

## Dozens take the plunge for Westborough charity

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Batman, Robin and a college kid wearing a Charlie Sheen T-shirt were among the brave souls who jumped into the chilly waters of Lake Chauncy yesterday for In Your Shoes' third annual Polar Plunge.

"I'm excited and a little nervous," Framingham State University student Greg Arpante, wearing a snorkel and goggles on his head, said a few minutes before he jumped. "But it's a good way to raise money for charity and do something I've never done."

The event, which included music from the Westborough High School marching band, warm food and a warmer bonfire, was organized by Westborough nonprofit In Your Shoes.

Participants were asked to raise at least \$100 for the privilege of diving into the icy cold water. In Your Shoes Vice President Karen Ross said participants raised more than \$10,000 in all.

Half the money will go toward helping the Westborough Youth and Family Services and Westborough's Emergency Services, and the other half will go to the In Your Shoes general fund.

"I was the only one to vote to not have this today," smiled Ross, who was also celebrating her birthday. She made the best of it though, ordering a custom "I'm taking the plunge on my birthday" top hat for the occasion.

Ross and other participants said they were thrilled that the sun was shining on the mild 39-degree December afternoon. Last year, the lake was frozen over, and heavy machinery was required to get to the point where there was even a spot to jump.

"It's a good way to help out charity and to look ridiculous," said 18-year-old Westborough High School student Zach Silverman, who wore a black Charlie Sheen Winning T-shirt and purple Cat in the Hat winter hat, among other doodads.

Perhaps the best costumes went to Tom and Mary Johnston, who dressed up as Batman and Robin, respectively.

"He's a cool superhero," Tom shrugged when asked for his inspiration.

The Johnstons jumped with a group of staff members and parents from Positively Preschool of Rte. 9.

"I'm cold already," owner Renee Thompson, who was jumping for her second year, said before she plunged. "But we really pride ourselves on being supportive of children and families in Westborough."

Team Positively Preschool and four other fundraising teams took the plunge separately, with most two or three-timers agreeing this was the mildest plunge yet.

"Good stuff," said Cheryl Goebel, who was a last-minute addition to her team after her husband got in a fender-bender and was doubtful for game time.

"He got here at the last minute, but I still jumped," she said smiling. "It wasn't as bad as I'd thought it would be."

Those who didn't feel like jumping into icy cold water but do want to support In Your Shoes can still donate to the cause at [www.firstgiving.com/inyourshoeswestborough](http://www.firstgiving.com/inyourshoeswestborough).

(Brad Petrishen can be reached at 508-490-7463 or [bpetrishen@wickedlocal.com](mailto:bpetrishen@wickedlocal.com).)