

# PRESS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## ***18<sup>th</sup> Annual Polar Plunge raises \$55,475 for Special Olympics Missouri***

CAPE GIRARDEAU - The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Cape Girardeau Polar Plunge on Feb. 3 at Cape County Park North was a splashing success, raising over \$55,000 to date. 134 brave men and women from around the area donned Hawaiian-themed costumes and swimwear to take a chilly dip into the lake at Cape County Park North. Their *Reason for Freezin'* was the athletes of Special Olympics Missouri (SOMO).

Online fundraising is still ongoing. Organizers of the Plunge still hope to raise an additional \$10,000 to reach the goal of \$66,000. Donations can be made on our [online fundraising page](#).

"It was a beautiful and amazing day to be raising money for amazing athletes," Plunge Coordinator Penny Williams said. "Thanks to all those who give so much of themselves, going far beyond their comfort level, to help someone else."

Top individual fundraisers:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place Fundraiser – Lisa Reitzel
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Fundraiser – Ayne Held
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Fundraiser – Lisa Berryhill (SOMO Athlete, Plunge Ambassador)

Top team fundraisers:

- Top Team – CHS Ohana | Chaffee High School
- Top Law Enforcement Team – Copsicles | Cape Girardeau Police Department
- Top School – CHS Ohana | Chaffee High School

Special Recognition:

- Polar Plunge Spirit of John John Atkinson Award: Preston Clark | Notre Dame High School

Competition for the Golden Plunger was steep this year. Participants were encouraged to come in costume and compete for the chance to take home the "Golden Plunger."

- Group 1<sup>st</sup> Place – CHS Ohana | Chaffee High School
- Group 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Shiver Bears | Poplar Bluff High School
- Group 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Islanders | Sams Club
- Honorable Mention – Belly Whoppers
- Individual 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Maison Dennis | Poplar Bluff
- Individual 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Russell Amelunke | Jackson Deli
- Individual 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Tie: Lucas Blattel, Lisa Berryhill and Daniel Fultz

SOMO was lucky to have more than 10 athletes helping with this event. Our Plunge Ambassadors for this year's Plunge were Lisa Berryhill and Daniel Fultz. They are both SOMO athletes, and they worked for months to help spread awareness of the Plunge!

“Special Olympics means so much to me,” Berryhill said. “It was a great day. I feel so much acceptance and support.”

This year’s event was held in conjunction with the Cape Girardeau Police Department.

Please Note: We will host our Polar Bear Strut 5k in December where we hope to raise an additional \$5,000. Also, we plan to host an additional Polar Plunge, hosted by the Southeast Missouri State Greeks, on March 2. Our goal with this event is also to raise \$5,000.

Thank you so much to our sponsors!

- Our Polar Hosts include Cape Girardeau Police Department, Cape Girardeau Fire Department, Cape County Parks Department and the Cape Girardeau Parks and Recreation Department.
- Polar Level sponsors are River Radio, Banterra Bank, Kiwanis Club, Coad Toyota, Drury Southwest, AID/VIP and St. Francois County Board.
- Our Tundra Level sponsors are Culver’s, Southern Cross Medical, American Family-Laurel and Chris Adkisson, Marcellous Jones Foundation.

For more information about the Polar Plunge, visit [www.somo.org/plunge](http://www.somo.org/plunge).

Media is welcome to download and use any pictures from [our Flickr page!](#)

### **Special Olympics Missouri**

Special Olympics Missouri (SOMO) is a year-round program of sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Thousands of athletes participate in 13 Olympic-type sports throughout the state. SOMO provides people with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, and experience joy as they participate in the sharing of gifts and friendship with their fellow athletes, their family and friends, and communities across Missouri.

SOMO is proud of our financial health, returning 82% of every dollar back to program services. We are privileged to be recognized with these honors: Better Business Bureau A+ Charity Accreditation, Guidestar Gold Level and Charity Navigator 4-star rating. Special Olympics was also recently named Morning Consult’s No. 4 most trusted nonprofit.

Thank you for trusting us with your donations, volunteer time and your goodwill.

Visit Special Olympics Missouri at [www.somo.org](http://www.somo.org). Engage with us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Tik-Tok](#), [Threads](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).

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