

Law enforcement community takes a dip in support of Special Olympics

BY DONNA RHODES

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LACONIA — Members of the New Hampshire Law Enforcement community joined forces last weekend for the 2018 Winni Dip where they once again fulfilled their mission of raising money for Special Olympics of New Hampshire. This year that amount was an impressive \$109,115, which will help with programs and a lot of friendly competition for those who are physically or intellectually disabled.

As serious as they are about their jobs, last Saturday was a day when Law Enforcement let it **SEE OLYMPICS PAGE A7**

all hang out however. The theme of this year's Winni Dip was "Glow Party" and before they took a quick plunge into the frigid waters of Paugus Bay in Laconia, the fun began with a costume parade in which five of the teams participated. With black lights illuminating the stage, they did their best to impress the judges with dance, a little show of muscle and some humorous costumes. The contest wound up with a tie for first place between the N.H. State Police who did a "perp walk" across the stage while dressed in jailhouse costumes and the glow-in-the-dark body suits worn by the Merrimack Police Department who boldly strutted and danced for the crowd.

As the more than 100 officers headed for the beach behind the Margate Resort to get the dip underway, they were led by WMUR's political analyst Adam Sexton, a regular participant, and New Hampshire Attorney General Gordon McDonald who was joining them for the first time.

The water was a mere 33 degrees when the first of five waves of dippers headed into the lake. They went in, got wet, then wisely raced back to the shore and headed in doors as appreciative crowds cheered them all on.

Among the local police departments that took part this year were contingencies from Laconia, Tilton and Sanbornton.

Matt Dawson of Tilton said nine members of his department signed up for the Winni Dip this year and raised approximately \$10,000 for Special Olympics.

"We enjoy doing this. It's for a great cause and it brings a lot of camaraderie to the department," Dawson said.

Sanbornton's Chief Stephen Hankard has been taking part in the dip for the past few years and was happy to have Officer Shane Morton join him. Together they raised over \$1,600 for SONH and were pleased to be part of the event. While many people wore water shoes to walk down

the snowy beach, Morton bravely went barefoot then raced out to do an impressive dive into the water. The two bumped their fists as they headed back to shore and the warmth of the resort.

"It was an experience for sure," said Morton afterward, "but it was also a lot of fun."

Wrapping up the dip each year, retired N.Woodstock Police Chief Dog Moorhead has traditionally done a belly flop into the lake. He recently had some surgery done and couldn't jump into the lake this time. Moorhead did not want to be left out though so he had two men dump buckets of lake water over his head to show his longstanding support for SONH.

As cold as it was on Saturday, nearly all the participants agreed that even with a 15 mph wind the conditions were much better than last year when the air temperature was a bone-chilling minus-17 degrees.

Lunch, speakers and awards followed the dip and guest speaker Parker Thornton, a Special Olympian, gave a special thanks to the law enforcement community for all they do each year to support SONH. He said Special Olympics has been a special blessing in his life, giving him courage



to do things he might not otherwise have done. People with intellectual disabilities, Thornton continued, are often just seen as being "different."

but New Hampshire Law Enforcement sees them as champions.

"You treat us with love, respect and kindness," he said. "Special

Olympics New Hampshire changed my life and you, Law Enforcement, make that happen. Thank you!"



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Tying with the Merrimack Police for first place in the costume parade at the 2018 Winni Dip was the New Hampshire State Police who not only did a slow "perp walk" onto the stage but also did some impressive dancing as part of their winning act.



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The Merrimack Police Department was truly in the spirit of the "Glow Party" theme at last Saturday's Winni Dip for Special Olympics New Hampshire where they tied for first place in the costume parade.



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Tilton Police (left, in white shirts and shorts) were among the 114 law enforcement officers from across the state who plunged into the icy waters of Paugus Bay for the annual Winni Dip to support Special Olympics New Hampshire.



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Due to recent surgery, retired N. Woodstock Police Chief Doug Moorhead couldn't do his traditional belly flop into Lake Winnepesaukee at last weekend's Winni Dip so he instead had buckets of lake water dumped over his head to show his support for Special Olympics New Hampshire.