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## **The SNOW Must Go On!**

### ***2,636 Plungers Brave the Weather & Raise More than \$850,000 for Special Olympics Virginia at 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Polar Plunge***

Virginia Beach, Va. – Feb. 6 proved fans will stop at nothing in support of the Polar Plunge and Special Olympics Virginia. 2,636 thrill-seekers took the icy dip into the Atlantic this year, despite snow, sleet, rain and 30+mph winds, raising \$861,000 (and counting!) for Special Olympics Virginia.

“We have the greatest group of volunteers and law enforcement partners in the world,” said Rick Jeffrey, president of Special Olympics Virginia. “This year’s Polar Plunge was a very challenging event to pull off considering Saturday’s weather conditions, but we managed to do it in a safe fashion.

“Still, the challenge that our plungers faced on Saturday, though extreme, was small when compared with the challenges our Special Olympics athletes and their family members face every day,” Jeffrey added. “By overcoming the challenge, though, these plungers will help our athletes meet their challenge of a lifetime.”

The 2010 Polar Plunge® Winter Festival, presented by WTKR News Channel 3, The FOX 106.9, FM99, Wawa and Virginia Natural Gas, kicked off at 10 a.m., with the **Polar Plunge commencing at 2:30 p.m.** While this year’s weather made for the coldest and most extreme Plunge on record for Special Olympics Virginia, many groups helped us take the Plunge to new heights:

- University of Richmond’s SAE fraternity tipped the fundraising scales at \$21,335, making them this year’s top fundraising team and Extreme Team Challenge winner. The Extreme Team Challenge was sponsored by Mega Office Furniture and the Supply Room Companies. Coming in a close second in the team fundraising challenge was Virginia Natural Gas with more than \$19,000.

- Special Olympics Virginia Board of Directors member Roger Giesinger of Chesapeake took home the individual fundraising prize for the fifth year in a row with \$21,570 raised.
- Numerous local personalities including Virginia Beach Mayor Will Sessoms, Mike Harvey from WTKR News Channel 3 and Rick Rumble from FM99 took the icy plunge for a great cause.
- Several hundred jammed to music by local band Butter during Friday's first-ever pre-Plunge party on the beach, presented by Dos Equis.

Since 1993, more than 28,000 plungers have raised more than \$5.5 million for Special Olympics Virginia. The inaugural Polar Plunge took place in 1993 at the Clarion Hotel, featuring 34 plungers who raised nearly \$8,000 for Special Olympics Virginia, a year-round international program of sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

Gold level Polar Plunge sponsors included Hardee's, Booz Allen Hamilton, GEICO, the Virginia Beach Convention and Visitor's Bureau and Admobile. Photos of the 2010 Polar Plunge will be posted on [www.polarplunge.com](http://www.polarplunge.com) by Tuesday, Feb. 16. In the meantime, be sure to mark your calendar for the **19th Annual Polar Plunge, set for Feb. 5, 2011.**

**For more information, please contact Special Olympics Virginia PR Director Holly Claytor at 804-370-7916 or [hclaytor@specialolympicsva.org](mailto:hclaytor@specialolympicsva.org). For more information on Special Olympics Virginia, visit [www.specialolympicsva.org](http://www.specialolympicsva.org).**

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*Special Olympics is a year-round international program of sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. By using sport as a vehicle for social change, Special Olympics Virginia strives to create opportunities for meaningful interaction and self discovery for everyone. The organization's goal is to open the heart and mind of every Virginian to the value and ability of persons with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics Virginia Inc. is the state program of Special Olympics Incorporated.*