



2018 Plunge Fundraising Toolkit

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POLAR PLUNGE.
FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS MASSACHUSETTS

**Special
Olympics**
Massachusetts





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About the Polar Plunge

Plungers are some of the brrrrrravest souls in Massachusetts who decide to take the plunge into the icy cold waters in the middle of the winter! They fundraise for the athletes of Special Olympics Massachusetts by raising at least \$100. Whether you are a local program raising money to support your team or a participant looking to support a great cause, each dollar raised directly supports year-round Olympic type sports training and competition for athletes with intellectual disabilities.

With over 10 Polar Plunges to choose from throughout Massachusetts, which one will you choose?

To find out more details on all of our Polar Plunge events, click [here!](#)



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Getting Started

STEP 1

REGISTER

Are you ready to be Freezin For a Reason? [Find your nearest Polar Plunge event here and get registered!](#)

STEP 2

CREATE A TEAM

Form a team and start recruiting friends, family members, neighbors, and co workers to join you! Not a fan of plunging? They can sign up to be a chicken instead! Compete against other individuals for fundraising awards and the costume contest!

STEP 3

SPREAD THE WORD

Jumping into the New England waters in the middle of the right is something to brag about! Post on social media, send out emails, or wear it loud and proud for all to hear!

STEP 4

REACH YOUR GOAL

Every dollar raised supports almost 13,000 Special Olympics Massachusetts athletes by providing them with the best equipment, the best uniforms, and long lasting friendships. Whether your goal is \$100 or \$10,000, you got it!

STEP 5

FOLLOW US



Click on each icon to be brought to our social media pages!



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Team Captain Recruitment

Behind every team is a great team captain who leads the way and encourages their team to reach their fundraising goal.



The Role of a Team Captain:

- ⇒ Register yourself and create your team with a fun name
- ⇒ Recruit team members by asking them to join online
- ⇒ Send emails through the custom email templates
- ⇒ Set goals with team recruitment and fundraising
- ⇒ Share fundraising tools with teammates and offer support
- ⇒ Assist in organizing any outside fundraising events leading up to a Plunge
- ⇒ Create unique fundraising ideas and costume themes
- ⇒ Communicate with your team prior to the event

How to be a successful Team Captain:

- ⇒ Send regular email updates and reach out through phone calls
- ⇒ Hold team meetings or fun gatherings
- ⇒ Motivate your team, aim high, and offer support to reach your goal
- ⇒ Remind your team why they are fundraising for Special Olympics MA



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Fundraising Timeline

Timeline	What to Accomplish
3-6 Months Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Register your team * Set a goal and create a plan to achieve that goal * Recruit team members and start fundraising!
2-3 Months Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Hold a kickoff event around town and partner with local businesses * Continue to recruit team members and ask for donations * Send emails, share on social media, and spread the word!
1-2 Months Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Create a contest with the team to raise as much as they can * Start planning a team costume * Continue to reach out and ask for donations
1-2 Weeks Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Recruit any last minute members to join the team * Create a packing list– remember, you will be very cold! * Set a time and place to meet up and what costume you are wearing
Day of Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Bring any cash or checks and sign in at the registration tent * Take a team photo * Warm up your bodies and have fun plunging!
After the Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Collect any additional donations and mail to Special Olympics Massachusetts * Say thank you to all the members on the team * Share your wonderful contribution to Special Olympics through social media!



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Fundraising Tools

Offline Pledge Form

Using online software is not for everyone. If you prefer to gather donations offline, use this form to keep track of them all. Just don't forget to bring them with you on Plunge day!

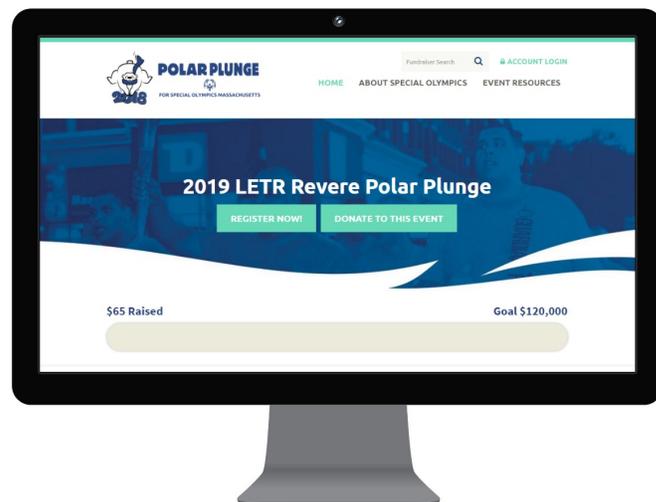
Click to download the [Offline Pledge Form](#).

This Toolkit!

This toolkit is full of all kinds of fundraising activities for schools, individual, members of a law enforcement, and more. Want to reach out to local businesses or a family member for support? Keep reading for some helpful hints!

The Donor Drive Website

We are excited to now work with DonorDrive for all of our fundraising events; a user friendly and visually appealing website to help participants to maximize their fundraising potential. We have documents to show you how to use it if you experience issues.



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Fundraising Tips– For Schools

Unique ways to get you to your fundraising goal and beyond! Plus, have a little fun along the way!

- * **Penny Wars** – Set up a challenge to collect the most points (pennies). Points are given for pennies and negative points for silver coins and cash. Others can sabotage by placing money other than pennies in the jars. The department, school grade, floor, etc. with the most points wins lunch at the loser's expense. All money in the jars is donated for the Plunge.
- * **Dress Down Days** – See if you can have your teachers help fundraise. Set a goal and if they raise it, they can have a dress down day- something the students are most likely not used too!
- * **Pizza Party** – This is a twist on the usual fundraiser dinner. Decide if you would like to make this a pizza buffet, set a limit on the number of slices per person, or actually sell the pizza "by the slice."
- * **Dessert Auction** – Ask for donations of baked goods. Label each dessert with the name of the dessert and the cook. Ask your team's most humorous and charismatic person to be the auctioneer who can entertain the crowd and boost the auction prices. Sell at school games, spirit rally's, school dances, before and after school, during lunch, etc.
- * **Trivia Night** – Find a location to host your team and guests. See if a local restaurant will host a trivia night with your group. Guests split into several small teams to answer trivia asked by a host and the winners are the team which, at the end of the night, has correctly answered the most questions. Funds are raised through entry tickets, food sales, etc.
- * **Restaurant to the Rescue** – Ask a local restaurant or café to contribute a portion of the proceeds for a day. It could even be a special menu item. Many restaurants are happy to help such as Bertucci's, Flatbread Company, Chili's, Ninety-Nine Restaurants, Panera Bread, Buffalo Wild Wings, and more. Create a sign letting patrons know that the owner will donate half the money if purchased.
- * **Pennies from Heaven** – did you know that one milk jug full of pennies weighs 35 lbs? And did you know that 30 lbs of pennies is equal to \$50? Collect pennies – sit out jars during lunch or at school functions, ask neighbors, etc.
- * **Bowl-A-Thon** - Bowlers get pledges for each pin they knock down, or you can just get a flat Donation.
- * **Car Wash** – There's nothing like a good old fashioned car wash fundraiser! Ask around at the local gas stations to see if you can set up a spot to host the car wash. All you need is buckets, a water line, a hose, big sponges, and soap. If not a gas station, try a big parking lot near a busy street that will get a lot of attention!



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Fundraising Tips– For Businesses

- * **Matching Gifts** – check with human resources at your company to see if they have a matching gifts program, this is an effective way to double your fundraising efforts!
- * **Dress Down Days** – have co-workers donate and in turn they can wear jeans to work for a day!
- * **Company Contribution** – Solicit a specific donation from your organization above and beyond that raised by your team, apply the credit evenly to all team members.
- * **Penny Wars** – Set up a challenge for your work to collect the most points (pennies). Points are given for pennies and negative points for silver coins and cash. Others can sabotage by placing money other than pennies in the jars. The worker, office, floor, etc. with the most points wins lunch at the loser's expense. All money in the jars is donated for the Plunge.
- * **Trivia Night** – Find a location to host your team and guests. See if a local restaurant will host a trivia night with your group. Maybe you can get discounted drinks and cast the trivia onto their TV's. Guests split into several small teams to answer trivia asked by a host and the winners are the team which, at the end of the night, has correctly answered the most questions. Funds are raised through entry tickets, food sales, etc.
- * **Auction (Silent or Live)** – Hold the event at your business, in your neighborhood, or church. Ask for contributions of unique items such as homemade toys, art, quilts, knitting, etc. Or, ask local businesses to include gift cards for auction. Display items prior to event with description
- * **Bake Sale** – Hold a Friday bake sale so employees will have treats for the weekend. Make sure to individually wrap items for individual sale.
- * **Best or Worst Tie Contest** – Bring out those 1980's ties! Charge colleagues a fee to enter the best/ worst tie competition. This is not restricted to only males- females can be a part of this too! Maybe even offer up a little fashion show too!
- * **Office Fines** – This is a fun one and sure to have everyone remembering to do their little chores. Charge someone a fee every time they fail to turn off the lights when leaving a room, leaves their computer open when they've been gone for longer than 30 minutes, calls meetings that could have been emails, prints something but then fails to get it from the printer, puts something in the trash that should have been recycled, etc.
- * **Donate your Special Day**- Whether it be your birthday, a baby shower, bridal shower, or going away party, ask coworkers to skip the presents and lunch party and donate money to your personal Plunge page!



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Fundraising Tips– For Law Enforcement

- * **Penny Wars** – Set up a challenge for your work to collect the most points (pennies). Points are given for pennies and negative points for silver coins and cash. Others can sabotage by placing money other than pennies in the jars. The worker, office, floor, etc. with the most points wins lunch at the loser's expense. All money in the jars is donated for the Plunge.
- * **Company Contribution** – Solicit a specific donation from your organization above and beyond that raised by your team, apply the credit evenly to all team members.
- * **Dress Down Days** – have co-workers donate and in turn they can wear jeans to work for a day!
- * **Tip- A- Cop** - Local officers turn in their badges for an aprons in support of Special Olympics. Choose a restaurant in your town and join the wait staff! Working alongside the staff, these cops will give you extra special service in hopes of an extra tip for Special Olympics. Can be a breakfast, lunch, or dinner event!
- * **5k Runs** - Some ideas are glow runs, run with the cops, and holiday themed runs. Check out more information at: <https://www.specialolympicsma.org/events/fundraising-events/letr-events/>
- * **Icon Sales** – Ask local businesses to support Special Olympics Massachusetts with icon sales! These are pieces of paper that a customer can sign and display on the wall if they choose to make a donation.



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Fundraising Tips– For Individuals and Teams

- * **Bowl-A-Thon** - Bowlers get pledges for each pin they knock down, or you can just get a flat Donation.
- * **Restaurant to the Rescue** – Ask a local restaurant or café to contribute a portion of the proceeds for a day. It could even be a special menu item. Many restaurants are happy to help such as Bertucci’s, Flatbread Company, Chili’s, Ninety-Nine Restaurants, Panera Bread, Buffalo Wild Wings, and more. Create a sign letting patrons know that the owner will donate half the money if purchased.
- * **Dessert Auction** – Ask for donations of baked goods. Label each dessert with the name of the dessert and the cook. Ask your team’s most humorous and charismatic person to be the auctioneer who can entertain the crowd and boost the auction prices. Sell at school events, churches, town wide events, outside restaurants on the weekends, etc.
- * **Trivia Night** – Find a location to host your team and guests. See if a local restaurant will host a trivia night with your group. Guests split into several small teams to answer trivia asked by a host and the winners are the team which, at the end of the night, has correctly answered the most questions. Funds are raised through entry tickets, food sales, etc.
- * **Social Media & Email** - Using social media to fundraise is extremely beneficial and one of the easiest ways. See page 8 and 9 for more information!
- * **Venmo** – If you have a Venmo account, request \$5.00 from your friends with a description that says “help me reach my fundraising goal of ____ for the [event name] Polar Plunge!” Some may decline, others may accept, and others may send you more than \$5.00. However, it is then up to you to transfer this money from your bank account to your personal fundraising page. Use at your own comfort level!
- * **Donate your Special Day**- Whether it be your birthday, a baby shower, bridal shower, or going away party, ask friends and family to skip the presents and donate money to your personal Plunge page!
- * **Any of the above**– All of these fundraising tips can be used across the board, no matter what type of participant you are. Think you can incorporate office fines into a non-office environment– go for it! Be creative and you will reach your goal.



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How to Raise \$150 in a Week!

Reaching your goal is easier than you think. Here are some simple ways to raise \$150 in a week:

Day 1	Make a \$20 Donation to yourself! Many participants look past this but donating to yourself shows your donors and teammates that you are dedicated to this cause.
Day 2	Using the email templates, send an email to 3 friends or for a \$10 contribution.
Day 3	Ask one parent and one sibling to donate \$10 to your fundraising page.
Day 4	Bring a pledge sheet to work and ask coworkers to donate \$5 or \$10 towards your fundraising goal. Send an all staff email, leave a donation bucket in the lunch room, or go around to offices and explain why you are fundraising!
Day 5	Send another email through the email templates to 4 additional friends or family members for a \$5 or \$10 donation.
Day 6	Reach out to businesses and restaurants in town to do a percentage night so that a portion of every customer's meal will be donated on your behalf to the event.
Day 7	Post on social media asking for each person to give \$10 to help you reach your goal. Share the link to your personal fundraising page!



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Sample Donation Letter

Dear **[Insert Name]**:

I am writing to ask for your help. On **[Insert Date]**, I have committed to grin and “bear it for the athletes of Special Olympics Massachusetts by taking a dip into **[Insert body of water i.e. Atlantic Ocean, or Lake Massapoag]** alongside hundreds of other warm-hearted people.

I know – you’re probably getting cold just thinking about it! But the cold that I will feel is temporary... the positive impact that will have on the lives of thousands of individuals with intellectual disabilities will last a lifetime.

I have set a personal fundraising goal of **[\$[insert amount]]**, and I need your help to reach it! So no, I’m not asking you to take the Plunge alongside me, but instead, I am asking if you will make a donation to Special Olympics Massachusetts on behalf of me taking the Polar Plunge. Any amount would be appreciated because it goes to a wonderful cause, and every little bit gets me that much closer to my goal.

In order to support my Plunge, please make your check payable to “Special Olympics Massachusetts” and return it to me in the envelope I have provided, or you can mail it directly to the office at Special Olympics Massachusetts, 512 Forest Street, Marlboro, Mass 01752. If you mail a check directly there, please be sure to include my name in the memo area so that the staff will know where to credit the contribution.

Or, if you prefer the web, visit **[Insert Website]** and click “Sponsor Participant.” Type in my name, which will take you to my personal fundraising page, and give you the option of making a donation online via credit or debit card.

If you want to learn more about this spectacular winter event, visit **[Insert Website]** to find out all of the chilly details. Think warm thoughts for me and my fellow plungers as **[Insert date]** approaches. I will do my best to honor my “Pledge to Freeze” and make my supporters proud!

Thank you!!!

[Plunger Name]



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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.

Special Olympics
MA Social media



Share on your
Social media

Facebook ****Please Read****

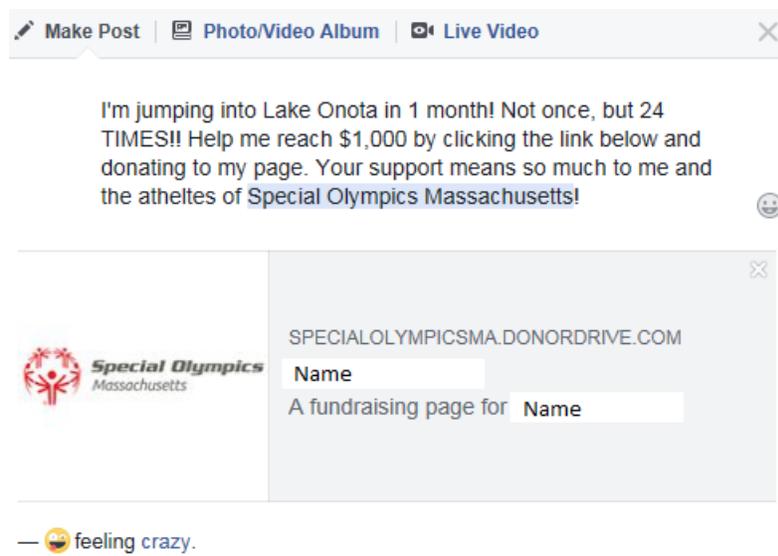
We strongly prefer if you **do not** use Facebook's built-in support a nonprofit option (Facebook Charities) to raise money toward your fundraising goal as all donations given through Facebook Charities goes to a general Special Olympics Massachusetts fund, and will **not** be added toward your personal 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!



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Fundraising Through Social Media

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 past, 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!

Other ideas

Whatever social media you use, include a short and to the point pitch that will get a donor's attention and want to donate to your personal page! Visuals are always helpful, so include event photos and videos if you have any. And, always include the link to your page if you can.



21s

I'm fundraising for the athletes of @SpOlympicsMA during the SUPER PLUNGE! In November, I am plunging into the freezing Lake Onota, not once, BUT 24 TIMES and I need your support to help me reach \$1,000! Please click here to donate to my fundraising page! specialolympicsma.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuse...



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Quick Facts

ATHLETES SERVED
12,584

UNIFIED PARTNERS &
ATHLETES TOTAL
15,314

2016-2017 CHANGE

+2.5%

+308 ATHLETES



ANNUAL COMPETITIONS
296

AVERAGE

5.7 COMPETITIONS / WEEK

24.7 COMPETITIONS / MONTH



VOLUNTEERS
11,597

COACHES

1,200

MEDICAL

122

2016-2017
CHANGE

+8.3%

+892 VOLUNTEERS



SPORTS OFFERED

TOTAL YEAR-ROUND
SPORTS

23

TOP 5 SPORTS
Track & Field
Basketball
Bowling
Soccer
Swimming



LAW ENFORCEMENT
TORCH RUN

MONEY RAISED

2016 **\$506,843** +195%

2011 **\$171,937** +277%

2007 **\$45,629** +97%

2003 **\$23,190**

EXPENSE PERCENTAGES

PROGRAMS & SERVICES **87.69%**

FUNDRAISING **8.96%**

ADMINISTRATION **3.35%**

SUPPORT

\$4,405,410

EVENTS

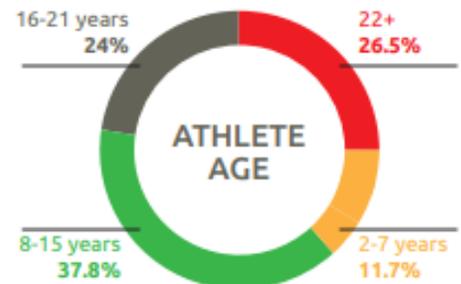
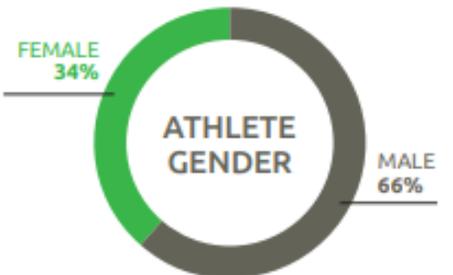
\$2,237,068

GRANTS

\$338,118

INDIVIDUALS, CORPORATIONS &
INVESTMENTS

\$1,798,995



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Event Day Checklist

- * Gloves, hat, scarf, fuzzy socks, and a coat
- * Sturdy shoes you don't mind getting wet
- * A change of *warm* clothes
- * A camera
- * Friends and family members
- * Any offline donations
- * The address and parking information for the event (find under *resources* when you are logged in)

Contact PolarPlunge@SpecialOlympicsMA.org or call 508-485-0986 x258 with any questions.



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