

Polar Plunge raises more than \$40K for Special Olympics Athletes



170 people braved the cold this month to take part in the annual Polar Plunge fundraiser hosted by York Regional Police to benefit local Special Olympics programs.

Held at the YRP's Aurora headquarters on March 7, this year's event brought out 170 people, many dressed in an array of colourful, fun costumes, raising \$42,000 in the process.

"This is our biggest year so far ? it's amazing and we're really happy about that," says Megan Stoddard, Coordinator of Special Events for the York Regional Police. "It's a feel-good type of event. It's always fun. I don't know if it was just word-of-mouth or what made it extra-special this year; we have noticed an uptick in a lot of our events, which is amazing, but is particularly so for this one."

The York Regional Police have been long-time supporters of local Special Olympics programs and this is just one annual event hosted by the Force that benefits the organization.

In June, for instance, the YRP will host the annual Race for Plunkett, formerly known as the Law Enforcement Torch Run.

The Race is named for YRP Officer Rob Plunkett, himself a big supporter of the Special Olympics, who was killed in the line of duty in 2007.

This annual event is both a fundraiser and an awareness-building event for Special Olympics and its athletes.

"[The Special Olympics] use these funds to help pay for uniforms, their training space, any equipment they might need," says Stoddard, "then we do assist the local York Region athletes and they will be travelling to the Spring Games in the Waterloo area this year."

"When you get to see some of the athletes and spend some time with them, there is a realization of just why it is important to support them in their goals and their training. Any time we have anything to do with the Special Olympics, whether it be the Polar Plunge or the Race for Plunkett, we appreciate the support and assistance."

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter