

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 15, 2024

CONTACT: Alex Jones, Plunge Coordinator

573-469-7864

ajones@somo.org

It's time for the Aloha SOMO Plunge! The official party of winter is Saturday, March 9, 2024

COLUMBIA - The 17th Annual Columbia Polar Plunge will take place on Saturday, March 9, 2024. Brave men and women from around the area will don Hawaiian-themed costumes and swimwear and take "polar" dips into Bass Pro Shop's Lake. Their Reason for Freezin' is the athletes of Special Olympics Missouri (SOMO)! All proceeds from this year's event will benefit training and competition for the thousands of SOMO athletes across the state, including right here in Mid-Missouri.

The Polar Plunge is open to anyone 10 years or older who is a fan of having a good time for a good cause. The event is hosted by the Columbia Police Department and will take place at Bass Pro Shops, 3101 Bass Pro Drive, Columbia, MO. Day-of registration begins at 10 a.m., and the Plunge starts promptly at noon.

"The Columbia Polar Plunge is a great community event," Plunge Coordinator Alex Jones said. "I am so excited to see the enthusiasm from the plungers and the supporters. Knowing we are truly making a difference for people in our community is the best feeling in the world!"

In 2023, Columbia Polar Plungers raised more than \$60,000 for SOMO athletes. Each participant must raise a minimum of \$75 to take the Plunge and can earn incentives by reaching fundraising goals. This year's goal is \$62,000, and organizers hope to break the million-dollar mark across the state with [more than 10 events](#).

Costumes are highly encouraged. Awards will be given in the following categories for pre-registered Plungers only:

- Top Fundraisers
- Top Fundraising Group
- Top Fundraising School

Golden Plunger awards for the most creative costumes will also be presented to the Top Group and Top Individuals.

No wet suits are allowed, and shoes are required.

The easiest and most efficient way to register and fundraise is online. Simply go to our [online fundraising page](#) to sign up. We encourage Plungers to email their friends and families to support their Plunge efforts. Paper registration forms are also available at the Training for Life Campus at 305 Special Olympics Drive, Jefferson City, MO. Mail or deliver pre-registration forms and the minimum \$75 contribution to Special Olympics Missouri Plunge at 305 Special Olympics Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

Plunging participants will receive an official Polar Plunge commemorative shirt and bragging rights for freezing your fur off. Participants can also receive incentives for reaching fundraising goals: \$250 – SOMO Polar Plunge towel, \$500 – SOMO Polar Plunge backpack, \$1,000 – SOMO Polar Plunge water bottle and \$2,000 – SOMO Polar Plunge touch screen gloves PLUS all other prizes.

SOMO is lucky to have two Plunge Ambassadors helping with this event. Our Plunge Ambassadors for this year's Plunge are Anna McDaniel and Sarah Byland. They are SOMO athletes, and they have been working for months to help spread awareness of the Plunge!

"I am excited about the Columbia plunge," McDaniel said. "I love seeing our community come together as one. My favorite part of the Polar Plunge is seeing all the costumes and people going into the ice-cold water for Special Olympic Missouri. One word to describe the Polar Plunge is inclusion because community and athletes are coming together for something they love to be a part of."

If you'd like to set up an interview with any of our Plunge Ambassadors or receive any additional information about the Polar Plunge, please contact Alex Jones at 573-469-7864 or email ajones@somo.org.

Thank you so much to our sponsors!

- Our Polar Level sponsors are Bass Pro Shops, Mid-MO Honda Dealers, KOMU and the Columbia Missourian.
- Our Tundra Level sponsor is Joe Machens.

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. Engage with us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Tik-Tok](#), [Threads](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).

###