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Penguin Plunge helps Special Olympics

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DERRY — There's nothing like an icy dip in the Atlantic Ocean this time of year to warm some hearts.

Add in the warmth of helping others and it's a great combination.

For anyone wanting to chill out a bit, the upcoming Penguin Plunge to support the New Hampshire Special Olympics is just the thing.

Many local supporters and volunteers of Derry Recreation's Special Olympics team, the Timberwolves, will brave the cold at the 12th annual Plunge on Feb. 6. They will jump into the ocean at Hampton Beach for a good cause and raise money to support Special Olympics.

Derry recreation coordinator Jessica Scarlett is a regular "plunger" and has participated in the event for six years. She also helps coach the Timberwolves athletes, who now practice weekly in preparation for competition throughout the year.

Scarlett said she is part of an official Penguin Plunge team, organized by one of the Special Olympics athletes. Team members will dress in pirate garb.

Scarlett's personal goal is to raise $750 to support Special Olympics.

"I try to set myself a goal," she said.

That goal also includes running into the ocean at least waist deep, then dunking herself under up to her shoulders to get the full effect.

"You're running in and as soon as the water hits your chest, you say 'holy mackerel, that's cold,'" Scarlett said.

Hundreds of people participate in the Penguin Plunge every year, raising money to support athletics, competitions, and other Special Olympics programs for the more than 3,700 athletes who participate.

For information on donating or participating, contact Scarlett at Derry Parks and Recreation at 432-6136 or visit sonh.org.

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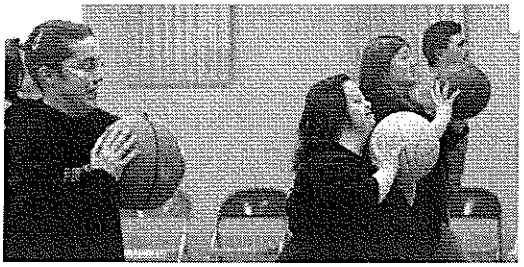
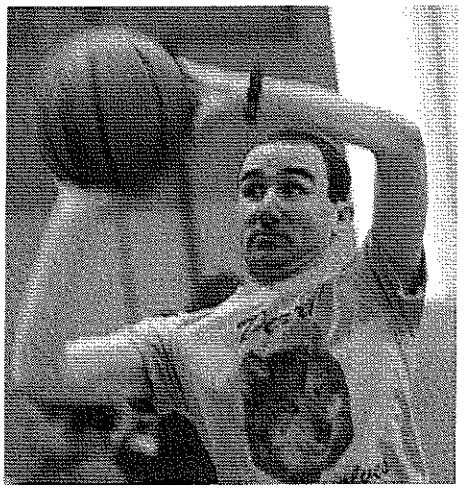


Derry Timberwolves athletes, from left, Alicia Crawford, Virginia Falabella, coach Nicole Ferrante and Clint Barry practice basketball at Veterans Hall. (1 of 2)



Dan Petrin of Derry gets ready to release the ball during practice with the Derry Timberwolves Special Olympics team. (2 of 2)