

# READY. SET. PLUNGE!

Special Olympics Florida  
Polar Plunge



## TEAM CAPTAIN HANDBOOK







## Thank you for the difference you make in our athletes' lives!

By fundraising for our Polar Plunge, you are helping Special Olympics Florida give opportunities to our athletes to become active citizens in their communities. They are able to be part of an inclusive environment that inspires them to be agents of social change and conquer obstacles that stand in the way of their dreams.

Thank you for your devotion of time, effort, selflessness, and advocacy for Special Olympics Florida and the athletes we serve. Our reach is growing because of you. Now ... READY. SET. PLUNGE!





# You're giving them the time of their lives.

It all began in the 1950s and early 1960s, when Eunice Kennedy Shriver saw how unjustly and unfairly people with intellectual disabilities were treated. She also saw that many children with intellectual disabilities didn't even have a place to play. She decided to take action. Thanks to dedicated and motivated team captains like yourself, Special Olympics Florida is able to provide athletes with fitness training, education, and athletic competition – coupled with social, life, and leadership skill development opportunities – for children and adults with intellectual disabilities or a similar developmental disability.

## **History:**

Special Olympics Florida, an accredited program of Special Olympics Inc., was founded in 1972 and is one of the largest volunteer-driven athletic organizations in the state.

## **Competitions:**

Special Olympics Florida offers sports training and competition with more than 400 events throughout the year.

## **Cost:**

\$0.87 of each dollar raised for Special Olympics Florida goes to program costs and services.

## **Involvement:**

Special Olympics Florida serves more than 40,000 athletes statewide. Neither athletes nor parents/caregivers are charged a fee to participate in the program, and activities exist for all ability levels, from severely challenged to elite athletes.





# What Special Olympics Florida provides:

Total Sports Participation  
53,060



Total Athletes  
40,000+



Total Volunteers  
27,697



Competitions  
447



County Games 315  
Area Games 115  
State Games 10  
Regional/National Games 7



Young Athletes  
12,000+



Motor Activities Training participants  
1006



Health Exams  
8.946



Unified Champion Schools  
106



Olympic-Type Sports  
23



and more ...

## Some expenses your fundraising pays for:

Young Athletes program ages 2-7 \$659.24



Complete health exam \$62.50



Choice of Coaches sports kit \$431.00



1 Athlete transportation for an event \$24.00



Cheerleading uniform with shoes \$339.00



Portable bocce court \$1,500.00



Strider Bike \$99.00



Motor Activities Training Program \$250.00



Little ELITES program \$659.24







## About Special Olympics Florida

Special Olympics Florida brings joy, confidence, and self-worth to people with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics Florida is not a single-day event or competition. It is a year-round, 365-day movement to inspire, pursue, and achieve dreams through participation in sports. Combine these sports with wraparound programs, and Special Olympics Florida athletes have a gateway to life-long empowerment, competence, acceptance, and joy.

## About Polar Plunge

Special Olympics Florida Polar Plunge is a fun, interactive experience where team members charge the cold waters of Aquatica or Florida's beaches. Plungers must raise a minimum of \$100 to participate - that's it! Your efforts allow Special Olympics Florida to continue providing year-round training and athletic competitions at no cost to our 40,000+ athletes statewide.

Each team member who raises \$100 will receive a Polar Plunge t-shirt, eligibility to plunge, and additional incentives. Join the fun, help raise funds, and earn prizes all in support of Special Olympics Florida.



## What is a Team Captain?

Team Captains are the leaders of your Polar Plunge team. You choose your own team members who share a passion and commitment to raise money for the athletes and programs of Special Olympics Florida. There is no cap to the number of plungers you can have on your team.

Fundraising efforts are culminated and celebrated at Polar Plunge! Team Captains organize the team, delegate any team fundraising efforts, and coach and motivate their members and donors along the way!

Teams can be composed of friends, families, co-workers, companies, churches, social clubs, offices, small businesses.....the list goes on!



# LET'S GET STARTED!

## STEP 1: ORGANIZE | 4 months to Polar Plunge

Register your team at [www.plungefl.org](http://www.plungefl.org) and set a team fundraising goal.

- ✧ Personalize your team page and your individual plunger page and set your goals.
- ✧ Work with your Special Olympics Florida staff partner to devise a plan that includes fundraising targets and making sure our mission is at the core of your campaign.
- ✧ Do you have a CEO who will help drive this campaign at work? Set up a meeting for you, your staff partner, and your CEO so the support of leadership and managers can be effectively established.
- ✧ Set a fundraiser and dollar goal. If you have started a company team, aim to get at least 20 percent of your company involved.
- ✧ Recruit a team ambassador or ask your staff partner for mission stories to share with your team throughout the campaign. Check out and utilize our fact sheet.

Network – ask company suppliers and local businesses to support your team or to pull with you. Need a letter? Your staff partner is happy to craft one for you!

The lists on the following pages are a step-by-step guide to a successful campaign. It will help keep you on track and on target during each phase of your fundraising campaign. Pull them out, post them, and check off your progress.

## STEP 2: RECRUIT | 3 months to Polar Plunge

### Build Momentum

- ✧ Does your company have more than one team? Work with your staff partner to host a Team Captain training.
- ✧ Follow up the training with a company-wide email from an executive encouraging employees to sign up online and start fundraising.
- ✧ Promote Polar Plunge and your team's efforts via social media. Share a photo, your goal, and let people know how they can sign up to support the team. If you are on a company team, work with your marketing or public relations department to help promote your campaign.
- ✧ Send updates every few weeks to celebrate your team's progress and encourage your team members to do more.



## STEP 3: FUNDRAISE | 2 months to Polar Plunge

Encourage fundraising – have lunchtime walks/meetings and challenge each other.

- ❄ Meet with each team member to help them start fundraising. Have them list friends, neighbors, and local organizations they plan to reach out to.
- ❄ Check in with your team members and celebrate their successes!
- ❄ Arrange incentives to motivate the team, like a free lunch or a vacation day for top fundraisers (for company teams).
- ❄ Arrange to make or have signs made to represent your team on Polar Plunge day.
- ❄ What will your team wear? Get creative with your team and make team shirts, themed costumes, or even matching outfits.
- ❄ Send a save-the-date to all of your team members and potential team members. Remember, your teammates must raise a minimum of \$100 to plunge on event day!

❑ Continue to promote your campaign and goals through social media, email, and follow up with your team members.

## STEP 4: PLUNGE | 1 month to Polar Plunge

Create and review your event day checklist.

- ❄ Organize your team and celebrate your success on event day!
- ❄ Contact your team members and get them excited for event day.
- ❄ Create a check list of important items you'll need, e.g., water, sunscreen, sunglasses, towel, etc.
- ❄ Get ready to charge the waters!
- ❄ Make thank you notes for each team member!
- ❄ Share your photos on social media and use #plungefl.
- ❄ Send a thank you to your supporters and include event day photos.





# Here are some tools to help.

- ❄ The Polar Plunge website! Utilize the online tools to send emails, follow-up messages, and a thank everyone who helped.
- ❄ Polar Plunge Online Toolkit: How to set up your team page and use the fundraising tool.
- ❄ A-Z Fundraising Ideas.
- ❄ Sample letters, emails, and voicemails: Ready-to-use messages to recruit fundraisers and encourage fundraising.
- ❄ Flyers  
Recruitment Flyer: Use this flyer to recruit new team members and to spread the word! Share these tools with each team member for faster fundraising!
- ❄ Matching Gifts: Many companies will match donations given to Special Olympics Florida by employees. Check with your team members and donors to see if their company offers matching gifts.
- ❄ Social Media Tips
- ❄ Use your STAFF PARTNER!

I am here to help!

Office: 352-243-9536

Amanda Reed | Development Manager, Special Events



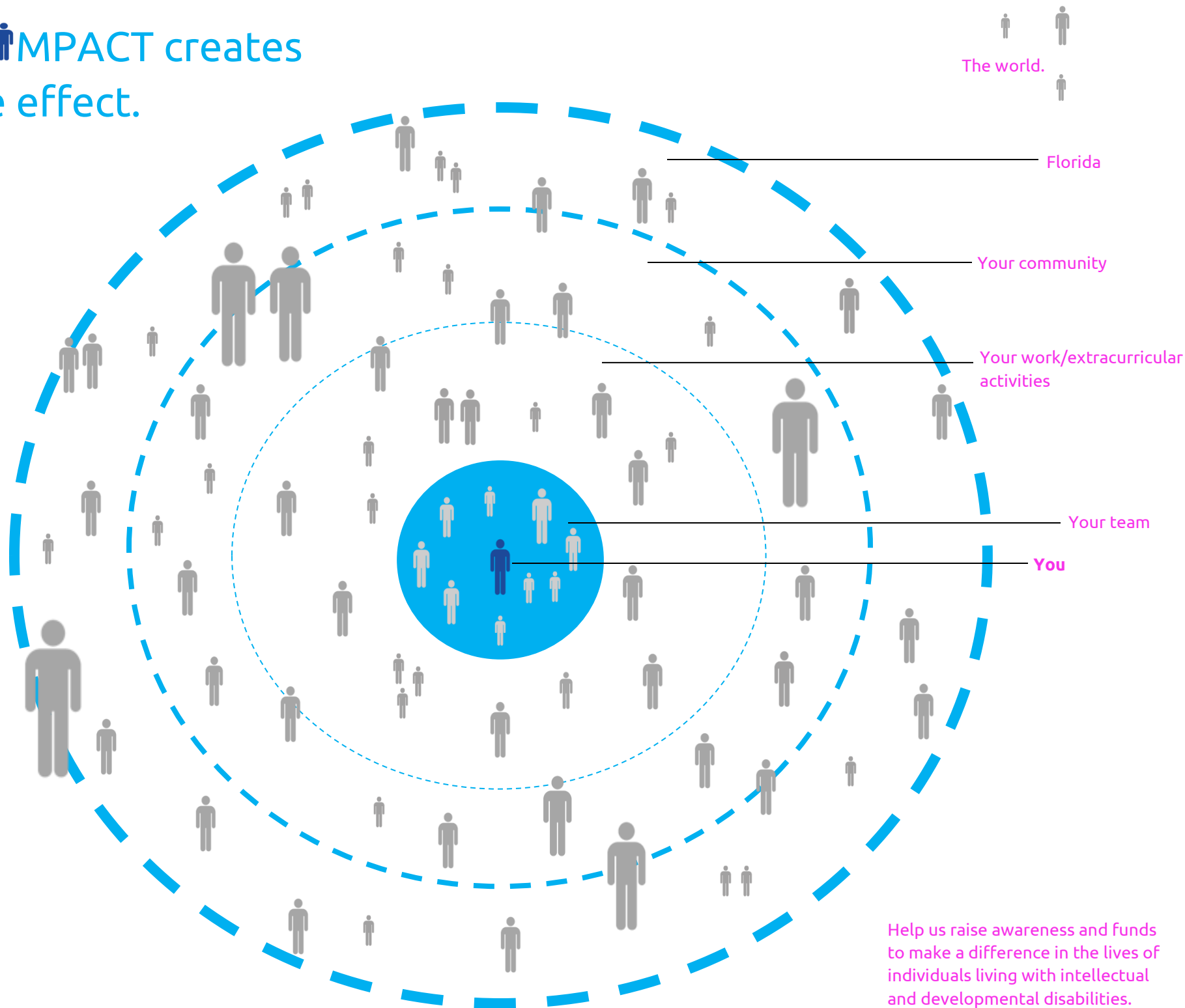
## FUNDRAISING TIPS | Raise \$500 in 10 days

	Tip:	Total:
<b>Day 1</b>	Get yourself started! Make a personal contribution and show others how committed you are to Special Olympics Florida and our athletes.	<b>\$25</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	Challenge 3 family members to match your donation of \$25.	<b>\$100</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	Ask your best friend to match your donation.	<b>\$125</b>
<b>Day 4</b>	Ask your boss for a company donation or a matching gift.	<b>\$150</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	Hang out with friends! Ask five friends to donate \$10 to your plunge efforts.	<b>\$200</b>
<b>Day 6</b>	Email your Polar Plunge page to five out of town friends and ask them to donate \$10 to your plunge efforts.	<b>\$250</b>
<b>Day 7</b>	Hit the town! Tell 5 businesses you frequent why you are plunging and ask for a \$10 donation.	<b>\$300</b>
<b>Day 8</b>	Gather support at work! Ask 5 co-workers for \$10.	<b>\$350</b>
<b>Day 9</b>	Ask 5 neighbors to support your plunge for \$10.	<b>\$400</b>
<b>Day 10</b>	Ask 10 people at your church, club, gym, etc. for \$10 each.	<b>\$500</b>

### YOU DID IT!

\*Remember, the EASIEST way to ask all of your contacts at once is through online fundraising! Make sure you set up your personal plunger page and customize it to showcase why you are plunging for our athletes! For other fundraising ideas, make sure to check out our A-Z fundraising guide or work with your staff partner!

YOUR  MPACT creates  
a ripple effect.



Help us raise awareness and funds  
to make a difference in the lives of  
individuals living with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities.

