Join us and Go For the Cold! Remember that your Plunge makes an impact. By participating in the Polar Bear Plunge, you’re helping us reach out to one more person who wants to participate in Special Olympics. On behalf of our athletes, THANK YOU!

#GoForTheCold #PlungeDE
PLUNGE WEEKEND FESTIVAL  ❖  FEBRUARY 3-5, 2017
PLUNGE DAY: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5 AT 1:00PM (REGISTRATION FEE IS $75)

Skip the lines and check in early for a relaxing start to your Plunge!

**Early Check-in Schedule:**
- Wednesday, February 1 (9:00am-7:00pm)  - SODE Office in Newark
- Friday, February 3 (5:00 - 8:00pm)       - Atlantic Sands Hotel in Rehoboth Beach
- Saturday, February 4 (4:00-8:00pm)     - Atlantic Sands Hotel in Rehoboth Beach

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4**

5K RUN TO THE PLUNGE - Don’t miss the fun!
Sponsored by Jack Lingo Realtor, Saturday’s 5K Run (or Walk) to the Plunge is the perfect way for everyone to support the Weekend Festival. Registration fee ($20 pre-registration fee until Jan. 25; $25 fee thereafter) includes long-sleeve T-shirt and hearty post-event snack. Race time is 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 4.

**DOWNTOWN ACTIVITIES**
Downtown Rehoboth Beach retailers and restaurants will be offering special discounts for all Polar Bears. Wear your Plunge wristband and consult your Plunge map for details!

**SANDCASTLES AT THE PLUNGE**
Watch while local sand sculptor, Andrew West, builds a sandcastle at the southern end of the Rehoboth Beach Boardwalk! Starts Saturday at 11am.

**HOT WINGS & ICE CREAM SAMPLING**
Fire & Ice is back with more fiery wings from local restauranteurs ... followed by cool and creamy ice cream delights from local creameries! Held at the Rehoboth Beach Firehouse on Saturday at 12:00 noon.

**RESTAURANT CHILI CONTEST**
Buy a ballot card for only $5 - then try a tasty portion of chili as several downtown restaurant chefs battle to make the best chili! Unique and delicious culinary delights await you at this popular annual chili contest starting on Saturday afternoon at 2:30pm.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5 - Plunge day**

**ICE CARVING AT THE PLUNGE**
Ice carving has moved to Sunday on the Boardwalk by the Atlantic Sands Hotel! Catch our “ice artists” creating frozen works of art!

**POLAR BEAR PLUNGE - 1:00pm sharp**
Make sure you arrive in plenty of time to enjoy the sights and sounds of the Lewes Polar Bear Plunge. Pack your gear for the big day and enjoy the boardwalk festivities, music, energy, laughs and excitement.

**APRES-PLUNGE PARTY**
Starts immediately after the Plunge (1:15pm) at the Baycenter in Dewey Beach! Music by Greg Mack’s Band, pizza and chili by Nicola’s Pizza, and Cash Bar.

REGISTER FOR THE 5K RUN AND THE POLAR BEAR PLUNGE AT WWW.PLUNGEDE.ORG
FORM or JOIN A TEAM!

The saying goes that “friends don’t let friends plunge alone.” Creating a Plunge Team multiplies the fun ... so invite your circle of friends, family, co-workers, colleagues and neighbors to join you!

The exhilaration of the Plunge and the excitement of doing it together as a team serves as an exceptional way for your group to make a significant impact in raising greater awareness for our Special Olympics athletes. Just think about how much fun it will be to be on the beach with your team ... making a difference together. Don’t forget to wear costumes, spiritwear, bring banners - have some fun and be a part of the party!

COOL SCHOOLS

Taking this fundraising challenge means that your school is truly making a difference in changing attitudes and changing lives. Cool Schools is about schools taking the plunge to promote awareness, acceptance and respect for Special Olympics athletes.

Dozens of schools are forming teams for this FUN and EXCITING opportunity to earn service hours - in addition to learning more about raising awareness for a great cause. Students, teachers, family and friends can join your team!

PLUS ... Pledge Respect as we kick off the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign on Sunday at the Plunge!

To pre-register go to WWW.PLUNGEDE.ORG.

For just $10 now (it counts toward your $75 total), you can secure your plunge hoodie sweatshirt for the big day. Polar Bear Plunge online pre-registration closes on Sunday, Jan. 29, 2017.

Fundraise until you reach $75, or RAISE MORE to qualify for our fun incentives!

- $75+ Official Plunge hoodie sweatshirt
- $250+ The above, plus embroidered beach towel
- $500+ All of the above, plus an embroidered garment-dyed sweatshirt
- $1,000+ All of the above, plus an embroidered L.L.Bean Super 200 fleece jacket or fleece vest
- $2,000+ All of the above, plus an embroidered plush white robe
- $5,000+ All of the above, plus stained glass art (one-of-a-kind designed by local artist, Dragonfly Leathrum)
FAQs Before & After the Plunge

I have already pre-registered. Do I need to check in at the Plunge? Yes, even if you pre-registered, you still need to check in. HOWEVER, for a worry-free and relaxing Plunge Day, take advantage of early check-in times on: Wednesday, February 1 at the SODE office in Newark (9am-7pm), Friday, February 3 (5-8pm) at the Atlantic Sands Hotel in Rehoboth Beach, and Saturday, February 4 (4-8pm) at the Atlantic Sands Hotel.

How do I turn in my additional donations? Special Olympics Delaware can help you with any additional offline donations BEFORE you arrive in Rehoboth Beach. This takes the worry out of you handling cash and checks leading up to the Plunge. Drop off or mail in your check and cash donations to our office anytime or during any of the early check-in dates.

What is traffic like and where can I park? Traffic the morning of the Plunge is like a summer holiday weekend, so plan accordingly. Parking meters are turned off for the Plunge. Rehoboth Beach begins to get busy by 10:00am, so make it a leisurely morning, arrive early and find a good parking spot.

Can I bring my dog? Dogs and other pets are discouraged from being on the beach or boardwalk during Sunday’s Plunge. It’s for their safety and that of our Bears and spectators.

Are tents permitted on the beach? What about drones? NO tents are permitted to be set up on the beach. NO drones may be flown over the boardwalk or over the Plunge Zone, in accordance with Rehoboth Beach rules and regulations.

Are there any tips for first-time Polar Bears? For those who are taking the Plunge for the first time we recommend “getting your feet wet” by using these tips in addition to the general tips we offer at www.plungede.org - (see “Tips for a Bearable Plunge”).
   • Plunge in front of the Atlantic Sands where it is less crowded and family-oriented.
   • There is no rule for how far you go in -- ankle-deep or all in!
   • Allow the first wave of folks to go in. This is not a race.
   • The beach will look very different coming out of the water -- and you may not be able to spot your towel. It’s always good to have a “towel-holder” friend or family member on hand to wave you to your spot on the beach.

Is there a place most Bears go to hang out afterward? Enjoy the Apres Plunge Party at the Baycenter in Dewey (temporary location for 2017). The party begins at 1:15pm!

Are showers and/or changing rooms available? Bears are welcome to shower at the Sussex Family YMCA. Just show your wristband at the door!

(See “Tips for a Bearable Plunge” on our Plunge website at www.plungede.org for more helpful tips!)

All registered Polar Bears will receive the official 2017 Lewes Polar Bear Plunge hooded sweatshirt!

DAY-OF PLUNGE CHECKLIST

- Check in and sign your waiver.
  Important: **Team members under 18 yrs. old must bring a signed waiver (by parent/guardian).**

- Turn in any additional funds raised, if any. Remember, try to take advantage of Early Check-in and SODE can help take care of your offline donations (cash and checks).

- **FOR THE PLUNGE:**
  Water shoes for going into the water (the sand is very cold on bare feet)

- A plastic bag (for wet clothes)

- Extra clothing, robe or blanket to keep you warm while you are waiting to plunge

- Two medium sized towels (one to dry off with and one to stand on)

- Clean, dry clothes and dry shoes to wear after plunging

- A backpack to hold everything

- Team outfits or costumes (optional but it makes it even more festive and fun!)

- Team mascot, flag or banners to show your team spirit

- Leave valuables at home. (We cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items.)

FOR MORE PLUNGE INFORMATION, GO TO WWW.PLUNGEDE.ORG
Special Olympics USA will compete at the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games, being held in Austria (Graz, Schladming, Ramsau and Dachstein), March 14-25, 2017.

3,000 athletes from 117 nations will compete in 9 indoor and outdoor team and individual winter events. Select sports will offer Unified Sports competition as well.

Four athletes from Special Olympics Delaware will be part of the Special Olympics USA team:

- **William Conner** - Newark Dragons
- **Morgan Jungling** - Newark Dragons
- **Torie Moore** - Newark Dragons
- **Jakai Walker** - Wilmington Wizards

Joining our four SODE athletes will be SODE staff members, **Gary Cimaglia** (Special Olympics USA Management Team), **Lisa Smith** (Torch Run Logistics Team), as well as members of Delaware Law Enforcement for Special Olympics, **Pete Sawyer** (Final Leg Runner) and **Danny Hall** (Torch Run Team Leader).

The Special Olympics USA team traveled to Vermont during the month of December to train for the 2017 World Winter Games. In attendance were 150 athletes and an additional 60 coaches and management team members from all across the country. They gathered in Killington for several days where they were fitted for their team uniforms.

**BE A FAN!** Follow Special Olympics USA on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for more up-to-date news leading up to the 2017 World Winter Games in Austria!

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**SODE athletes to compete at SOPA and SOMD Winter Games**

SODE athletes have been training hard in Nordic Skiing and Snowshoeing the past 2 months and will have the opportunity to participate in the SOPA Winter Games on January 29-31, to be held at the Seven Springs Resort in Pennsylvania. During the course of the event, more than 350 athletes and 130 coaches from the tri-state area will participate in three days of exciting winter sports – competing in alpine and cross-country skiing, and speed skating, snowshoeing and individual skills events.

The SODE Alpine Ski team has begun practicing at Blue Mountain. Alpine time trials will take place on February 12 at White Tail Ski Resort in Pennsylvania. The Alpine ski competition is hosted by SOMD on February 27-28 at Whitetail Ski Resort.

**Thank you to all our coaches and volunteers for their hard work - and thank you to the athletes and families! Good luck in your upcoming competitions!**
**AREA ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Wilmington Area:** Unified Basketball practices start Tuesdays from January 17, 2017, to March 28 from 6:00 - 7:30pm at Eisenberg Elementary School, 27 Landers Ln., New Castle. To sign up, please contact Ed Capodanno at sode.wilmington@gmail.com.

**Sign-up Deadline for Unified Basketball:** Feb. 6, 2017

**Community Fitness Fridays** - Hockessin Athletic Club, 100 Fitness Way in Hockessin every Friday night from 7:00pm - 8:30pm

**Newark Area:** Young Athletes winter session starts Wednesdays, beginning Feb. 8 - Mar. 29 from 5 - 6:00pm at McVey Elementary. Contact Jon Buzby at j buzby@udel.edu or call 302-831-3484.

**MOT Area:** New Strength Training program will be held at the Village Gym on Sundays from 1 - 3:00pm starting in February. Volunteer coaches are also needed to help. For information contact Mary Ward Hutchison at sode.mot@gmail.com or 302-540-2863.

**Sussex Area:** Strength Training has begun. Practices are on Thursdays at the Sea Colony Fitness Center from 6 - 7:00pm.

**Kent Area:** Young Athletes winter session starts Wednesdays from 5:30 - 6:30pm at the Charlton school beginning February 1 through March. Contact Jon Buzby at j buzby@udel.edu or call 302-831-3484.

**COACHES 101 CLINICS:**
- January 23 & 25 - Special Olympics Delaware office in Newark - 5:45pm
- February 11 - Crossroads Church in Georgetown, Sussex County - 9:00am

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**SPECIAL OLYMPICS STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 - 2020**

Our new strategic plan has been created to align with the overall strategic direction of the Special Olympics global movement, and do “more and better” for the athletes of Special Olympics Delaware.

At the core, Special Olympics is a sports organization that uses the power of sport as a catalyst for social change. Through sport, we challenge society. By highlighting how the needs of people with intellectual disabilities (ID) are not being met, we expose inequity and exclusion. By drawing attention to the gifts of people with ID, we break down misperceptions and tackle negative attitudes. The focus for Special Olympics therefore needs to be on both providing a high quality sports experience and engaging key influencers and communities with that experience in ways that help create positive attitudes and bring about permanent change towards inclusion of people with ID.

**VISION**

Special Olympics Delaware will combine high quality sports with a wide audience, and be a driving force for social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.

**Goal 1: Improve Athlete Performance**
- Improve sports quality
  - Increase frequency and quality of training opportunities
  - Increased competitive opportunities in Delaware and Mid-Atlantic Region
  - Transition school-based athletes to community (18% - 50%)
- Expand Unified sports and young athletes
  - Expand Unified Sports in schools and community
  - Increase school partnerships and youth engagement
  - Increase Young Athlete training sites to 2 per Area
- Improve Athlete Health
  - Increase participation of Areas attending Healthy Athletes
  - Develop programs to support a healthy lifestyle

**Goal 2: Build positive attitudes**
- Improve external awareness among partners and key influencers
  - Increase Games attendance to 4 fans for every athlete
- Connect the movement
  - Conduct annual survey of athletes, families, coaches and volunteers to influence program development

**Goal 3: Build Capacity**
- Increase revenue by 25%
- Strengthen leadership
  - Recruit quality coaches
  - Develop Area and State Athlete Input Councils

To learn more about our 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, please view the link on our website at WWW.SODE.ORG
Save the Date!  
**Basketball Jamboree on March 5 at St. Andrew's**

Get ready for the Special Olympics Delaware Basketball Jamboree scheduled on Sunday, March 5. Based on last year’s success, St. Andrew’s School will again be hosting this mid-season tournament!

**This is a mandatory qualifying tournament for the State Basketball Tournament in April.**

Please look for more information from your basketball coaches.

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**Time for Summer Camp!**

Special Olympics Delaware’s Overnight Sports Camp is a three-day, two-night camp featuring sports training, traditional camp activities and socialization held at Camp Barnes, located near Bethany Beach in southern Delaware. Camp is offered to all qualified Special Olympics Delaware athletes.

Athletes may apply for acceptance into ONLY 1 of the 2 following camps:

**SESSION 1:** Saturday, August 5 – Monday, August 7

**SESSION 2:** Sunday, August 13 – Tuesday, August 15

The recommended minimum age for attending camp is 13 years old.

Applications are being considered now for both camps. **Space at both camps is limited and a completed application does not mean acceptance into camp. Visit sode.org to download an application or call 302-831-4653 to have an application mailed to your home.**

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**Special Olympics Delaware recognized as 2016 Superstars in Business Excellence Award Winner**

Special Olympics Delaware (SODE) is honored to be recognized by the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce as a 2016 Superstars in Business Excellence Award winner in the Non-Profit category.

This award honors businesses and nonprofit organizations for their outstanding achievements and model approaches to business and management.

We thank the Delaware State Chamber for this outstanding recognition of our program. This award truly belongs to all of our many volunteers, athletes and families, friends and supporters, who make our program possible!
SODE highlighted at national basketball tournaments

Special Olympics Delaware basketball teams showcased their talents in two national tournaments during the holidays.

The Wilmington Wizards played an exhibition game during the opening ceremony of the 26th annual Diamond State Classic, held at St. Elizabeth High School. “The Philosophy of the DSC is not only to provide the community the opportunity to watch the best in high school girls basketball, but, with regard to the Special Olympics game, we are able to showcase a group of exceptional athletes with their own unique skills and their determination, spirit and sportsmanship that should be a part of every game of basketball,” Wizards basketball director Steve Meeker explained. SODE has been a financial benefactor of the tournament for years.

The Sussex Riptide and MOT Tigers squared off in a game during the morning session of the final day of the Slam Dunk to the Beach tournament at Cape Henlopen High School. “What a great opportunity for both teams. They had a great time,” Riptide basketball director Jim Watson said. “The cool thing was six of the players got to play on their home high school court, and for the coaches, we got an opportunity to coach our sons on that court, which none of us would have ever thought that opportunity would happen. It was a special moment for everyone involved.”

Thanks to the organizers of both tournaments and to the dedicated SODE coaches who realized the value of an opportunity like this and started their practices early to ensure the teams demonstrated their true abilities on the court. Thanks to Karleen O’Brien-McCann and Steve Meeker (Wizards), Chris Popp (Tigers) and Jim Watson (Riptide) – your commitment to our mission is invaluable.

Make every time you’re active count for charity.

Sign up for FREE

MOTIVATE THE FIRST STATE - make your workouts count!

Sign up at www.MotivateTheFirstState.com and start logging your activities on Plus3 - then earn funds for Special Olympics Delaware!

The points you earn for staying active convert to donations ... so you can raise money for SODE every day just by getting or staying in shape or just recording your healthy habits like eating vegetables, brushing your teeth or a slew of other everyday activities.

It’s easy to sign up and track your exercise and other daily healthy habits. No matter what your daily exercise and healthy living habits are, you can make a difference!

Register today and join our SODE team -- just search Special Olympics Delaware for our team. Thank you!
UNIFIED FLAG FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

On December 3, the second-ranked McKean Highlanders faced off against the fifth-ranked Newark Charter Patriots in the first Unified Flag Football State Championship at Delaware Stadium.

Under the unprecedented partnership between Special Olympics Delaware and the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) eight schools across the state competed throughout the fall season with bi-weekly games followed by playoffs.

The Newark Charter Patriots secured their first DIAA State Championship in a hard fought game winning 35-28.

Congratulations to all our participating high schools and our Unified teams!

Exciting News:

We are proud to announce that Unified Flag Football and Unified Track & Field officially became sanctioned sports under the DIAA this fall!

The vote to include students with special needs in interscholastic sports competition is historic in that decades after people eligible for Special Olympics were brought into public education, they now have new opportunities to bring their competitive spirit and positive attitude to contribute through sports to their schools. The DIAA is also looking to expand beyond these sports in the future, so that one day, athletes have the chance to participate in a sport every season. The goal is to have a legitimate competitive season for Unified athletes at schools across the entire state.

To get your school involved, please contact Kylie Frazer at kfrazer@udel.edu.

SPREAD THE WORD TO END THE WORD

Special Olympics’ annual awareness campaign, Spread the Word to End the Word, kicks off on Wednesday, March 1, 2017.

Spread the Word to End the Word began as a way to recognize how our choice of words frames how we treat others, but has really evolved into a campaign that promotes acceptance and respect for everyone. To get your school involved in this Respect Campaign, please contact Kylie Frazer at kfrazer@udel.edu.

Student Leadership Conference

Special Olympics Delaware, in partnership with the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA), hosted the annual student leadership conference on November 16, 2016, in Dover at the DelTech Community College campus.

A record 40 schools attended with more than 235 student leaders, coaches, educators and special guests. A special thanks to SODE athlete, Sasha Hudson, for helping as a guest emcee.
SUPPORT OUR FUNDRAISERS! REGISTER FOR THESE EVENTS AT WWW.SODE.ORG

2017 DODGEBALL MADNESS
Delaware Law Enforcement for Special Olympics will host its sixth annual Dodgeball Madness Tournament in March 2016. The event is held in the gymnasium of Caesar Rodney High School. Each team must consist of six players minimum with the opportunity to have two alternates (max of eight). Minimum age to participate is 16 years old. Each team is guaranteed to play in at least six games.

Entry Fee: $50 per person; 6-8 players per team
Date: Saturday, March 25, 2017

2017 RIDE TO THE TIDE
Hundreds of motorcycles take part in a police-escorted ride from the Rommel Harley-Davidson in Smyrna to Rehoboth Beach, in support of Special Olympics Delaware. Organized by Delaware Law Enforcement for Special Olympics.

Entry Fee: $25 (pre-registered); $30 (day-of)
Date: Sunday, April 23, 2017

Go OVER THE EDGE - and be a superhero for Special Olympics
Over the Edge is a unique fundraising event -- and the only one of its kind in Delaware -- allowing colleagues or friends the opportunity to raise money and "send" yourself or a friend, or a boss or colleague, rappelling 17 stories (222 feet) "Over the Edge" of a building to raise money and awareness for Special Olympics Delaware.

For the fourth straight year, we are streaming the event live on the internet so anyone anywhere in the world can watch YOU Go Over the Edge.

Visit WWW.SODE.ORG for more information and sign up today! Registration is now open!

Take the edge off and bring a friend to go over with you!
When: Thursday, May 11, 2017
Where: 300 Delaware Ave., Wilmington

SPECIAL OLYMPICS DELAWARE: ONE TEAM, ONE VISION.
Levin Matching Fund matches your Plunge donations!

If you can’t bear to “take the plunge” ... you can still join in on the fun by sending a pledge that Irv & Phyllis Levin will match - dollar for dollar!

Irv Levin, who has participated in the Lewes Polar Bear Plunge for 26 consecutive years, and his wife, Phyllis, have once again agreed to match, dollar for dollar, donations made to Irv’s Plunge pledge drive. This is a wonderful opportunity to maximize your support for Special Olympics Delaware!

Irv & Phyllis’ son, Jamie, is a Special Olympics athlete, and they have always provided tremendous support to the organization. This matching funds effort is their way of continuing that support while also allowing others to join in and help create a contribution of even greater significance.

“With a son involved in Special Olympics Delaware, Phyllis and I, as parents, want to be involved in the program,” Irv says. “We know how worthwhile and important the organization is, and we also know that the money raised is being used to support the program - and we like that. We see where the money goes and how much the athletes benefit!”

Quick and easy!

Donate online by visiting Irv’s fundraising page at https://give.classy.org/IrvLevin and your contribution will be matched dollar for dollar - OR - send in the form below with your check or credit card information.

Yes, I want to support Special Olympics Delaware through the

LEVIN MATCHING FUND

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name: ____________________________________________________________________________________

Street: ____________________________________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: ___________________ Zip: _____________________________

Phone: (______) __________________________

Pledge Amt. $ ____________ Please enclose a check with this form (payable to Special Olympics Delaware)

Mail to: Special Olympics Delaware • University of Delaware • Newark, DE 19716-1901

OR pay by credit card: M/C or Visa Acct. # __________________________ Exp. Date_____

All pledged donations will be matched dollar for dollar by the Levin Family.

Donors who pledge $1,000 or more will receive a free 1-week rental of an oceanfront home in Edisto Island, South Carolina. (Blockout dates during peak season may apply. For more information, contact Ann Grunert at agrunert@udel.edu).
Go For The Cold!

This isn’t just a plunge, it’s a jump for joy. Proceeds from the Lewes Polar Bear Plunge benefit the athletes of Special Olympics Delaware, so on February 5, the coldest moment of your life will support the biggest moment of theirs. The crowd will be huge, the cause great, and the water freezing. But we don’t do it because it’s easy - we do it to make a difference.

Please register today at WWW.PLUNGEDE.ORG