

# PRESS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:** Crystal Schuster, Plunge Coordinator

573-635-1660

cschuster@somo.org

## ***30th Annual Polar Plunge raises \$226,737 for Special Olympics Missouri***

LAKE OF THE OZARKS - The 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Lake of the Ozarks Polar Plunge this past Saturday, Feb. 22 at the Lake of the Ozarks was a splashing success, raising \$226,737 to date, with money still flowing in. A total 18 Super Plungers, 11 Pee Wee Plungers, 231 Plungers, and 75 Strutters from around the area donned 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:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place Fundraiser – Amber Anderson Smith | \$15,510

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 – Joel & Company
- Group 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Jolly Rogers
- Group 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Osage Beach PD ft. Jelly Roll
- School 1<sup>st</sup> Place – California High School Stu-Co
- School 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Dent County
- School 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Camdenton High School

### **STRUT RESULTS**

**Strutters: 75**

**Money Raised: \$5,870**

**Top Male: Luke Webb – 18:36.89**

**Top Female: Amorita Jenkins – 28:23.66**

### **SUPER PLUNGE RESULTS**

**Super Plungers: 18**

**Money Raised: \$142,654**

**Top Fundraiser: JT Gerlt | \$32,000**

## **PEE WEE PLUNGE RESULTS**

**Pee Wee Plungers:** 11

**Top Fundraiser:** Jackson Barthelmass | \$1,350

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 Missouri State Parks, Mix 92.7, KS95, Cool 102.7, KRCCG-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 [PlungeMO.org](http://PlungeMO.org).

Media is welcome to download and use any pictures from our [Flickr Page](https://www.flickr.com/photos/somissouri/albums/72177720324052758) (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/somissouri/albums/72177720324052758>).

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 8 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 83% 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. 5 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 [X](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Tik-Tok](#), [Threads](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).

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