POLAR PLUNGE

Special Olympics Northern California

WELCOME FUNDRAISING CHAMPION

Thank you for your unwavering support of Special Olympics Northern California! We're thrilled that you have decided to make an even bigger impact by fundraising for Polar Plunge.

Supporters like you make a world of difference for Special Olympics NorCal athletes. Your fundraising efforts will help provide athletes with transportation, uniforms, facilities fees, equipment, meals and so much more.

For every $500 donated, an athlete trains for a year at no cost.

To ensure that you are equipped with plenty of tools and tips to achieve success, we've created this Fundraising Champion guide.

Learn more at
PlungeCA.org



GETTING STARTED

SETTING UP YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE

Set your goal: Setting a goal for your fundraiser is your first step toward success. Research shows that an initial goal of $200 is a good place to start. Once you've reached your goal, you can increase it and raise more funds.

PRO TIP: To jump-start your campaign, be the first one to donate! Showcasing that you're not only a Polar Plunge participant but also a donor will encourage your network to give.

TELL YOUR STORY

Your story is the first thing people will see when visiting your fundraising page, so your goal is to make it as impactful as possible. Why are you raising funds for Special Olympics? It's important to communicate how Special Olympics NorCal's mission has impacted your life in a meaningful way, and why you've decided to fundraise.

GENERAL TIPS

DO

- **Shout Out Donors:** Acknowledging donors ensures they feel appreciated. It also shows other people in your network that you're already receiving donations, and encourages them to donate too.
- **Ask More Than Once:** Don't be shy! Follow ups and additional asks can help increase the probability of securing donations.
- **Be Enthusiastic:** All of your communication about the fundraiser should demonstrate your passion and enthusiasm. Showing your commitment to Special Olympics NorCal means people will be more inclined to donate.
- **Be Creative:** You may find that other people in your network are fundraising or showing their support for other organizations. Use your creativity to make your fundraising efforts stand out. Make a short, fun video, post a photo carousel, or customize your email signature. Find new and creative ways that make your fundraiser stand out.

Continued on next page

GETTING STARTED

DON'T

- **Get Discouraged:** Cold calling and emailing donors may seem like a daunting task at first. Sometimes the rate of success is not as high as we'd like it to be but don't get discouraged! Stay consistent in your approach.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I COMMUNICATE WITH MY NETWORK?

There are **five absolute times** you should communicate with your network during a fundraising campaign:

1. Campaign launch
2. Midway goal
3. Final push
4. Campaign end or goal reached
5. Thank you

We recommend maintaining momentum with one to two social posts per week, and one weekly email between each of these five main milestone communications, to help keep your campaign top of mind.

During the final push phase of your campaign, increasing your frequency to a few social posts a day has proven to be highly effective—so go for it!

We recommend creating a simple sharing schedule to plan out your communication strategy ahead of time. This will save you time and make your campaign more fun and less stressful.

PRO TIP: Use Google Calendar, Google Sheets, or even a notebook to plan out when you will post to social media and email/text your network.

SOCIAL SHARING

Utilize Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn and TikTok to reach out to your network when asking for donations.

Make sure that you link your Polar Plunge donation page to your posts so it's easy for people to donate right to your page!

TIPS

1. Get creative! Feel free to share pictures and videos in your posts.
2. Have a personal story? Share it with your followers and let them know why you're participating in the Polar Plunge.
3. Tag Special Olympics NorCal in your posts!

   Instagram: **@SpecialOlympicsNCA**
   Facebook, X, TikTok: **@SONorCal**
   LinkedIn: **@SpecialOlympicsNorthernCalifornia**

SAMPLE POSTS

- Help me support Special Olympics NorCal's 28,000+ athletes! I'm participating in the 2026 Polar Plunge. Please contribute to my Plunge donation page! #OneNorCal #PlungeCA #JumpIn *<insert link to personal Polar Plunge donation page>*
- You can make a difference too! Help me reach my fundraising goal for the 2026 Polar Plunge to raise money for Special Olympics Northern California. #OneNorCal *<insert link to personal Polar Plunge donation page>*
- Ready to take the plunge for Special Olympics NorCal? I am! You can help with a donation! #OneNorCal *<insert link to personal Polar Plunge donation page>*
- I'm raising money for Special Olympics Northern California by participating in the 2026 Polar Plunge. Help by donating to the cause. Every contribution counts! *<insert link to personal Polar Plunge donation page>*
- I'm competing in the 2026 Polar Plunge to raise money for Special Olympics Northern California. You can help! Donate here: *<insert link to personal Polar Plunge donation page>*

TO DOWNLOAD SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

sonc.org/polargraphics

EMAIL OUTREACH

Email is an incredibly effective fundraising tool and a great way to spread the word! Ask others to join your team and request donations to your Polar Plunge fundraising efforts.

TIPS

1. **Make it personal:** Tell your story. Share with others why you Plunge, whether you're participating for fun or because you have a connection to Special Olympics Northern California.
2. **Make a contest or game out of it:** Maybe the first person to donate or the largest donation gets a gift from you! Follow-up.
3. **Be sure to say thank you to donors** after they make their donation, and again after the Plunge.
4. **Send them a picture** of you after taking the Plunge
5. **Fundraising will remain open for one month after the final Plunge events.**

Email examples on next page

DONOR ASK – SAMPLE EMAIL

SUBJECT LINE: Help Me Help Special Olympics Northern California
PREVIEW LINE: I'm Doing Something Special at the Polar Plunge. You can help!
BODY TEXT:
Dear [*Name*],

I've signed up for the Polar Plunge, a global Special Olympics fundraising tradition. [My team / I] will be plunging into chilly NorCal waters to raise funds for programs and events supporting people with intellectual disabilities.

Funds from the Plunge will benefit more than 28,000 Special Olympics athletes around Northern California all year-round.

Will you help me support Special Olympics by making a donation on my fundraising page? Every contribution counts.

All Special Olympics programs and services are provided **free of charge** for athletes and their families, thanks to generous supporters, like you.

You can make a secure online donation by visiting <*insert link*>.

I'm happy to help if you have any questions. Thanks so much for supporting Special Olympics Northern California!

Warmly,
[*Your Name*]
[*Your Contact Information*]

THANK YOU – SAMPLE EMAIL

SUBJECT LINE: Thank you for supporting Special Olympics NorCal
PREVIEW LINE: Your donation will make a great impact on people's lives
BODY TEXT:
Dear [*Name*],

Thank you so much for supporting me by making a donation! Your contribution will make an impact on the lives of Special Olympics athletes in Northern California.

More than 28,000 athletes take part in Special Olympics NorCal's sports, health, schools and leadership programs, all for free, thanks to generous donors like you.

If you'd like to learn more about Special Olympics NorCal, visit SONC.org.

Thanks again for doing something special for so many people!

[*Your Name*]

HOW TO RAISE $150 IN 7 DAYS

DAY	THE ASK	TOTAL PER DAY	GRAND TOTAL
1	Kick-start your fundraising by adding a personal contribution of $10.	$10	**$10**
2	Post your fundraising link and ask 6 friends for $5 each.	$30	**$40**
3	Ask 3 coworkers, classmates or teammates to “skip coffee or lunch” and donate $10 each.	$30	**$70**
4	Ask a parent, sibling or relative for $20. Your birthday or a holiday is bound to be around the corner!	$20	**$90**
5	Ask two neighbors for $10.	$20	**$110**
6	Post a cute picture of your pet (or borrow a friend’s) and ask for 5 people for $5 “treat donations” in their honor.	$25	**$135**
7	Ask your best friend, partner or roommate for a $15 donation.	$15	**$150**

Don’t forget to also ask them to join your Polar Plunge team too!

HOW TO RAISE $500 IN 10 DAYS

DAY	THE ASK	TOTAL PER DAY	GRAND TOTAL
1	Kick-start your fundraising by adding a personal contribution of $25.	$25	**$25**
2	Ask 3 family members to match your personal donation of $25.	$75	**$100**
3	Ask your best friend to donate $25.	$25	**$125**
4	Ask your boss for $25. Don't forget to ask if your company has **corporate matching!**	$25	**$150**
5	Share your link in your work Slack, Teams channel or group chat. Aim for 5 donations of $10.	$50	**$200**
6	Ask 10 people to donate their "spare change" ($5 each).	$50	**$250**
7	Ask 5 businesses that you frequent to donate $10 each.	$50	**$300**
8	Prep challenge: Post on social media "If 10 people give $10 today, I'll jump into the pool fully clothed!"	$100	**$350**
9	Ask 5 neighbors to donate $10 each.	$50	**$400**
10	Post on your social media and ask for 5 people to donate $10 each.	$50	**$500**

Don't forget to also ask them to join your Polar Plunge team too!

MAKE AN *Impact*

Special Olympics Northern California works hard to create an inclusive community where people with and without disabilities can make connections, develop healthy lifestyles, achieve success, and experience the joy of sports. All of our programs are offered free of charge!



POLAR PLUNGE
Special Olympics Northern California

IMPACT:

Every $500 provides 1 athlete FREE access to Special Olympics NorCal opportunities for a year, with $0.91 of every dollar going directly back to athlete programs.

29K+
Social Media Footprint

80K+
Newsletter Subscribers

15K+
Visits to sonc.org per month





10.9K+
Unified Sports Partners

28.5K+
Athletes

23K+
Volunteers

9.4K+
Coaches

100+
Athlete Leaders

1.4K+
Health & Wellness Screenings

500+
Schools in Partnership Program

388
Competitions

5.5M
Global Special Olympics Athletes

1.1M
Global Special Olympics Coaches & Volunteers

Contact Katie with any questions at katieo@sonc.org

Special Olympics Northern California