



2012 MSP Polar Bear Plunge
Saturday, Jan. 28 (Plunge)
Friday, Jan. 27 (Cool Schools Challenge, SuperPlunge)
Sandy Point State Park, Annapolis, MD
www.plungemd.com



MSP Polar Bear Plunge



@PlungeMD

The 16th Annual MSP Polar Bear Plunge Fact Sheet

The MSP Polar Bear Plunge—aka THE official event of Winter—is celebrating its Sweet Sixteen on January 28, enticing thousands upon thousands of warm-hearted citizens into the Chesapeake Bay, while thousands of others take part in the frigid fun of PlungeFest, the FREE winter festival surrounding the Plunge.

For just \$50 in pledges, participants take a dip into the Chesapeake Bay in Annapolis to raise money for Special Olympics Maryland. Founded in 1997, the event will celebrate its 16th anniversary on Jan. 28, 2012. Baltimore Ravens QB **Joe Flacco**, once again named the event's Honorary Chairman, will return for his fourth straight year. A number of attractions will debut at the event, including the all-new **Pee Wee Plunge**, a special 11 a.m. dip for pint-sized Plungers ages 8 and under and their family members. Making its anticipated return will be **PlungeFest**, the FREE winter festival surrounding the Plunge with food, crafts and other attractions. Highlighting PlungeFest will be the **Rams Head Ice Lodge and Beer Garden**, with a special appearance by rock band **Fuel**.

Quick Dips

- **Established:** In 1997 when approximately 350 Plungers first took to the Chesapeake Bay, raising \$75,000 in the initial year. The idea of a Polar Bear Plunge was first conceptualized by Special Olympics Delaware in the mid-90s, and then passed along to SOMD. Since, the MSP Polar Bear Plunge has grown into the largest-such event in the country.
- **Since the event's inception in 1997,** approximately 72,000 people have taken the Plunge, raising a total of \$19.1 million dollars for the athletes of Special Olympics Maryland.
- **In 2011,** the event raised nearly \$3 million, this despite a shaky economy and the first-year enforcement of a no-alcohol policy.
- **PlungeFest,** the FREE winter festival surrounding the Plunge, will once again offer a slew of attractions including the Carnival FunFest tent, the Astro Events Kids Zone, the costume contest, and the Rams Head Ice Lodge and Beer Garden.
- **The Cool Schools Challenge**—a Plunge designed exclusively for middle and high schools around Maryland—will return in 2012 for its third year. The event has become enormously successful and over the last two years has raised a combined \$377,000.

Who Benefits?

- **The Plunge** is one of the largest fundraisers in the entire state, with all proceeds from the event benefiting Special Olympics Maryland (SOMD). The organization offers year-round sporting activities to individuals with intellectual disabilities. SOMD currently offers 28 different sports to thousands of athletes throughout Maryland.



Plunge Nation



Famous Plungers

Over its 15-year history, the MSP Polar Bear Plunge has attracted numerous local and national celebrities, all braving the cold water for the same cause: Special Olympics Maryland.

- Current Baltimore Ravens QB Joe Flacco and DE Haloti Ngata
- Former Baltimore Ravens TE Quinn Sypniewski, OT Adam Terry, G Edwin Mulitalo, C Jason Brown, DE Michael McCrary
- New York Jets Head Coach Rex Ryan
- Former Baltimore Oriole BJ Surhoff
- Olympic Figure Skater Kimmie Meissner
- Former Maryland Head Football Coach Ralph Friedgen
- Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley
- Former Maryland Governor Robert Ehrlich
- Former Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend
- Anne Arundel County Executive John R. Leopold
- State Senator Jim Robey
- US Congressman Frank Kratovil
- Cast of "Hot Tub Time Machine": Rob Corddry, Clark Duke & Craig Robinson



Right: Current NY Jets Head Coach Rex Ryan plunged in 2008 while serving as the Ravens' defensive coordinator.

Anyone can be a Plunger, from the very young to the young at heart. In 2011, nearly 20,000 attended PlungeFest—12,000 of whom Plunged. General conclusions that can be drawn from the demographic information include:

- Thirty-five (35) different states were represented at the 2011 MSP Polar Bear Plunge, including Hawaii, California, Florida, Texas and New Hampshire.
- A full 80% of Plungers are between the ages of 10 and 39.
- The youth segment (ages 10-19) saw a whopping 30 % increase in 2011 with the Cool Schools initiative. It's expected to continue to trend positively in 2012.
- The Plunge is overwhelmingly supported by residents of Baltimore (City and County) and Anne Arundel County. Participants from these areas account for 2/3 of all Plungers.
- The number of Plunge participants from out-of-state in 2011 was 5% of Plungers. This is a testament to the event's status as the premiere Plunge events in the country.
- Other county/region breakdowns: Carroll County (7%), Harford County (6%), Howard County (5%), Eastern Shore (5%) and Prince George's County (4%).



The Plunge is a guaranteed super time for everyone.

For more information, requests for interviews or photos, or other materials, please contact:

Kelley Schniedwind (kschniedwind@somd.org, 443-386-7965)