

PLUNGER



Tool Kit

Be Bold, Get Cold
www.PolarPlunge.ca



POLAR PLUNGE



FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS ONTARIO



Dear Plunger,

The Polar Plunge for Special Olympics is the **coolest** event of the winter. It is a unique opportunity to support Special Olympics Ontario athletes by taking a dip into a chilly body of water.

Since 2015, the Ontario Polar Plunge has raised over \$1.5 million for Special Olympics, an organization devoted to year-round sports and competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Becoming part of the Plunge experience means you are helping

Over 25,000 of these individuals experience a brighter tomorrow.

This year there are over 25 Plunges across the province for you to choose from. Our theme this year is, "**Be Bold, Get Cold**". In the following pages, you will find information on how you can use this theme to help raise money and make the most of your plunge.

We look forward to seeing you!



Sincerely,

Your Special Olympics Ontario Plunge Team



Polar Plunge Fast Facts

Who: You can plunge alone or with a group! Convince your friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers to join the fun. There is no age limit, however, children under the age of 18 must register as minors and have a waiver signed by a parent or guardian.

How: Each Plunge has its own registration fee and fundraising requirement in order to earn the privilege of jumping into the icy winter waters! Make sure to check your plunge's website to find out about the great fundraising incentives and Polar Plunge swag you can get this year!

Why: The Polar Plunge is a great way to show your support for athletes by raising money for one cool organization – Special Olympics Ontario. Plus it's a ton of fun!!!

How to Register

Go to www.PolarPlunge.ca to find a Plunge near you. Click the link for the location you are interested in and hit the register button! Then follow the steps to register and create your personal fundraising page. The fundraising page is a great tool for you to raise money and to earn cool Polar Plunge incentives!



Benefits of Online Fundraising

- ✓ Online fundraising allows you to ask for donations from family and friends all over the world at no cost.
- ✓ Online donors immediately receive their tax receipt via email for online donations over \$10.
- ✓ It is easy to email your contacts to remind them to donate.
- ✓ You can set up email lists, track donations, and customize your page to reflect your personal fundraising style.
- ✓ Donations made by credit card are typically 65% higher than those made by cash or cheque pledges.
- ✓ Less paperwork for you and you can see your fundraising thermometer grow right away!



Tips for Polar Plungers

So you've finally decided to take the Plunge?! Congratulations – you are a plunge away from a very rewarding and unique experience, both in and out of the water!

Here are some tips to help you make the best of your Plunge day

DO

- ✓ Wear your plunge costume under your outfit so you won't have to worry about changing and will stay warm while you wait.
- ✓ Carpool. Parking can be crowded, so come as a group, or take advantage of Plunge shuttle services, if available.
- ✓ Invite friends to watch, take photos, and pass dry clothes to after the event!
- ✓ There are restrooms/changing areas for your use.
- ✓ Leave yourself plenty of time to make it to the Plunge location and get registered.
- ✓ Make a fun and unique costume to plunge in! This is a family event, so be sure costumes are appropriate and do not cover the nose and mouth.
- ✓ Bask in the glory of your achievement! Not only did you take the plunge, but you supported Special Olympics Ontario!
- ✓ Be sure to share photos, videos, or YouTube links.
- ✓ We do our best to keep our Plungers warm as long as possible. This means staying inside our heated changing stations/staging areas (if available) until it's time to Plunge.
- ✓ Proceed directly to the registration area when you arrive to grab your free registration gift and any cool incentive prizes you may be eligible for (Thank you for fundraising!). Be sure to hand in any offline pledges/donations you have received.
- ✓ Trained Dive Team and EMS are at each Plunge for assistance.
- ✓ Wave/Plunge times will be assigned for each team/individual. Please confirm at registration for you wave/Plunge time.

DO NOT

- ✓ DO NOT dive into the water. This is a safety precaution for all plungers that is strictly enforced by the dive team.
- ✓ Do not run out of the water after you plunge as everything is wet and slippery. Be careful on your way to the changing area, showers, pool, or hot tub, depending on the site.
- ✓ We advise you to not plunge after drinking alcohol. Intoxicated people will not be permitted to plunge.



Tips for Polar Plunge Teams

Here are some tips to help you successfully lead a team of Polar Plungers

- ✓ Recruit friends, family and colleagues to join your Polar Plunge team. The bigger the team, the better.
- ✓ Create your plunge team online when you register and take advantage of the many online fundraising tools.
- ✓ Encourage team members to register online, join your team, and create their own personal fundraising pages.
- ✓ Set your fundraising goals and encourage your team members to surpass them!
- ✓ Challenge another team to a friendly competition to see who can raise the most money.
- ✓ Gather your teammates' email addresses and send them periodic updates. Keep your team members informed of progress towards your goals and offer fundraising tips.
- ✓ Plan a team-building meeting or event and invite plenty of attendees (food is a great motivator)! Show pictures and tell stories if you've taken the plunge before so everyone can see how much fun it is.
- ✓ Plan and create a plunge costume theme to help build team spirit.
- ✓ Have fun!

Social Media

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are incredibly powerful fundraising tools. It has become common practice for Plunge participants to do most if not all of their fundraising solely through social media. They are free, easy to use and a personal way to connect with friends and family all over the world with minimal effort.

- ✓ Make sure you are following Torch Run Ontario on social:
 - Facebook - www.facebook.com/OntarioTorchRun
 - Twitter - @TorchRunOntario
- ✓ Make sure you are following Special Olympics Ontario on social:
 - Facebook - www.facebook.com/specialolympicsontario
 - Twitter - @SOOntario
 - Instagram - @SpecialOlympicsOntario
- ✓ On your community's page at www.PolarPlunge.ca, you will find a "Dare a Friend" link. Use this to connect to Facebook and direct people to your fundraising page.
- ✓ If your community Plunge has an account on social media, make sure you follow the page.
- ✓ Make your plunge an event on Facebook. Invite friends to support your fundraising effort. That way they will have a reminder before you plunge!
- ✓ Share, retweet, and comment on Plunge posts.
- ✓ Add your fundraising link to your social media pages so people can make donations.
- ✓ Share why you are plunging and what your goal is.
- ✓ Let your pictures do the talking ... If you've plunged before, post a picture of your jump along with your donation request.
- ✓ Set your profile picture and timeline photo to a picture of you taking the plunge or the costume you'll be wearing to Plunge. Pump up the excitement to your social network.
- ✓ Share your "training" (i.e. how you are preparing for your jump).
- ✓ Update your fundraising progress continuously, including donor shoutouts.
- ✓ Don't forget to thank your friends and family after your Plunge!
- ✓ Use the hashtags #FreezinForAReason and #BeBoldGetCold to follow Plunge chatter.



Sample Posts

If you're drawing a blank on what you can post, here are some ideas to get the creative juices flowing:

- ✓ Help me support the 25,000+ athletes who participate in Special Olympics Ontario. Please donate to my Polar Plunge fundraising! #FreezinForAReason #BeBoldGetCold *<insert link to your fundraising page>*
- ✓ I'm going to be #FreezinForAReason for Special Olympics! Please help me fundraise by making a donation here *<insert link to your fundraising page>*
- ✓ #BeBoldGetCold this winter! Let's get dressed up and jump into freezing water together. LET'S DO IT, support @SOOntario & join my Plunge team! #FreezinForAReason
- ✓ Never plunged into freezing cold water before? Check it off your bucket list by joining me at the Polar Plunge for @SOOntario. Register here *<insert link to your fundraising page>* #BeBoldGetCold

Add fun memes to your post! You can use one of the memes we've created or create your own. Access the premade plunge memes [here](#).

How to Raise \$500 in Ten Days

DAY #	WHO TO ASK	TOTAL/DAY	GRAND TOTAL
1	Add personal contribution of \$25	\$25	\$25
2	Ask three family members to match your personal donation of \$25	\$75	\$100
3	Ask your best friend to sponsor you for \$25	\$25	\$125
4	Ask your boss for a \$25 contribution, or to match the total that you raise	\$25	\$150
5	Ask five friends to sponsor you for \$10	\$50	\$200
6	Ask five additional friends to sponsor you for \$10 each	\$50	\$250
7	Ask five businesses that you frequent to sponsor you for \$10 each	\$50	\$300
8	Ask five co-workers to sponsor you for \$10 each	\$50	\$350
9	Ask five neighbors to sponsor you for \$10 each	\$50	\$400
10	Ask ten people from your social circle to sponsor you for \$10 each	\$100	\$500



Additional Ways to Fundraise

You've sent out emails to friends, called your Grandma asking for her support, and inundated your social media accounts with all things "Plunge!" You've raised money, but you still want to do more. Great! There are several other great ways to get the word out about your Plunge efforts and fundraise for your cause. Most of all, have fun with it!

Hold Your Own Fundraiser

Whether the fundraiser is for your personal efforts or a team fundraiser, it's a great way to get people together and raise funds AND awareness for the Polar Plunge and Special Olympics Ontario. Some ideas for fundraisers are below ... you can use these models and make them your own!

- ✓ Host a bake sale at your office, in your neighborhood, or post your items for sale on Facebook!
- ✓ Hold a garage sale with proceeds going to your Plunge.
- ✓ Work with a local restaurant to provide a meal for customers at a set cost, with half of it going to your Plunge efforts.
- ✓ Hold a silent auction or raffle.

Workplace Giving

- ✓ Before hitting up your coworkers for a donation, see if you can form a company team instead. It's a fun team building opportunity for companies, and wearing your company t-shirt is a great way to maximize exposure at the event too!
- ✓ Find out about matching gift policies at your company. Some companies match employee fundraising, while others match donations made by employees. This is an easy way to double your donations!
- ✓ Have your donors find out about their companies matching gift policy to see if their donation will be matched.
- ✓ Host a Casual for a Cause day at work. Employees can donate a set amount to wear jeans (or better yet, Plunge gear from previous participation) and funds raised goes to support your Plunge.



Additional workplace fundraising ideas include:

- ✓ Set out a candy jar and ask for change each time they take a piece; purchase bottles of water and pop at wholesale and put in the company lunchroom. Charge \$1 for drinks and any profit can go to your fundraising efforts.
- ✓ Ask your boss if they'll get in on the fun! If your company raises X amount, they'll take the Plunge with you!

EMAIL OUTREACH

Email is an incredibly effective fundraising tool, reaching people all over the world with the click of a button. It is a great way to spread the word about your Plunge participation, and to ask others to join your team or pledge your cause.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ Make it personal: Tell your story. Share with others why you participate, whether it's because you are Plunging for fun or because you love Special Olympics Ontario.
- ✓ If you've plunged before share a picture of your previous jump to frozen glory.
- ✓ If it's your first time, share your nerves and excitement!
- ✓ Have fun with it! Make a contest or game out of it - the first person to donate, or the largest donation gets a gift from you!
- ✓ Follow-up. Be sure to say thank you to donors after they make their donation, and again after you take the Plunge. Send them a picture of you plunging with the results from the event.

Sample Text:

I am Freezin for a Reason! This winter I am taking the Plunge to support Special Olympics Ontario. You may be asking yourself what exactly is this Plunge? Well, I am raising money so I can jump into frozen water. The Plunge into the water may be a little chilly, but I don't mind because I am supporting an amazing cause.

To jump into the frigid waters, I have set a personal fundraising goal of **\$(amount)**, and I need your help to reach it. Please make a donation to my personal fundraising page and help me reach this goal.

You can support my Plunge several ways. The best and easiest is to visit my page **(add link here)** and make a secure donation. All online donations of \$10 and above will be automatically sent a tax receipt to the email address you provide. You can check my fundraising page to see my goal, pledges raised and a photo of me after the Plunge!

If you prefer not to donate online, you can also give your donation directly to me and fill out a pledge form to make sure you receive a tax receipt. Offline pledged donations of \$20 and above will be issued a tax receipt 6-8 weeks after the plunge.

If you can't support my Plunge through a donation, why not consider being bold in the cold and joining me in taking the Plunge? You can join my team online now! To learn more about the Polar Plunge and Special Olympics Ontario, visit PolarPlunge.ca.

Email Tag

Include an email tag at the bottom of your email talking about your Plunge participation. It can be a sentence or two about the Plunge, or use the Plunge photo icon to show potential donors exactly what you'll be doing! You can even hyper link the image to your personal Plunge page.



Plunge-Day Checklist

Don't forget the necessities to make the best of your day!

- ✓ Check the local Plunge website for event specific timings, details and FAQ's
- ✓ Bring extra clothing to stay warm!
- ✓ Plastic bag for wet clothes and shoes
- ✓ Aqua/scuba shoes or an old pair of running shoes for going into the water. The ground can be very cold for bare feet!
- ✓ Clean, dry clothes to wear after you Plunge
- ✓ Hand/feet warmers
- ✓ Backpack to hold onto your Plunge clothes and awesome incentive prizes
- ✓ Two towels – one to dry off and one to stand on
- ✓ A costume! Have fun with it – remember our theme, ***Be Bold, Get Cold***
- ✓ Banners or signs to show your Team Spirit
- ✓ A dry partner to hold onto your valuables while you're in the water (brrrrrr!)
- ✓ Any offline donations (cash, cheque) you've collected for your Polar Plunge efforts for Special Olympics Ontario
- ✓ Bring a camera! You'll want to remember this moment
- ✓ HAVE FUN!



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is team membership limited to my organization/corporation?

A: No. Team participation is encouraged among your families, friends, and neighbors. The outside, high-energy setting of the Polar Plunge creates a fun, wholesome event that brings co-workers and their families together outside the office for the purpose of helping others.

Q: How are funds raised through a Polar Plunge team?

A: Individual team members are responsible for setting goals and raising funds from co-workers, friends, neighbors, and family members who wish to back the team and support the mission of Special Olympics Ontario. Individuals are encouraged to set up fundraising pages as an easy way to collect donations.

Q: How is the money collected?

A: Each team member is responsible for collecting funds from supporters and turning them in at Plunge registration prior to the event. You can also raise all of your funds online and no collection will be needed. All funds raised online go directly to Special Olympics Ontario.

Q: What should I bring with me to the Plunge?

A: We encourage you to bring: towels, shoes to plunge in and shoes for after, dry clothes, and a bag to hold your wet clothes.

Q: What should I wear to plunge in?

A: We encourage participants to take part in the costume contest; however, it is not mandatory.

Q: Where does the money raised for Polar Plunge go?

A: The money raised goes to support training and competition for over 25,000 athletes who participate in Special Olympics Ontario.