

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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17th Annual Columbia Polar Plunge raises more than \$56,000 for Special Olympics Missouri

COLUMBIA - The 17th Annual Columbia Polar Plunge on March 9 at Bass Pro Shops was a splashing success, raising more than \$56,000 to date. A total 193 brave men and women from around the area donned Hawaiian-themed costumes and swimwear to take a chilly dip into Bass Pro Shops Lake. 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 \$6,000 to reach the goal of \$62,000. Donations can be made on our [online fundraising page!](#)

"The Columbia Polar Plunge was a great success," Plunge Coordinator Alex Jones said. "A big thank you to our plungers, volunteers and sponsors! This event could not happen without them! The Plunge was a fun day filled with laughter, community and of course, Freezin' for a Reason!"

Top individual fundraisers:

- 1st Place Fundraiser – Sarah Byland | \$2,624 (SOMO Hulu Friends)
- 2nd Place Fundraiser – Heinrich Lenz | \$2,485 (Isle of Capri Casino)
- 3rd Place Fundraiser – Chris St. Romaine | \$2,001 (Isle of Capri Casino)

Top team fundraisers:

- Top Fundraising Team – Isle of Capri Casino | \$8,392
- Top Law Enforcement Team – Missouri 5-O | \$3,655
- Top Fundraising School – Fulton High School Student Council | \$3,234

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 – SOMO Hulu Friends
- Individual 1st Place – Jessica Nunan

SOMO was lucky to have two Plunge Ambassadors helping with this event. Our Plunge Ambassadors for this year's Plunge were Anna McDaniel and Sarah Byland. They are both SOMO athletes, and they worked for months to help spread awareness of the Plunge! McDaniel is also a SOMO board member, and Byland is a SOMO Hall of Fame athlete.

"The Columbia plunge was amazing," McDaniel said. "I still can't believe the amazing outcome of plunge this year and the beautiful weather. Overall, it was a great turn out and a great event this year!"

This year's event was held in conjunction with the Columbia Police Department.

Thank you so much to our sponsors!

- Our Polar Level sponsors are Mid Missouri Honda Dealers, the Columbia Missourian, Clear 99, Bass Pro Shops and KOMU.
- Our Tundra Level sponsor is Joe Machens.

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](#).

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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