and get excited about the foundation! (Let the politician speak the last minute or two and help kick the race off if they are in attendance)
- Color Guard to present the colors/flags (this can be a local military or police unit, local JRTC, boy scouts, etc)
- Music Playing
- Booths and tents set up for a vendor village
- Static Displays (local military, police, EMS, Fire Trucks)
 - Sometimes local military recruiting stations will come set up a tent and fund things (aka pull up bar, etc)
- Fire Truck with the large American Flag hanging down
- Flags, Flags and more Flags! Often the city/county or Rotary clubs have these that they are willing to let you borrow to help with the patriotic set up/theme
- Unique way to honor the fallen (that we have heard from other LRDs):
 - Board of Honor (everyone writes who they are running in honor of)
 - Small flags in the ground for every hero lost in 9/11 OR fallen military/first responders in your county
 - Put local fallen heroes all along the race route to let runners remember why they are running (can be as little as a laminated picture on cardstock with their name with a stake on the ground)
 - Give a little ribbon with a name of a fallen hero that they can carry on the race route with them
 - ideas: You can supply safety pins, lengths of cut ribbon and sharpies at a table for people to create their own.
(Ideas: Yellow for fallen military, Red for fallen firefighters, Blue for fallen police officers, White for fallen EMTs)
 - Gold Star Family members OR first responders/military in your area to give medals to winners

Vendor Village

- Local military recruiters often set up awesome tents/displays
- Banks often like to set up displays and give aways
- Any of your sponsors - invite them to set up a tent