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Freezy does it for Westborough polar plungers (with video)

Photos

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Kathleen Culler

Westborough resident Tim Novak whoops and yells as he climbs out of a frigid Lake Chauncy during the polar plunge fundraiser yesterday.

By Jeff Malachowski/Daily News staff MetroWest Daily News

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WESTBOROUGH — Despite cold temperatures and rain, nearly 50 residents emerged from the frigid waters of Lake Chauncy cold, wet and shivering during yesterday's first In Your Shoes Polar Plunge.

While many quickly jumped in and out of the murky waters and rushed to a bonfire on the shore of Lake Chauncy to get warm to the cheers of several spectators, others, such as Mark McNamara, dove into the 40-degree water and leisurely swam around to raise money for the Westborough Food Pantry and fuel assistance program.

"It felt good," said McNamara, who dressed as a chicken and dove in with a group of employees from IBM. "I was ready to go in again."

McNamara, of Westborough, said he decided to dress in a chicken costume in an effort to stand out from the crowd.

Photos

Zoom



Kathleen Culler

Dressed as a chicken, Mark McNamara jumps into Lake Chauncy in Westborough during yesterday's polar plunge charity fundraiser.

"I always try to think of something different," he said.

Fellow IBM employee Brian Welsh, who dove in alongside McNamara, described his plunge as "refreshing."

Westborough native Keith Ledoux said he was not as cold as he expected to be.

"It's the initial shock of the cold water, but after a while it isn't that bad," Ledoux said while warming up by the bonfire shortly after emerging from the water. "It feels great. It's great to see the community come out."

Although some described their swim in Lake Chauncy as relaxing, others had a different take on their first polar plunge.

"It felt like a thousand knives sticking into you," said Westborough resident John Gavin.

"It was very cold, but we were expecting that," said a shivering Steve Decoursey of Westborough.

Members of In Your Shoes, a nonprofit charity group, organized the polar plunge in an effort to raise money for the organization, as well as the Westborough Food Pantry and fuel assistance program, which will receive half of the proceeds from yesterday's polar plunge. The remainder of the money will go to In Your Shoes general fund, which helps Westborough residents in need.

In Your Shoes founder Donna Kelly said the group decided to hold the fundraiser after noticing several local towns and organizations holding polar plunges for charity. Each plunger was required to raise \$100 and the event raised about \$5,000.

"That's pretty special for a first-time event," said Kelly. "This is a great venue that is not utilized enough. It's so cool that people are stepping up and plunging for us."

Many local businesses and organizations including IBM, Bohler Construction, Westborough Youth Soccer and Coldwell Banker had several employees and members dive into Lake Chauncy.

Prizes were awarded for best costume, team spirit and the individual and team that raised the most money. Although the weather conditions were less than ideal, Kelly said nobody backed out and she praised the plungers' enthusiasm.

"These conditions are horrendous, but people are coming no matter what," said Kelly. "We are really thrilled."

Read more: <http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/news/x29009071/Freezy-does-it-for-Westborough-polar-plungers#ixzz1kx3NqY84>