



Tips to maximize fundraising for your Polar Plunge

One of the most effective means of fundraising is by creating a personalized online fundraising page through Firstgiving.com. Special Olympics NC provides access to individuals to create a personalized page that can be shared with all your contacts through email, blogs and social media – such as Facebook and Twitter. Your contacts can donate safely and securely via credit card.

To create a page go to www.firstgiving.com/sonc and search for the Polar Plunge where you will participate.

Suggestions for creating effective online fundraising pages:

1. Personalize your page. Add a picture, write a brief paragraph on what you're doing or if you're plunging in honor of someone, and include information about Special Olympics NC.
2. Be sure to note that donations are 100% tax deductible.
3. Post your fundraising goal ... the minimum to jump at most plunges is \$50, but you are encouraged to raise more! The more you raise, the more you are helping SONC athletes.
4. Add an incentive for people to donate. Make donating a contest for your friends and family; let people know that for every \$25 they donate, they could be entered into a drawing for a great prize. Be creative; offer to bake cookies, raffle off tickets to a game you can't attend, give away a bottle of wine you've been saving ...
5. Link your fundraising page to your social network sites. Firstgiving has tools to make it easy.

Make sure you SPREAD THE WORD ...

Once your website is set up, you want to share that link with everyone you know! The fastest and easiest way to start is to send out an email to everyone in your address book. You may also consider sending snail mail letters to your holiday card list.

How to write a good Email or Letter

To ensure that your friends and family know what a great cause you're supporting, follow these simple steps:

- Introduction - let people know that you're planning on "Freezin for a Reason" to support the mission of Special Olympics NC.
- Be sure to include information about Special Olympics NC and where the money goes.
- Include why you are supporting Special Olympics NC ... are you plunging in honor of anyone.
- "The Ask" or request for a donation is really important. Make sure you specifically ASK for help reaching your goal by ASKING for a donation
- Let people know how to donate (either through your webpage or include a self addressed envelope and donation reply card if you're mailing letters)
- Tell them donations are 100% tax deductible
- Include a personal fundraising deadline so people don't put off donating -remember, funds must be raised by the day of the event.
- Closing and Thank you



EMAILS vs.LETTERS

Email is the fastest way to get your online fundraising website out to all your family and friends. It is also a great tool for sending event updates and reminder emails. Letters take a bit more time but can be really effective at letting people know how serious you are about reaching your goal. Ideally, use both! Some people you know will respond better to a letter, knowing you took the time to write and mail one. Others may prefer the ease of simply clicking on a link in an email to donate on line. Many people will need more than one request to donate, so it's okay to send your invitation to donate via both email and letter.

Use Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and Blogging

Social media is a great way to self promote! Connect with people who you would normally not be in regular contact with and let them know you are fundraising. When you click on the "Fundraising pages" tab of your firstgiving page there are powerful tools to link your page to your social media sites.

- Use your Facebook status update with your website link
- Tweet your web link to let people know what you are doing.
- Start a fan page on Facebook and invite all of your "friends" to be a fan. Be sure to include your fundraising page link on your fan page and send out periodic updates.
- You can also start a blog that chronicles your journey to plunge – including your thoughts, what you are going to wear, etc.

Contact Jamie Vaughn – jvaughn@sonc.net or 919 719-7662 x 123 – if you would like any assistance or have any questions about fundraising for your Polar Plunge.