

# PRESS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:** Kellen Wolters, Plunge Coordinator

(314) 961-7755

wolters@somo.org

## ***18th Annual Maryland Heights Polar Plunge raises more than \$112,000 for Special Olympics Missouri***

MARYLAND HEIGHTS - The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Maryland Heights Polar Plunge on Saturday, Feb. 24 in Maryland Heights was a splashing success, raising \$108,961 to date. A total 389 brave men and women from around the area donned Hawaiian-themed costumes and swimwear to take a chilly dip into Creve Coeur Lake. We also had 45 runners come out for our Polar Bear Strut 5k, which raised an additional \$3,097. The weekend total came out to \$112,040. Their *Reason for Freezin'* was the athletes of Special Olympics Missouri (SOMO).

Online fundraising is still ongoing. Donations can be made on our [online fundraising page!](#)

"We had a beautiful day for our Polar Plunge," Plunge Coordinator Kellen Wolters said. "It was amazing to see the St. Louis community come together and raise funds for our Special Olympics Missouri athletes."

Top individual fundraisers:

- Jason Flanery
- Dave Peterson
- Kirk Halveland

Top team fundraisers:

- Top Community Team – Heartland Heroes
- Top Law Enforcement Team – Hazelwood Police Department
- Top Fundraising School – North Tech

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."

- Community Group – Heartland Heroes
- Law Enforcement Group – CMPA Class 209
- School Group – Festus High School Student Council

SOMO was lucky to have a Plunge ambassador helping with this event. Our Plunge Ambassador for this year's Plunge was Glenn Plank. He is a SOMO athlete, and he worked for months to help spread awareness of the Plunge!

This year's event was held in conjunction with Maryland Heights and Hazelwood Police Departments.

Thank you so much to our sponsors!

- Our Polar Level sponsors are Premiere Rentals, Special School Districts of St. Louis and Fox2/KPLR.

- Our Tundra Level sponsor is Hollywood Casino.

For more information about the Polar Plunge, visit [somo.org/plunge!](https://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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