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Plunge...It's WAY Cool!

***Plungapalooza 2010 Featuring the Maryland State Police Polar Bear Plunge
Set for January 30 at Sandy Point State Park
Iconic Winter Festival Benefiting Special Olympics Maryland Continues to
Attract New Support, Expand Offerings***

Baltimore, MD – It's THE event of winter and it's back for the 14th year with more chills and thrills than ever. It's Plungapalooza 2010 featuring the Maryland State Police Polar Bear Plunge and it's all happening January 30 at Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis.

With a \$4 million fundraising goal, an expected 15,000 Plunge participants – including Ravens QB Joe Flacco, a brand-new “Frigid Friday” Plunge that is exclusive to school teams, the 80's themed Rams Head Ice Lodge, an entertainment tent featuring live music and beer and wine for sale; a new incentive program that includes a Carnival Cruise; and a bigger and better festival, organizers are optimistic that the event will continue to grow in popularity in 2010 despite the still-challenging economic climate. And all indications are good, with registration ahead of this same time last year, including both number of participants registered and money raised.

Registration for the MSP Polar Bear Plunge opens at 8 a.m. on Jan. 30, and mass Plunges will take place at both 1 and 3 p.m.

Wanna-be Plungers need only raise a minimum of \$50 in pledges (or as a personal donation) in order to be a part of the fun. For that contribution, all participants receive a commemorative Plunge sweatshirt, lunch courtesy of new Plunge sponsor The Greene Turtle, and a photo gift. Additional event premiums are available for those raising \$500 and above. New for 2010, this list of premiums includes a free Carnival Cruise for those raising \$3500 or more, along with the standard Plunge gear like fleeces, jackets and bags.

Registration is now open for the event, and available online at www.plungemd.com or by calling 1-800-541-7544 x503.

Frigid Friday

In response to the increase in participation by the youth community, the 2010 event will include a special “Frigid Friday” Plunge that is exclusive to school teams who are signed on under the Cool Schools promotion. The Cool Schools Campaign is a school team challenge that includes special incentives for school teams, as well as special awards to the top overall fundraising school and the top schools in a variety of divisions. Taking part in the MSP Polar Bear Plunge has become popular among students, teachers and administrators alike because it qualifies as a service learning activity and also offers a fun and memorable team-building activity for participants. The Frigid Friday Plunge is scheduled to take place at Noon on Friday, January 29, and as many as 1,000 students are expected to participate.

“Who’s Who” of Plungers

The event has become popular amongst local celebrities and politicians and Ravens QB Joe Flacco recently confirmed his plans to participate in 2010. Other notable participants in past events include Governor Martin O’Malley; former Baltimore Ravens Assistant Head Coach Rex Ryan; Ravens players Adam Terry – OT, and Haloti Ngata – DT; Orioles Hall of Famer BJ Surhoff; former Raven Edwin Mulitalo; WBAL-TV’s Jennifer Franciotti, Sandra Shaw, Deb Weiner and Rob Roblin, among others; 98 Rock’s Mickey, Amelia & Spiegel Morning Show, Stash, Theo and Sarah “The Queen” Fleisher; former Governor Robert Ehrlich; and numerous other legislators, and business and community leaders. New for 2010, Clarence Mitchell IV from WBAL-AM has committed to participate.

Rams Head Ice Lodge

For the first time ever, the full-day event will feature a dedicated entertainment tent with live music all day long and a beer garden, hosted by Entertainment Partner Rams Head. All are welcome to stop in to the 80’s themed tent and enjoy free live music beginning at 8 a.m., including a set by East Coast’s premier 80’s cover band, The Reagan Years, among others. Festival-goers can also hang out in this heated tent with a ski-lodge feel and enjoy great food and drink courtesy of Rams Head, The Greene Turtle and Yellow Tail.

Plungapalooza 2010

The event has grown into a “can’t-miss” spectacle that includes much more than just the Plunge, and 2010 will be no exception. Plungers and spectators alike are invited to enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of the boardwalk-themed festival tent – a huge, heated tent located on the grounds of Sandy Point State Park. Attractions include boardwalk-style games and displays, local and national vendors, live music and other entertainment, event merchandise sales, a Plunge Food Court, sandcastle building, ice carvings, wood carvings and a special area just for the kids with games, inflatables, face painting and more. Old favorites like the costume contest, live remote by 98 Rock, and the morning action at the Super Plunge Village will also be on the schedule. 2010 will also once again

include the crowning of Miss and Little Miss Polar Bear Plunge and Miss Hypothermic Hon during the Polar Bear Plunge Pageant.

The Plunge Phenomenon

Why has this event become such an institution? For some it's a tradition, for others it's done on a dare. It's on many Plunge participants' "bucket lists". It's something to look forward to in the post-holiday doldrums of winter, counteracting the late January date that has been tagged "the most depressing day of the year." And it's just about as daredevil as many Plungers ever want to get.

Whatever the reason, this chilly charity event has become one of the top fundraisers in Maryland, earning more than \$3 million for Special Olympics Maryland in 2009 thanks to the 11,000 participants of all ages who were daring enough to take a dip in the wintry waters of the Chesapeake Bay – this despite the national recession.

Aerotek Plungapalooza is open to the public free of charge and spectators are encouraged to enjoy the festive atmosphere of the day.

There is NO general parking available at Sandy Point State Park in 2010. Participants and spectators alike are encouraged to travel to Sandy Point via bus (bus parking passes are available by contacting organizers at plunge@somd.org or calling 410-789-6677), or taking advantage of the free TMS Polar Express shuttle bus system that will run continuous routes all day long from the Naval Academy Stadium, Anne Arundel Community College and Kent Island High School. Organizers are working with the transportation company to remedy the long wait times that occurred after the 13th Annual MSP Plunge – this includes utilizing double the number of buses and making major improvements to the flow of traffic and overall design of the shuttle system.

About Special Olympics Maryland

The Plunge is the organization's largest single-day fundraiser, grossing more than \$13 million in support of 10,000 Special Olympics Maryland athletes since its inception in 1997. Due in large part to the success of the MSP Plunge, SOMD has implemented Young Athletes -- an innovative new "play" program for youngsters ages 2 to 7. This program focuses on early intervention in building and improving fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination in children with intellectual disabilities.

SOMD is a year-round sports organization dedicated to providing quality sports training and competition opportunities to Maryland's children and adults with intellectual disabilities and/or closely related development disabilities. SOMD currently serves 10,000 athletes statewide, and offers 28 sports, all at no cost to the athletes or their families. For more information about SOMD visit www.somd.org or call 410-789-6677 x117.