

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Crystal Schuster, Plunge Coordinator

573-635-1660

cschuster@somo.org

29th Annual Polar Plunge raises \$272,800 for Special Olympics Missouri

LAKE OF THE OZARKS - The 29th Annual Lake of the Ozarks Polar Plunge this past Saturday, Feb. 24 at the Lake of the Ozarks was a splashing success, raising \$272,800 to date. A total 20 Super Plungers, 13 Pee Wee Plungers, 250 Plungers, and 84 Strutters from around the area donned Hawaiian-themed costumes and swimwear to run a 5K and/or take a chilly dip into Lake of the Ozarks. Their *Reason for Freezin'* was the athletes of Special Olympics Missouri (SOMO).

Online fundraising is still ongoing. Donations can be made [here!](#)

"I am completely blown away by the support of the community and all the participants for this year's event," said Crystal Schuster, SOMO's Senior Director of Community Development. "The amount of money raised for the SOMO athletes is nothing less than incredible, and my heart is overflowing with gratitude for everyone involved!"

Top individual fundraisers:

- 1st Place Fundraiser – Amber Anderson Smith | \$15,953

Top team fundraisers:

- Top Fundraising Team – Jolly Rogers | \$20,000

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 1st Place – Plungers in Wonderland
- Group 2nd Place – Gilligan's Island
- Group 3rd Place – Davis Dawgs
- Individual 1st Place – The Super Troopers
- Individual 2nd Place – Buzz "Lakeyear"
- Individual 3rd Place – Lucky Charms
- School 1st Place – California High School Stu-Co

STRUT RESULTS

Strutters: 84

Money Raised: \$4,856

Top Male: Tucker Seise – 17:07

Top Female: Jamie Johnston – 30:55

SUPER PLUNGE RESULTS

Super Plungers: 20

Money Raised: \$166,741

Top Fundraiser: JT Gerlt | \$43,000 (new record for a Super Plunger)

PEE WEE PLUNGE RESULTS

Pee Wee Plungers: 13

Top Fundraiser: Jackson Barthelmass | \$1,140

SOMO was lucky to have SOMO athlete and Plunge Ambassador Bobby Bates helping with this event.

“I love helping with the Polar Plunge and seeing all of the excitement the day of the event,” Bates said.

This year’s event was held in conjunction with the Osage Beach Police Department.

Thank you so much to our sponsors!

- Our Polar Level sponsors are Mid-MO Honda Dealers, Missouri State Parks, Mix 92.7, KS95, Cool 102.7, KRCG-TV, Jolly Rogers, and Lamar Advertising
- Our Tundra Level sponsors are LO Profile and Margaritaville Lake Resort.

For more information about the Polar Plunge, visit www.somo.org/plunge.

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

Plungers are welcome to fill out our [Polar Plunge survey here!](#)

Please note: We have another Polar Plunge in Mid-Missouri coming up on March 9 in Columbia. You can check out our [press release here!](#)

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](#).

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