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IMAGE GALLERY: Polar Plunge Makes Big Splash [Video]

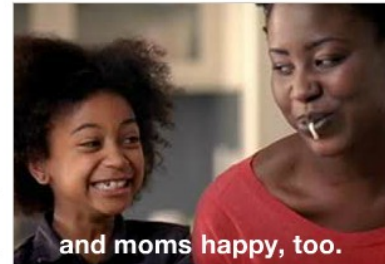
Twenty-eight brave souls took the plunge for In Your Shoes, helping to raise over \$10,000.
By [Nancy Wright](#) | [Email the author](#) | December 5, 2011

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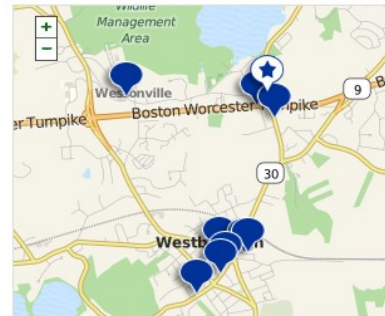
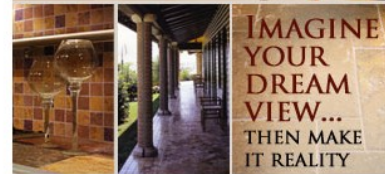
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Karen Ross gives the polar bear mascot a big hug Credit: Courtesy of In Your Shoes

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From chopping ice to sunbathing -- what a difference a year makes. Unlike last year, the Dec. 3 Polar Plunge, run by the nonprofit organization, *In Your Shoes* (IYS), featured people shedding their

layers, running around in short-sleeve shirts with barely a goose bump. Last year, volunteers were chopping ice at [Chauncy Lake](#) to make room for the plungers.

The balmy day was a far cry from the ice-ridden day last year. As Judy DiOrio, Polar Plunge volunteer coordinator, put it, "Last year the ice and snow made for a very authentic Polar Plunge, which was really terrific, but this year it was hard to beat the warm air and water temperatures -- especially for us Polar Bears."

Polar Plunge Chairperson Karen Ross, agreed that the ice last year was definitely "cooler" and more polar-like, but the warmth of the day was much more inviting for plungers and spectators. She pointed out that while there was no ice, there were many similarities to last year.

- Close to 30 brave Polar Plungers
- Close to 40 volunteers (not including the [Westborough High School](#) Ranger marching band members)
- Lots of great food from local sponsors [Panera](#), [Starbucks](#) and [Ted's Montana Grill](#), as well as baked goods donated by individuals
- Enormous logistical support from:
 - ~[Department of Public Works](#)
 - ~[Westborough Fire](#) and [Police](#) departments
 - ~[Westborough Recreation Department](#)
 - ~Westborough Youth Commission
 - ~Westborough High School National Honor Society
 - ~[Westborough Cable Television](#)

Terry Gavin, co-founder of In Your Shoes, gave special credit to the event's emcee. "A big thank you to Mark Dittleman for being master of ceremony. He does such a great job and we appreciate him donating his time and talent each year."

Speaking of talent, about 25 members from the high school's marching band created a festive beachfront by playing many familiar tunes for the half-hour before plungers took to the frosty lake. When asked her favorite moments from the event, Gavin said, "Definitely the marching band playing. That, along with the enthusiasm of the plungers and the tremendous bonfire created and manned by Jim Brown, made for a memorable day. "The Browns donated all of the wood for the fire, which was quite impressive this year."

What also made the day memorable was the amount of money *In Your Shoes* raised. "We set a very lofty goal this year of \$20,000," said Ross. "After raising \$10,000 the first year and \$11,000 the second year, we thought we could hit \$20,000 this year by introducing an online fundraising tool. We were hoping it would reach a broader audience, therefore increasing last year's total."

The latest tally brought the day's total to about \$11,000. IYS will continue to accept donations through the end of the year at <http://www.firstgiving.com/InYourShoesWestborough>. This year, [In Your Shoes](#) will share the proceeds with two other local organizations. [Westborough Youth and Family Services](#) (WYFS) and Westborough Emergency Services (police and fire) will each receive 25% of the profits raised. The other 50% will go to the [In Your Shoes](#) general fund to help Westborough residents throughout 2012.

The IYS Polar Plunge committee was happy with the turnout and gave awards for best costume, most spirited team and the team that demonstrated the best polar personality.

Capturing the prize for best costume was Team Birthday Party, who also won best polar personality and most money raised by a team. Winning first place for most spirited team was Old Goats Troop #382. The award for the person who raised the most money went to Bill Goebel, who brought in an impressive \$2,240.

Ross is still hoping IYS can move closer to its \$20,000 goal. "We know it's a tough time, but we're hoping people will consider donating \$5 or \$10 to help their neighbors."

She mentioned that people can send in contributions, too, if they're not comfortable with online giving. Anyone interested in donating can make a check out to [In Your Shoes](#), with Polar Plunge in the memo line, and send it to [In Your Shoes](#), PO Box 19, Westborough, MA 01581.

In Your Shoes Thanks the 28 Polar Plungers

Team Positively Preschool: Jake Thompson, Renee Thompson, Mary Johnston, Thomas Johnnton, Jake Jacobson, Michelle Mi, Judy Harriman, Abby George

Individual Plungers, Two for the Pool: Joe McManus and John Badenhausen

Team Old Goats Troop #382: Dana Peterson, Sam Pierce, Ben Peterson, Marc Scharen, Bob Milne

Team Awesome: Steffi LeGraf (Stephanie Leclair), Brittany Gavin, Greg Arpante, Allie Reed, Zach Silverman

Team Birthday Party: Karen Ross, Paul Ross, Judy DiOrio, Steve DiOrio, Colleen Crowley, Cheryl Goebel, Bill Goebel, Jim Fitzgerald