

# Polar Plunge: a frigid success

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The Ninth Annual Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge was a huge success Sunday, Feb. 8, as Brockport students braved Lake Ontario's icy waters in support of the Special Olympics New York.

Temperatures were less polar-like than usual at this year's Polar Plunge, as a bulldozer cleared out the ice so plungers could reach the water. Even so, the water was teeming with slush and ice, remaining a bleak 34 degrees, as plungers immersed in the water at Ontario Beach Park.

"It was very slushy and numbingly cold," LeeAnn Greenauer said, who was recruited for the event.

The College at Brockport made an impressive contribution for its second time taking part in the Polar Plunge, raising a total of more than \$9,500. The goal this year was \$10,000.

"Donations are amazingly still coming in," Paul Giglio, Brockport's Polar Plunge coordinator, said.

Last year, Brockport had 40 plungers, which raised more than \$7,000 for the cause.

"It was such a huge increase in funding and participation from last year, despite the economic problems," Giglio said.

This year, more than 120 students represented Brockport as they plunged into the lake.

The school worked under the same name "Screamin' for a Reason Golden Eagles," as they rallied for the cause. The team, as a whole, came in fourth place.

Among participating schools such as RIT, Brockport raised the most money to be given the "Cool School" award. The award was presented Monday, Feb. 9, by WBEE.

This year's prize includes an all-expenses paid private concert by national recording artist Jason Michael Carroll, courtesy of Arista Nashville.

The donated money goes toward the 3,200 athletes in the Genesee region who compete in the Special Olympics. The non-profit organization gives free training to these athletes for different Olympic-style events.

The Special Olympics New York Winter Games took place this past weekend, with opening ceremonies in the Rochester Auditorium. More than 1,000 athletes from different parts of the

state competed in winter events such as Nordic and alpine skiing, figure and speed skating and snowshoeing.

Overall, the Special Olympics exceeded their goal, raising \$196,000 at the Rochester plunge, with more than 1,300 people participating.

Here, at Brockport, Giglio has been constructing the event since October. He and the polar plunging team ran two campaigns. One encouraged students to swipe Brockport meal cards and give another \$2 for the cause, which raised an overall \$1,522. Donations were also collected through a "plunging for a change" jars, with faces of prominent plungers, in the Union.

The Polar Plunge gathered a huge crowd as family and participants in the Special Olympics cheered the plungers on.

The spectators were mostly bundled up in the 34-degree weather. Yet the temperature had little to do with how plungers were dressed, as Kristyn Geiger wore a bathing suit. Other outfits included Bill Sachman as Uncle Sam and Raleigh Hicks, sporting a spider-man costume.

The Polar Plunge was also a part of the Lakeside Winter Celebration at Ontario Beach Park to support Rochester as a fun winter destination. Students could warm up with the Chilly Chili Challenge or see the Snow Sculpting Contest.

There were many prizes for the efforts of student fundraisers. Those who raised the minimum of \$25 received an embroidered towel, and with a donated \$60 plungers received a sweatshirt.

"Everything went really smoothly," Giglio said. "I'm very happy about the turnout."

The donations were well-appreciated as members of the Special Olympics watched hundreds of people rush across the frozen beach. Some went barefoot for the full-out swim, while others waded out to their ankles.

"We were in and out in 20 seconds." Krista Thresh, "It was cold but fun."

No matter how daringly the participants went out, it was all for a meaningful cause.

"It's great to know that someone can do something exciting and new while raising money for a great cause," Nick Piazza, a freshman who plunged. "Don't get cold feet about this event, it's a lot of fun."

The fundraiser will certainly benefit participants in the organizations, as they are given an opportunity to compete in the Special Olympics.

Not all those who promised to plunge did, however.

BSG President Kyle Amendola, Vice President Bill Keating, Treasurer Lindsey Geyer and Golden Eagle Quarterback Zach Luke raised money for their plunge in jars in the Union. They

did not show up to the event.

Giglio did not have exact numbers of how many actually went in the water.

"We'd like to thank all the teams, organizations and departments for donating and participating in this event," Giglio said.

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