



Polar Plunge School Team Toolkit

Table of Contents

What is the Polar Plunge?	Page 2
Fundraising Event Ideas	P. 5
Fundraising Through Social Media	P. 6
Team Recruitment Resources	P. 8
Plunger Email Campaign	P. 9
Fundraising Awards & Incentives	P. 10
Special Olympics MA Fact Sheet	P. 11
Polar Plunge Event Checklist	P. 12



What is the Polar Plunge?

It's when thousands of people around Massachusetts run into icy cold water to raise money for Special Olympics Massachusetts. As a plunger you register to participate in one of the many polar plunges in and around Massachusetts in the winter months. Students have a goal of raising \$100 in pledges from friends, family, co-workers, Facebook friends, etc. Then on plunge day you run or jump into the water and get out as fast as you can. You decide how far you want to go in. It's all done for fun and to raise money for a great cause and to benefit programming in your community.

Polar Plunge School Teams

Why put together a team at your school?

Show your school spirit while giving back to the community and hanging out with friends and family. Polar Plunge is a great opportunity for students to promote respect, demonstrate leadership skills and show their support for Special Olympics Massachusetts. This is a great team building or community service opportunity, and you can even earn money for your school by plunging! It's cold enough, and your school IS bold enough!

Who can plunge on your school team?

Students, teachers, coaches, administrators and family can join your school's Polar Plunge team! Each student on the team is asked to raise a minimum of \$100 in order to earn the right to plunge. *Team members can sponsor one another with their funds if there are any difficulties for plungers to raise \$100 on their own.* There is no maximum number of plungers per team. The more, the merrier! So spread the word and invite your whole school to plunge!



K-12 School Challenge

Does your school have a heated rivalry? Why not start an “icy rivalry” and challenge your rival to a contest off the field of play and in community service that gives back to some very special athletes. If rivalry isn’t your thing, that’s okay too. The goal of the school challenge is to show your community that students and schools take pride in giving back and are committed to making a difference!

How does your school benefit?

Students are able to interact with their peers, educators and the community in a positive way while receiving community service hours. By plunging, each member of your team is promoting the acceptance, respect and dignity of people with intellectual disabilities and supporting Special Olympics Massachusetts’ movement for equality and social justice.

How do I Start a Team at my School?

Create your team online at www.polarplungema.org and choose your **Plunge of choice**. Choose a team name that includes your school name so we know who you are (School Name - Team Name). Then recruit other students and teachers by having them sign up online under your team. Use the recruitment cards on page to help people sign up on your team.

School Challenge Team Captains

What is a Team Captain?

A team captain serves as a liaison between the Polar Plunge, Special Olympics Massachusetts staff and the team members. You will help keep your team motivated and excited for the plunge!

The Role of a Team Captain:

- Build a team and help them sign up online
- Recruit a co-captain
- Set recruitment and fundraising goals
- Share fundraising tools with teammates
- Organize and delegate team fundraising events
- Stay connected with your team by:
 - Holding team meetings
 - Sending regular emails to update members of team progress, fundraisers, etc.
 - Social Media (create a Facebook group for your team)

How to Be a Successful Team Captain:

- Recruit as many people as possible at your school
 - Have a team kickoff party to get things started.
- Set a goal for total amount of money and aim high!
- Motivate your members and show your enthusiasm for the event!
 - Stay in contact with your teammates with regular meetings/check-ins
- Educate your school through every outlet so that everyone knows about the event.
 - Let your donors & teammates know that you are fulfilling a very important mission



Fundraising Event Ideas

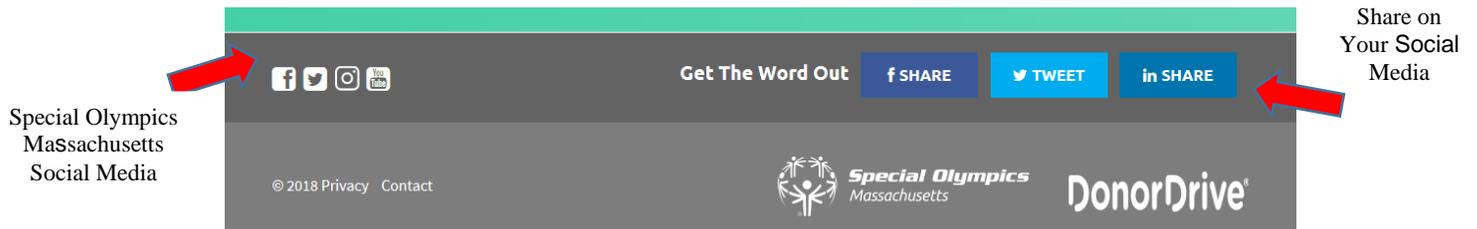
Organize and hold fundraisers to bring in the donations! **Highlighted ideas are the most popular.**

- **As your School Resource Office to get involved** – Police Departments partner with the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics year-round. Any of the below can work in conjunction with your school police officers jumping in to help or offering a contest for the top class fundraiser (*i.e Pizza party for the top class*)
- **Collect Donations for Plunge Icons-** Sell Plunge icons (any donation amount) and display in your school's hallways. This is a great way to raise awareness and raise funds! *Contact Special Olympics for Icons.*
- **Facebook and Twitter-** Promote your personal or team fundraising page on FB or Twitter.
- **Hat Day-** Students pay money (\$5 or donation of choice) to wear a hat to school. *Get approval from your Admin first.*
- **School Events-** Ask if they would be willing to donate a portion of each ticket to your Plunge team (*dances, sporting events, battle of the bands, theater performances, etc*).
- **Personal Assistant for a day-** Offer to run errands, babysit, organize, clean a fridge, dog-sit, etc. for a donation to your plunge.
- **Win a date with a senior** – Sell \$1 raffle tickets to win a date with one of your school's most eligible seniors.
- **Donut Sale-** Get a local bakery to donate donuts and sell them at your school. *Make sure to get approval from your Admin first.*
- **Charity Game Night-** Organize a game night. Charge a small entrance fee, all money goes to your Polar Plunge team.
- **Change Collection-** Set up a collection jar at school or at your workplace.
- **Soda Can Drive-** Reach out to neighbors for soda cans.
- **Raking Leaves/Shoveling Snow-** Offer to rake leaves or shovel your neighbor's driveways for donations.
- **Guess Jar-** Fill a clear jar with candy, and people pay a small fee to guess how many pieces are in the jar. Proceeds go to your Polar Plunge.
- **Coffee Stand/Restaurant** - Get a local coffee stand or restaurant to donate proceeds to your plunge (*Dutch Bros., Panda Express and Chipotle are all supportive businesses*).
- **Crush Cans-** Hold a Valentines Days "Love Gram" event by selling cans of Crush soda and delivering them to their Valentine <3

**As a fun way to track your team's donations, draw a thermometer to put up in your school's hallway so that everyone can see your progress!*

Fundraising through Social Media

This is a screenshot from the bottom of all the pages on DonorDrive. If you link your social media, click on the buttons to directly share your link on those platforms.



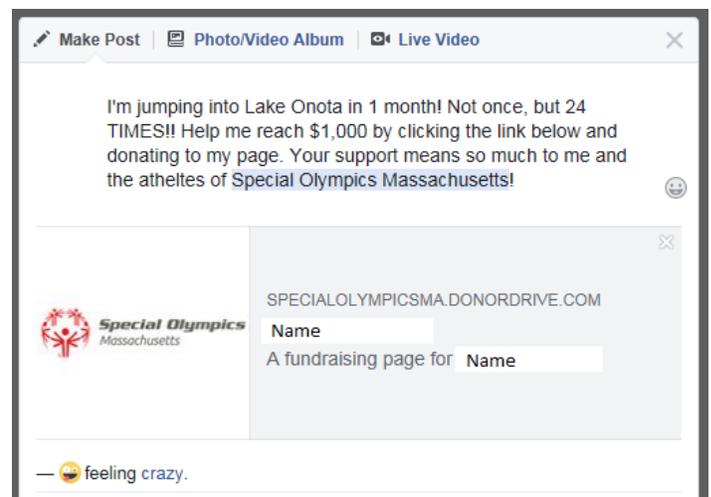
Facebook ****Please Read****

We strongly prefer if you **do not** use Facebook's built-in support a nonprofit option (Facebook Charities) to raise money toward your fundraising goal as all donations given through Facebook Charities goes to a general Special Olympics Massachusetts fund, and will **not** be added toward your personal or team goal. When you register for an event, you can easily share your personal fundraising page on social media through DonorDrive. If someone chooses to donate to you, they will click on the link which will bring them directly to the fundraiser and your personal page. No need to create a Facebook Charity because our new DonorDrive software has everything you need to reach your fundraising goal!

How Facebook charities work: When we receive a check from Facebook, we do not know how many people, what event, or how much of the check goes to a specific place. It takes two weeks to receive a check from Facebook, so your personal total will not raise on the event website immediately. As of now, we are staying away from Facebook fundraisers and ask that you please do the same. However, you can share your progress and ask for donations on your Facebook through the DonorDrive event website or by posting the link yourself. Email meghan.oneil@specialolympicsma.org with any questions.

Posting to Facebook:

- Click the link at the bottom of the event website and login with your Facebook. It will directly share your personal fundraising page.
- Or, post on your own! Copy the link to your personal page, and post a status update on Facebook. Tag Special Olympics Massachusetts in your post, add a "feeling" such as excited, and add any images or Gifs you may like. See sample Facebook post image!



Instagram/ Twitter

- First, follow Special Olympics Massachusetts @SpecialOlympicsMA on Instagram and @SpOlympicsMA on Twitter! When writing a post, make sure to tag SOMA!
- Post your personal fundraising link into your “bio” so when you advertise that you are participating in an event, redirect your followers to the link in your bio to donate! For Twitter, you can include the link directly in your Tweet.



- Refer to the screenshots for a Twitter example and an Instagram Story example.
- Use hashtags! That way, when someone is browsing, they may come across your page and want to donate! Or, create your own custom hashtag to use on all your posts! Some good hashtag ideas:

#SpecialOlympics #SpecialOlympicsMassachusetts #PolarPlunge2018 #50years #JollyJaunt #TruckPull #RunForAReason #5k #Marathon #SOMA #SpecialOlympics50 #LETR #CostumeParty #[TOWNNAME] #SuperPlunge #FreezinForAReason #Inclusion #ChooseToInclude #Fundraising #IAMGoingToJumpInALake #InTheMiddleOfTheWinter #SendHelp

- Add photos, videos, or Gifs on your post. This will grab someone’s attention. If you have photos of you participating in the event in the include those so viewers can see what your fundraising event is all about! Or, film a video of why you are participating and post it leading up to the fundraiser!



past,

How to Raise \$150 in 10 Days

	Who to Ask	Total per day	Grand Total
Day 1	Sponsor yourself for \$10	\$10	\$10
Day 2	Ask 5 family members to sponsor you for \$10 each	\$50	\$60
Day 3	Ask 4 friends to sponsor you for \$5 each	\$20	\$80
Day 4	Ask 2 neighbors to sponsor you for \$10	\$20	\$100
Day 5	Ask your boss or coach to sponsor you for \$10	\$10	\$110
Day 6	Ask 3 out of town friends or family to donate \$10 (<i>use template on next page</i>)	\$30	\$140
Day 7	Ask your local coffee shop or favorite restaurant to match your \$10 donation	\$10	\$150

How to Recruit Teammates

Get Your Leadership Class Involved

Leadership classes have a strong influence over student bodies and they can offer a lot of support. Talk to your leadership class to see how they may be able to help you create a Polar Plunge team at your school. They may have creative ideas and ways to promote the Plunge to students. They are also the right people to talk to about getting time to speak about the Polar Plunge at an upcoming assembly!

Hold an Assembly

School assemblies are the perfect way to promote the Polar Plunge to your student body! The assembly should cover:

WHO

WHAT

WHEN/WHERE

WHY

HOW

Hang Posters

Special Olympics can provide Polar Plunge posters to put in your hallways to spread the word about the Plunge!

School Announcements

Write a short announcement encouraging students to join your school's Polar Plunge team and broadcast it over the loudspeakers for your entire student body to hear!

Set Up a Booth

Have a Polar Plunge booth during lunch to promote your school's team. Tell people what the Polar Plunge is and why they should participate. Hand out flyers or have a laptop set up for people to sign up!

Arrange a Meeting

Set up a meeting after school for students to come and learn about what the Polar Plunge is, why they should get involved and how!

Emailing

This is one way to raise a lot of money in a short amount of time! Set aside an hour one day and you can reach out to all your friends and family. Write personal emails to your family, friends, and acquaintances and let them know you are plunging.

- **Compose an email or use the template below.** Remember to share the sample email with team members to get them started. Also, make sure your plunge date is correct (the sample email is just a template, so adjust accordingly).
- **Send it to everyone in your contacts.**

Dear **[Insert Name]**,

On **[Insert Date]**, I will be participating in the **[Insert City/Town Name]**, Polar Plunge at **[Location]**. I have decided that it's cold enough, and I'm bold enough to take a freezing dip into the Atlantic Ocean on behalf of **[your school name]** for the athletes of Special Olympics Massachusetts!

I have set a personal fundraising goal of **\$(insert amount)**, and I need your help to reach it! Any amount is greatly appreciated—it all goes to a wonderful cause, and every little bit gets me that much closer to my goal. Or join me in taking the plunge, if you dare!

There are three easy ways to support my Plunge:

1. **Online donation:** Credit or debit card. Visit **[Enter Website]** and search for my name in the "Sponsor Participant" section.
2. **Offline donation:** Cash or checks. Make checks payable to "Special Olympics Massachusetts" then mail to SOMA / 512 Forest Street Marlboro, MA 01752. If you do it this way, please be sure to include my name in the memo area so that the staff will know where to credit the contribution.
3. **Join!** Join my team **[insert team name]** at **[Enter Website]**

Think warm thoughts for me as **[plunge date]** approaches. Can you believe how much WARMTH can come out of so much COLD? Your support changes lives!

Thank you! **[Plunger Name]**

Fundraising Incentives

Each plunger will receive an official Event Long-Sleeve T-shirt. Other prizes will be awarded to Plungers that raise additional funds. Visit **[Enter Website]** for a full list of Incentive prizes.

Top Team Prizes (subject to change by event)

Awards will be presented in each Category:

- Top Individual Fundraiser
- Top Team Fundraisers
- Top K-12 School Fundraisers
- Top College/ University Fundraisers
- Top Public Safety Organization Fundraisers
- Top Corporate Team
- Top Community Team





Special Olympics Massachusetts Fact Sheet

WHO WE ARE: Special Olympics Massachusetts is a statewide year-round sports program for Massachusetts' children and adults with intellectual disabilities. We currently offer training and competition opportunities in 24 different Olympic-style sports. We serve more than 12,000 participants, ages eight and above.

OUR MISSION AND VISION: The mission of Special Olympics Massachusetts is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

The vision of Special Olympics Massachusetts is to help bring all persons with intellectual disabilities into the larger society under conditions whereby they are accepted, respected and given the chance to become useful and productive citizens.

OUR HISTORY: The concept for Special Olympics was born in the early 1960s when Eunice Kennedy Shriver started a day camp for people with intellectual disabilities at her home in Rockville, Maryland. The first International Special Olympics Games were held in 1968 at Soldier's Field, Chicago with 1,000 athletes participating from 26 states and Canada.

HOW WE'VE GROWN: Mrs. Shriver's vision of an international sports organization for people with intellectual disabilities, one that would bring the joy and pride developed through sports competition to those the world believed could not learn or play sports, has grown into one of the largest and most successful sports and volunteer organizations in the world. Special Olympics programs are in every state and in over 160 countries worldwide, serving close to four million athletes every year.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE: Throughout Massachusetts, there are 100,000 persons with intellectual disabilities and/or closely related developmental disabilities who could benefit from our sports programs. Eligible athletes are all children and adults, at least eight years old, with intellectual disabilities, a cognitive delay, or a closely related developmental disability. Children age six and seven may participate in Special Olympics training, but may not compete. The Young Athletes program exists for 2-7 year olds to build motor skills.

OUR GAMES ARE ALWAYS: There are training and competition opportunities every day throughout the year. Our programs are free to all eligible athletes and are possible thanks to the generous support from individuals and businesses who believe in Special Olympics athletes. Financial support comes exclusively from individuals, organizations, corporations and foundations. We receive zero government funding. The average cost of supporting one athlete, for one season is \$100.00. Your support changes lives.

Plunge Day Checklist



- ✓ Plunge costume
 - ✓ Shoes to plunge in (REQUIRED)
 - ✓ Change of clothes for after your plunge
 - ✓ Towel
 - ✓ Camera
 - ✓ Friends
 - ✓ Any offline donations
 - ✓ Plastic bag for wet clothes
-