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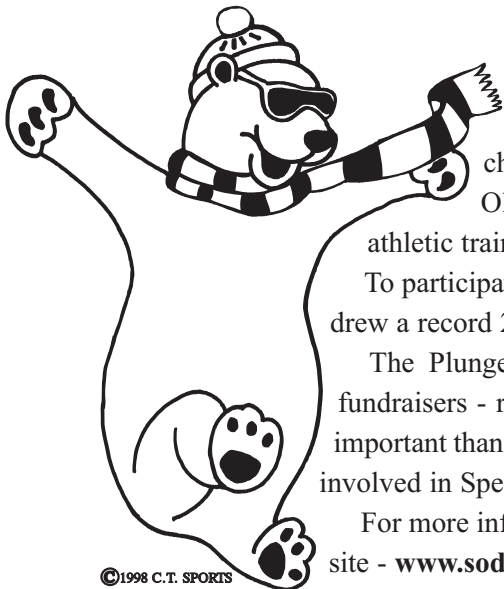
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# 2010 Lewes Polar Bear Plunge for Special Olympics Delaware

**Sunday, February 14, 2010, at 1:00 p.m.**

**Rehoboth Ave. & the Boardwalk, Rehoboth Beach**



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For the 19th consecutive year, thousands of 'Polar Bears' will brave the chilly water of the Atlantic Ocean to raise money and awareness for Special Olympics Delaware - the state's largest organization dedicated to year-round athletic training and competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. To participate, each 'Polar Bear' collects a minimum of \$50 in pledges. Last year's event drew a record 2,923 Bears, a crowd of 15,000 spectators, and raised over \$490,000! The Plunge has evolved into one of Special Olympics Delaware's most significant fundraisers - raising nearly \$4.5 million since it began in 1992 - and that support is more important than ever as SODE continues to grow. There are currently 3,300 Delaware athletes involved in Special Olympics, the highest participation level in program history. For more information on Special Olympics Delaware, please visit the organization's Web site - [www.sode.org](http://www.sode.org).

*The Lewes Polar Bear Plunge is presented by:*

**Wawa** **Comcast**

*and supported by:*



**CAPE GAZETTE**  
**THE LEWES POLAR BEARS**



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## **Final Plunge numbers available by 4 p.m.**

Special Olympics Delaware will release a final tally on the number of Plunge participants, as well as the amount of money raised, as soon as possible - which is usually no later than 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.

This release will be e-mailed to all media outlets, but should you wish to receive a phone call with this information, please make arrangements with Jon Buzby, director of media relations for SODE, whose contact information is listed below.

### **SODE Media Contact**

Jon Buzby  
director of media relations

302-740-1033 (c)

302-831-3484 (w)

[jbuzby@udel.edu](mailto:jbuzby@udel.edu)

### **Plunge Festival events**

Ice-sculpting contest  
5k Run/Walk to the Plunge  
Restaurant Chili Contest  
Decorate-a-Polar Bear  
Lewes Polar Bear Plunge

## Why the Lewes Polar Bear Plunge if it's held in Rehoboth Beach?

Although it has been held in Rehoboth Beach since 1998, the roots of the Lewes Polar Bear Plunge to benefit Special Olympics Delaware - and therefore its name - are firmly planted in Lewes.

A group known as The Lewes Polar Bears have been taking frigid dips into the Atlantic Ocean since 1982. They plunge five times a year (the first Sunday of each month November-March, with the exception of January, when they plunge on New Year's Day) at Cape Henlopen State Park.

In 1991, Special Olympics Delaware approached The Lewes Polar Bears with the proposition of having the club designate one of its plunges to raise money for SODE. The Bears agreed and the February 1992 plunge, which attracted 78 participants and raised \$7,000, ignited the annual tradition.

The next six plunge events for SODE took place at Cape Henlopen State Park, but a nor'easter in 1998 caused significant damage to the park, and the event - with two days notice - was moved to Rehoboth Beach.

Due to the increasingly large volume of participants and spectators that the Plunge was drawing, the change of venue actually proved beneficial, and so SODE, The Lewes Polar Bears and Cape Henlopen officials all agreed the move should become permanent.

Despite the move, and in deference to its origin and association with The Lewes Polar Bears, the event has retained its original name.

## History of the Lewes Polar Bear Plunge to benefit Special Olympics Delaware

<u>Year</u>	<u>Polar Bears</u>	<u>Money Raised</u>	<u>Air Temp.</u>	<u>Water Temp.</u>
1992	78	\$7,000	35°	35°
1993	189	\$22,000	28°	34°
1994	305	\$37,000	38°	34°
1995	339	\$42,000	0°	28°
1996	393	\$45,000	38°	38°
1997	506	\$59,000	42°	39°
1998	684	\$120,000	52°	42°
1999	950	\$165,000	48°	41°
2000	1,200	\$267,000	40°	34°
2001	1,500	\$276,000	40°	35°
2002	1,860	\$350,000	45°	40°
2003	2,190	\$360,000	40°	34°
2004	2,075	\$365,000	28°	32°
2005	2,115	\$395,000	43°	36°
2006	2,390	\$426,000	46°	43°
2007	2,692	\$520,000	29°	42°
2008	2,767	\$530,000	53°	43°
2009	2,923	\$490,000	53°	40°
<b>18 years</b>	<b>25,156</b>	<b>\$4,476,000</b>	<b>avg. 39°</b>	<b>avg. 37°</b>

## Irv & Phyllis Levin Once Again Will Match Donations Toward Irv's Plunge

For the sixth consecutive year, Irv and Phyllis Levin, of Claymont, have agreed to match, dollar-for-dollar, each donation made toward Irv's Plunge.

Over the course of its first four years, the 'Levin Matching Fund' effort has generated over \$250,000 for Special Olympics Delaware!

The Levins have a son, Jamie, who participates in Special Olympics Delaware, and have always provided tremendous support to the organization as volunteers and financial supporters. They view this matching funds effort as a way of continuing that support, while also allowing others to join in and help create a contribution of even greater financial significance.

"With a son involved in Special Olympics Delaware, Phyllis and I, as parents, want to be involved in the program," says Irv, who has participated in the Plunge for 16 years. "We know how worthwhile and important the organization is, and we also know that the money raised is being used to support the program."

To take advantage of the Levins' generous offer, go to [www.firstgiving.com/Irv](http://www.firstgiving.com/Irv) or simply write a check payable to Special Olympics Delaware and mail it to:

Levin Matching Fund  
Special Olympics Delaware  
University of Delaware  
Newark, DE 19716-1901

Polar Bear Plunge Photos may be viewed at  
[www.sode.org](http://www.sode.org)

## Special Olympics Delaware Facts & Figures


- ▶ Special Olympics Delaware is the state's largest organization dedicated to providing quality year-round athletic training and sports competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Nearly 3,300 athletes across the state currently participate in the program - the highest participation level in the organization's history.
- ▶ Special Olympics Delaware was founded in early 1971 and its first competition, a Track & Field event held at Wilmington High School, took place in June of that same year. SODE is celebrating its 40th year!
- ▶ There is no charge for athletes to participate in Special Olympics Delaware.
- ▶ Special Olympics Delaware provides athletic training and sports competition in 20 sports:
  - Aquatics
  - Athletics (track & field)
  - Basketball
  - Bocce
  - Bowling
  - Cycling
  - Equestrian
  - Figure Skating
  - Flag Football
  - Golf
  - Long Distance Running
  - Powerlifting
  - Roller Skating
  - Skiing (alpine & nordic)
  - Snoeshoeing
  - Soccer
  - Softball
  - Tennis
  - Volleyball
- ▶ Athletic training and competition is offered for athletes at all skill levels, from divisioned tournament competition to skills events to Motor Activities Training Program (MATP) events for persons with severe limitations.
- ▶ Along with offering athletic training and sports competition, Special Olympics Delaware also offers additional programs - such as Healthy Athletes components at major competitions, an Athlete Empowerment Conference, and Summer Camp - for its athletes.
- ▶ In order to enhance the training process, league play, time trials and clinics conducted by local college and high school teams have been introduced.
- ▶ Summer Games is the next large sports event scheduled for Special Olympics Delaware. Training is already underway in six sports -- athletics, aquatics, bocce, powerlifting, softball and tennis -- and the Games takes place June 11-12 at the University of Delaware athletic complex.





## Polar Bear Plunge Facts & Figures


- ▶ The Lewes Polar Bear Plunge is held annually at 1 p.m. on the first Sunday in February. Yes, that is Super Bowl Sunday, but with the 1 p.m. start time we've never missed the big game yet!
- ▶ This is the 19th year for the Plunge, and since its inception in 1992 it has generated nearly \$4.5 million for Special Olympics Delaware.
- ▶ All Special Olympics Delaware staff members take the Plunge.
- ▶ The 2009 Plunge was a record-breaking event, as 2,923 Polar Bears participated.
- ▶ At the first Plunge, held in 1992, there were just 78 participants, but they raised \$7,000.
- ▶ More than 2,000 'Polar Bears' have participated in the Plunge each of the past seven years.
- ▶ The Plunge has been postponed twice, each time when a nor'easter delivered over two feet of snow to the area in 1996 and 2010, delaying the event until March.
- ▶ Safety is the top priority at the Plunge. There are at least 100 people, including members of the Coast Guard, the Delaware State Police Scuba Team, medical/safety support teams from Lewes and Rehoboth, and volunteers with medical/safety backgrounds, available for anyone who may need assistance.


## Media Parking & Tips for Covering the Plunge

 Reserved media parking is located on the 2nd block of Rehoboth Ave. *In order to help the police officers who will be securing the area, please have your media credential available to ensure you are able to access this restricted parking area OR let us know in advance you are planning to cover the event. Contact information for Jon Buzby, director of media relations for SODE, is on the front of this booklet.*

 If you need assistance at the Plunge, locate any event staff personnel -- they can be identified by yellow slickers with 'Event Staff' written on the back -- and they will be happy to assist you or find someone who can.

 The Plunge happens promptly at 1 p.m. - and it happens quickly! - so give yourself time to reach the beach.

 Even though Plunge time is 1:00 p.m., registration opens at 10:00 a.m., and by 11:00 a.m., the beach and Boardwalk are bustling with Bears, which makes it a great time for interviews, taking pictures or capturing some video footage. The Apres Plunge Party, which takes place immediately after the Plunge at the Rehoboth Beach Convention Center, is also a good time to talk with 'Polar Bears' and their families and friends.

 Registration is located next to the gazebo on Rehoboth Avenue; the main stage is located on the Boardwalk just south of Rehoboth Avenue; the main Plunge will take place from Rehoboth Avenue and two blocks south.

## Language = Attitude

**ACCEPTANCE**  
**Be a fan of**  
**RESPECT**  
**HUMANITY**

**PASSION** **UNITY**

Special Olympics is changing attitudes where lessons of ability, acceptance and inclusion are taught on the fields of competition by our greatest teachers -- the athletes. But life's lessons are also being given by a powerful new voice -- today's youth. Across the United States and around the globe, young people in high schools and college campuses have joined a movement of mutual respect and human dignity called "Spread the Word to End the Word." The goal: To get people to stop and think about their hurtful and disparaging use of the word "retard," and pledge to stop using it.

"Spread the Word to End the Word" is an educational campaign to raise awareness regarding the hurtful consequences of the derogatory use of the word "retard(ed)." The use of the R-word (retard) has developed a degrading and unempowering meaning, particularly for those with intellectual disabilities and those who love them. The use of the word overshadows the abilities that a person has and instead highlights the differences between people rather than exploring all of the things we have in common.

High school youth from across the state are preparing to join an international call to action to stop using the word. All over high school and college campuses around the world on March 3, students encouraged their peers to take a pledge -- in person by signing a banner and then online at [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org) -- to stop using the R-word.

High school students from all over the state will be present at the plunge and encouraging those in attendance, Bears and spectators, to sign a banner on the boardwalk pledging to stop using the R-word. And then, just as importantly, it is our hope that all those pledging at the Plunge will in turn encourage others to do the same.