



2015 POLAR PLUNGE

SCHOOL CHALLENGE TOOL KIT

Minnesota Nice meets Minnesotan Ice

PLUNGEMN.ORG



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2015 POLAR PLUNGE SCHOOL CHALLENGE TOOL KIT

Party like it's 32 degrees. You may have heard about the Polar Plunge from a friend, seen it on TV or even read about it online, but what exactly is this “Plunge” everyone is talking about?

So you're saying you've never jumped into frigid Minnesota waters in the middle of the winter? Well, we can help change that!

Each year, the Polar Plunge challenges thousands of brave jumpers at numerous locations around the state. It's a great way for everyone—individuals, organizations and businesses—to get involved in supporting Special Olympics Minnesota. All funds raised go towards programming and events for more than 8,000 athletes statewide.

Think you have what it takes? The concept is simple: participants raise a minimum of \$75 and take a dip into one of Minnesota's frozen lakes. But the Plunges are so much more than that: They're the kind of fun and thrilling events that you really have to experience to understand. Grab some friends, get pumped and register today!

Polar Plungers can follow this example by bravely taking a chilly dip! Visit **PlungeMN.org** for more information. You can also contact **plunge@somn.org** or **800.783.7732, ext. 280**.

2015 POLAR PLUNGES

Owatonna (NEW)	January 31	Prior Lake	February 21
White Bear Lake	January 31	Anoka County	February 28
Willmar/Spicer	January 31	South Metro	February 28
Maple Grove	February 7	Alexandria	March 1
St. Peter	February 7	Minneapolis	March 6-7
Sauk Centre (NEW)	February 7	Brainerd	March 7
Rochester	February 14	Eden Prairie	March 14
St. Cloud	February 14	Mille Lacs	March 14
Woodbury (NEW)	February 14	Grand Rapids	March 21
Duluth	February 21	Warroad (NEW)	March 21

2014 PLUNGE HIGHLIGHTS

Schools are a large part of the Plunges past success! In 2013, Plunger participation increased by 18 percent and funds raised increased by 13 percent. That means more than 15,500 Plungers jumped into frigid waters, raising \$3.3 million to benefit Special Olympics Minnesota.

WHAT IS THE SCHOOL CHALLENGE?

Chal•lenge - *something that by its nature or character serves as a call to battle, contest, special effort, etc.*

Here’s your Plunge call to battle – take the Polar Plunge school team challenge and compete against hundreds of other teams raising funds to plunge into the frigid waters. Are you ready to battle against other Plunge teams for bragging rights and win the coveted Polar Plunge Plaque? Can you beat last year’s Top Five University & School Challenge Teams?

UNIVERSITY	FUNDS RAISED
University of Minnesota -Twin Cities	\$26,562
St. Cloud State University	\$19,202
University of Minnesota - Duluth	\$16,042
Minnesota State University - Mankato	\$7,282
Macalester College	\$6,717
SCHOOL	FUNDS RAISED
Coon Rapids Middle School	\$9,411
Grand Rapids High School	\$8,354
Lincoln Center Elementary	\$7,915
Lakeville North High School	\$6,847
Rosemount High School	\$6,392

* Funds raised for the challenge include online Pledges only

HOW TO JOIN THE SCHOOL CHALLENGE

1. To form a team, visit PlungeMN.org and select register.
2. Fill in the registration fields and select next step.
3. Create your team name and select School. In the drop down box, select your school or type a new school.
4. Confirm your information is correct and select confirm.
5. Recruit your friends, classmates, club members, Greek affiliates, sports teams, etc. to join your team! Use the Plunge tools provided in the next section to raise awareness of your team and raise more funds for Special Olympics Minnesota.

Need help forming your team? Contact: Alyssa Siech, alyssa.siech@somn.org, 612.604.1255

HOW TO RALLY YOUR SCHOOL TO GET INVOLVED

With 20 opportunities to take the Polar Plunge, we'd love to see your school become involved to help us continue to grow and expand the Plunges, and raise more funds to support Special Olympics Minnesota. The following are several ways your school can help spread the word about the Plunge, and get people excited about being freezin' for a reason:

- Advertise the Plunge around your school by displaying the following (details on pages 6-7):
 - Plunge Table Tents
 - Fundraising Icons
 - Plunge Brochures
 - Customizable Posters/Plunge Posters
 - Plunge Rack Cards
- Host a Plunge booth. Recruit team members or pledges by handing out Plunge materials.
- Host Snowflake P. Bear, the Plunge mascot, for a few hours or the entire day. Contact plunge@somn.org to see if Snowflake is available.
- Ask for support by posting your team information on the school's website or intranet with a link to the Plunge team page.
- Email students information about the Plunge and instructions on how to join the team.
- Include Plunge information in your email (e.g. email tagline).
- Social Media: Use Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, blogs, etc. to recruit team members, bring awareness to your Plunge and ask for pledges!
- Feature a team member, a.k.a. Plunger, weekly/monthly. Highlight their Plunge story, pledges raised, their 2015 Plunge plan including costume and more!
- Hold Plunge contests within the school to see who can raise the most pledges. Set incentives: if a certain amount of pledges are raised the President/Principal will Plunge. Don't forget to make the contest competitive yet fun!
- Form teams within your school to raise the competitive spirit (E.g. Residence Hall vs. Residence Hall or Sorority vs. Fraternity). Set goals such as recruiting the most Plungers or raising the most pledges.
- Display the Plunge promotional video on school TV's, website, campus movie theater, etc. We have 2-minute and 30-second versions available!
- Challenge another school to take the School Challenge. Everyone enjoys friendly competition.
- Plunge Icons: Sell Plunge icons to supporters. Icons can be placed throughout the school showing the names of those who support the Plungers and Special Olympics Minnesota.
- Spread the word about your involvement by placing Plunge ads wherever you can; newsletters, closed circuit TVs, announcements and booths during sporting events.
- Use the Plunge as a class project or as a credit for required volunteer hours.
- Remember: Your Plunge team does not need to consist of only students. Invite your teachers, coaches, advisors, family and friends to join in on the freezin' for a reason, as well.

The options are endless to spread the word out about the Plunge!

PLUNGE TOOLS



Table Tents

Table tents only take up about 6 inches and can be easily wiped off. Display them on cafeteria tables, reception areas, offices, dorms and anywhere else you can think of!

Fundraising Icons

The icons are 3 inch by 5 inch cards with the Polar Plunge logo. Icons can be sold for one dollar (or more) and the funds can be used toward your Plunge team's pledges. When sold, people can write their names on them and you can display them in your school. Creativity counts when selling icons! You can also showcase who is taking part in the event and hang their icon in a separate location.

Customizable Posters

The customizable posters are 8.5 inches by 11 inches and can be customized for your school. They are great for displaying in public areas so that people can easily grab the information they need to know how to register for join your team. There are also posters that can be posted on doors and walls to display why you are freezin' for a reason. These can be received from Special Olympics Minnesota or downloaded at PlungeMN.org.

Plunge Posters

The Plunge Posters come in three different sizes; 8.5 inches by 11 inches, 11 inches by 17 inches and 24 inches by 36 inches. These posters are great for displaying in public areas to bring awareness of the 2015 Polar Plunges.



Plunge Rack Cards

The Plunge Rack Cards are two-sided display cards that can be given to anyone interested in learning more about the Polar Plunge. Display them in common areas for people to take or put them in student mailboxes, the options are endless.



Plunge Email Icon

The Plunge Email Icon is a photo that can be included in your email signature. Not only does it promote the Plunge, but also can hyper link to PlungeMN.org or even your team page. Put this in your email to bring awareness to your team!



Plunge Website

For 2015, we have made brand new PlungeMN.org and will continue to use it as a go to place for Plungers to get all the latest updates, new, fun facts, photos and tools. The website heavily promotes the School Challenge on its home page. Contact plunge@somn.org if you are participating in the School Challenge. Maybe you'll be featured on the home page, and as always, we are happy to promote any upcoming Plunge fundraisers that you may be hosting!

EMAIL OUTREACH

Email is an incredibly effective fundraising tool, reaching people all over the world with the click of a button. It is a great way to spread the word about your Plunge participation, and to ask others to join your team or pledge your cause.

Tips & Tricks

- Make it personal: Tell your story. Share with others why you participate, whether it's because you are Plunging for fun or because you love Special Olympics Minnesota.
- If you've Plunged before, share a picture of your previous jump to frozen glory.
- If it's your first time, share your nerves and excitement!
- Have fun with it! Make a contest or game out of it - the first person to donate, or the largest donation gets a gift from you!
- Follow-up. Be sure to say thank you to donors after they make their donation, and again after you take the Plunge. Send them a picture of you Plunging with the results from the event.

Sample Text:

It's gonna be frigid! This winter I will be taking the Plunge to support Special Olympics Minnesota. You might be asking yourself what this Plunge is? Well, I will be raising money so I can jump into a frozen Minnesota Lake. The Plunge into the water may be a little frigid, but I don't mind because I am supporting the amazing athletes of Special Olympics Minnesota.

To jump into the frigid waters, I have set a personal fundraising goal of \$(amount), and I need your help to reach it. I'm hoping you'll make a donation to Special Olympics Minnesota on my behalf and support my Polar Plunge. Don't you want to see me be freezin' for a reason?

You can support my Plunge several ways. The best and easiest is to visit PlungeMN.org and pledge online. My personal page can be found at [PlungeMN.org\(personal url\)](http://PlungeMN.org(personal url)). You can check this page to see my goal, pledges raised and a photo of me after the Plunge!

If you prefer not to donate online, you can also give your donation directly to me, or mail it in to Special Olympics Minnesota at the address below. Please make sure to include my name with your donation so I receive credit for the pledge.

Special Olympics Minnesota
100 Washington Avenue S, Suite 550
Minneapolis, MN 55401

If you can't support my Plunge through a donation, why not consider being bold in the cold and join me in taking the Plunge? You can join my team online now! To learn more about the Polar Plunge and Special Olympics Minnesota, visit PlungeMN.org.

Email Tag

Include an email tag at the bottom of your email talking about your Plunge participation. It can be a sentence or two about the Plunge, or use the Plunge photo icon to show potential donors exactly what you'll be doing! You can even hyper link the image to your personal Plunge page. To use, visit PlungeMN.org/tools, right-click the image and choose "save image as."

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook and Twitter are incredibly powerful tools for fundraising. It has become common practice for Plunge participants to do all of their fundraising entirely through social media. They are easy tools to use and a personal way to connect with friends and family all over the world with a minimal effort.

Facebook

- Like us: [Facebook.com/PlungeMN](https://www.facebook.com/PlungeMN)
 - Share a post from [Facebook.com/PlungeMN](https://www.facebook.com/PlungeMN).
- Add a link to your online Plunge page to send people directly to your Facebook profile.
- Make your Plunge an event on Facebook. Invite friends to support your fundraising effort. That way they will have a reminder before your Plunge!
- Update your status:
 - Share why you are Plunging and what your goal is.
 - Update you fundraising progress each time you continuously until you take your Plunge.
 - Don't forget to share your "training" (i.e. how you are preparing for your jump).
- Let your pictures do the talking:
 - If you've Plunged before, post a picture of your jump along with your donation request.
 - Set your profile picture and timeline photo to a picture of you taking the Plunge, or the costume you'll be wearing to Plunge.
- Shout outs: post a shout out to your donors when they pledge! You can even tag them in your post - just type @ + their name.
- Use Hashtags: you can now use hashtags like #PlungeMN on Facebook
- Don't forget to thank your friends after your Plunge!

Twitter

- Follow us: [Twitter.com/PlungeMN](https://twitter.com/PlungeMN)
- Retweet a tweet from PlungeMN and/or your followers
- Use the hashtag #PlungeMN to follow the chatter about the Plunge.
- Upload Photos: tweet a photo of you taking the Plunge, if you've done so before. If you're a rookie, tweet a photo of your costume. Don't forget to ask for support!
- Create an engaging 140 character message that shares why you are taking the Plunge.
- Shout outs: tweet each time you receive a new pledge. Don't forget to mention them in your status, just type @ + their name.
- Set your profile picture and twitter header image to a photo of you Plunging.
- Don't forget to thank your followers after your Plunge!

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO FUNDRAISE

You've sent out emails to friends, called your Grandma asking for her support, and inundated your social media accounts with all things "Plunge!" You've raised the \$75 minimum, but you still want to do more. Great! There are several other great ways to get the word out about your Plunge efforts and fundraise for your cause. Most of all, have fun with it!

Hold Your Own Fundraiser

Whether the fundraiser is for your personal efforts or a team fundraiser, it's a great way to get people together and raise funds AND awareness for the Polar Plunge and Special Olympics Minnesota. Some ideas for fundraisers are below ... you can use these models and make them your own! Be sure to send any fundraisers you are hosting in to Plunge Headquarters at plunge@somn.org and we will post the details to our upcoming events calendar.

- Host a bake sale at your office, in your neighborhood, or posts your items for sale on Facebook!
- Hold a garage sale with proceeds going to your Plunge team.
- Work with a local restaurant to provide a meal for customers at a set cost, with half of it going to your Plunge efforts.
- Hold a silent auction or raffle.

Workplace Giving

- Before hitting up your coworkers for a donation, see if you can form a company team instead. It's a fun team building opportunity for companies, and wearing your company t-shirts is a great way to maximize exposure at the event too!
- Find out about matching gift policies at your company. Some companies match employee fundraising, while others match donations made by employees. This is an easy way to double your donations!
- Have your donors find out about their companies matching gift policy to see if their donation will be matched.
- To check if a company offers matching gifts, visit www.matchinggifts.com/specialolympics/
- Host a Casual for a Cause day at work. Employees can donate a set amount to wear jeans (or better yet, Plunge gear from previous participation) and funds raised goes to support your Plunge.
- Additional workplace fundraising ideas include:
 - Set out a candy jar and ask for change each time they take a piece; purchase bottles of water and pop at wholesale and put in the company lunchroom. Charge \$1 for drinks and any profit can go to your fundraising efforts.
 - Ask your boss if they'll get in on the fun! If your company raises X amount, they'll take the Plunge with you!

PAST SUCCESS

The School Challenge experienced increased success in 2013. During the fourth year of the School Challenge, schools rallied their students, staff and employees to join teams increasing the number of Plungers on teams and raise funds for Special Olympics Minnesota. The following are examples of schools that rally their entire communities to become involved!



St. Cloud State University vs. University of Minnesota Duluth

Traditionally, the St. Cloud and Duluth Plunges are held the same day. This resulted in the University of Minnesota Duluth challenging St. Cloud State University to a friendly challenge; to see which school could raise the most money and participants for their respective Plunge. The competition was coined the “Top Dog Challenge” and included students, faculty and staff taking the icy jump. As a result of the challenge, both the St. Cloud and Duluth Plunge experienced a HUGE increase in participation and funds raised! In 2014, St. Cloud won the challenge for the first time, raising \$19,202. Duluth was close behind with \$16,041. Who will win in 2015 is anyone’s guess!



Lincoln Center Elementary School

Lincoln Center Elementary School really does it all for Special Olympics Minnesota! Not only do they participate in Unified Bowling, but they also have a growing Plunge team. Last year, Lincoln Center Elementary participated in the first ever Cool School Plunge and were award the highest fundraising team at the event with \$7915. We can’t wait to see their numbers in 2015!



Coon Rapids Middle School

Coon Rapids Middle School took on a whole new approach to fundraising for the Plunge. The school teamed up with the Coon Rapids PD (a fellow Anoka County Plunge team) to take each other on in a charity basketball game. Admission tickets were sold for \$3 for adults and \$2 for students, with the proceeds going towards their Plunge fundraising efforts. Along with support from school leadership, inner district challenges with other schools and creative fundraising (a teacher sold advertising on his body!), Coon Rapids Middle School was able to raise \$9,411!



Wayzata High School Football

These guys are competitors in more ways than one. When they’re not on the football field, you can find them taking an icy dip at the Minneapolis Plunge. For the last four years, the Wayzata High School Football team has participated in the Plunge, with a goal in mind to support the athletes of SOMN. In 2014, the Team raised \$6,046, and we expect that number will increase in 2015!

GET INVOLVED

Try something exciting and borderline crazy for the experience of a lifetime! It's a chance to create an atmosphere at your school like you've never seen before. The team camaraderie will be great for your school and allow you to support a great cause at the same time! So ... grab a unique costume, raise some money, and be freezin' for a reason while taking the Plunge for Special Olympics Minnesota!