



**FirstGiving™** Be where the giving happens.

# Be brave in the attempt: Taking the plunge.

FirstGiving helps **Special Olympics Illinois** raise a (very) cool \$1.2 million.

Law Enforcement Torch Run  
**POLAR PLUNGE™**



Imagine this: you agree to raise at least \$75 in donations from friends, family, and co-workers for **Special Olympics Illinois**, and in exchange for this noble effort, you get to jump into the icy waters of Lake Michigan and other frigid lakes around the state. Right in the middle of winter.

You've got to admire the determination of these plungers. We do, at FirstGiving. In fact, we've been partnering with **Special Olympics Illinois** since 2006, helping people throughout the state raise money for this worthiest of causes — while satisfying their need for crazy — at the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge. Sponsored by a multitude of local law enforcement agencies that have selected **Special Olympics Illinois** as their nonprofit of choice, the Polar Plunge is held over several weekends in late February and early March. In 2010, more than 5,000 people braved the freezing waters of 17 different lakes around the state, to raise over \$1.2 million for the athletes of **Special Olympics Illinois**.

Of this amazing total, more than \$560,000 came through online giving, via FirstGiving's individual fundraising web pages. Matt Johnson, Manager of Marketing and Events at **Special Olympics Illinois**, cites the ease with which plungers can create and personalize their individual FirstGiving web pages, with stories and pictures about themselves, their goals, and their commitment to the athletes of Special Olympics.

"Law Enforcement officers are tremendously competitive," notes Matt, "and the idea of working as a team — whether the Crestwood Copsicles or the Maryville Bi-Polar Bears — to raise more money than other groups, fuels that competitive spirit. With FirstGiving's team pages, we can accommodate this perfectly." And you don't have to be a cop to get in on this party, either: many people and organizations formed teams, including popular Chicago Blackhawks hockey player Andrew Ladd, who led a team of Blackhawk fans into frigid Lake Michigan. (Of course, Andrew's used to icy conditions.)

**Special Olympics Illinois** uses the FirstGiving platform for a variety of grassroots fundraising events as well, including a Plane Pull event at O'Hare International Airport, a "Run WITH the Law" fun run that teams youth with local law enforcement, golf tournaments, and more. In most cases, the nonprofit also takes advantage of FirstGiving's handling of registration, the automatic generation of thank-you notes and tax-deductible receipts, and other reporting features.

In each of the years since FirstGiving's partnership with **Special Olympics Illinois** began, the nonprofit has conducted an annual review of FirstGiving's performance, comparing it to other online fundraising organizations. Each year, **Special Olympics Illinois** keeps coming back to FirstGiving.

Like plungers to an icy lake.



We especially like FirstGiving's robust reporting features, which — given that we have almost 20 locations to track — is especially convenient and helpful.



Matt Johnson,  
Manager, Marketing and Events  
Special Olympics Illinois

**5,000 plunged**  
**\$1.2 million raised**



To learn how **FirstGiving** can help your organization raise more funds with greater ease, contact us at **877.365.2949** or at [sales@firstgiving.com](mailto:sales@firstgiving.com).