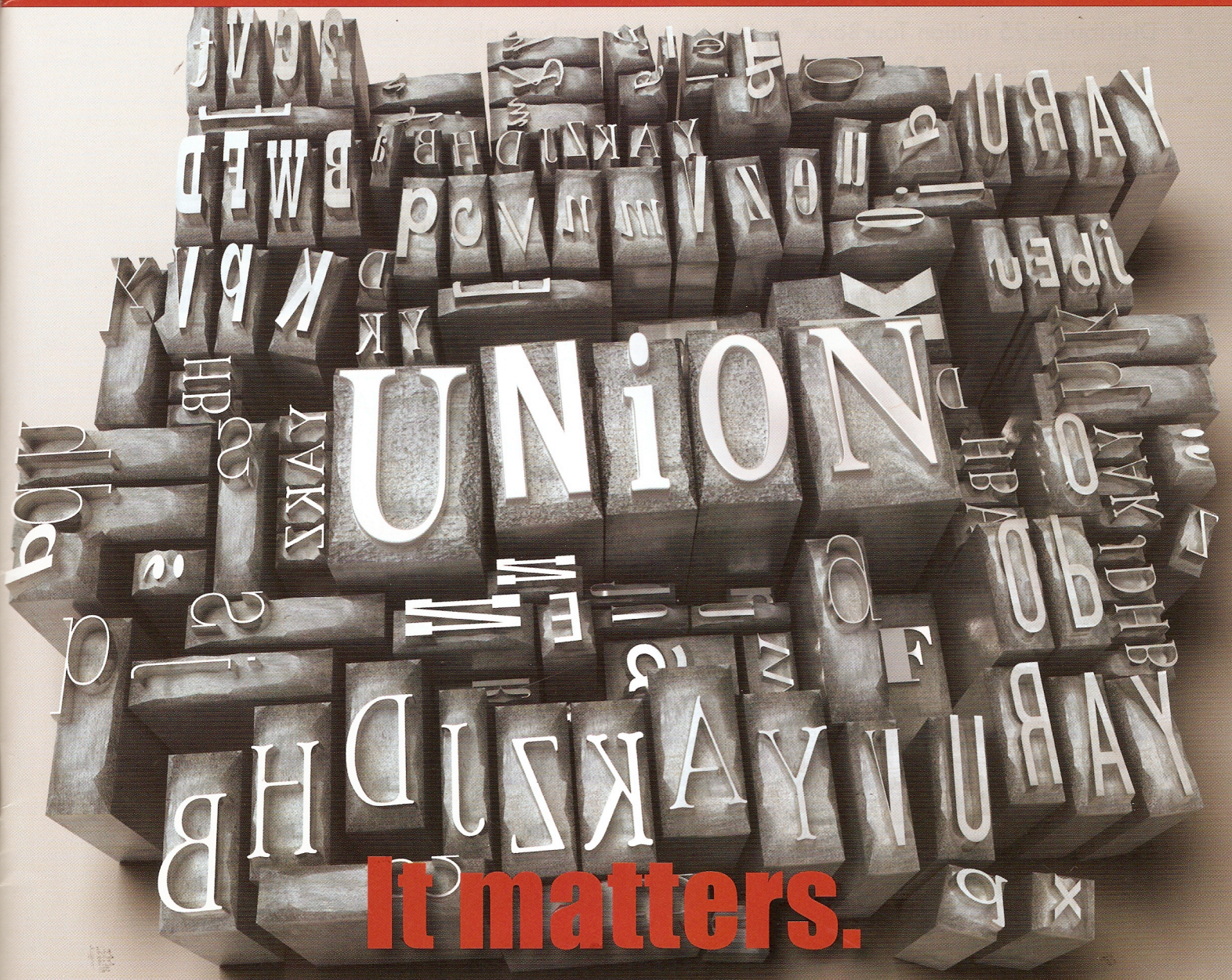


Wisconsin Police Journal



JANUARY 2010
VOL. 78, NO. 1

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN PROFESSIONAL POLICE ASSOCIATION



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Police Protection Bill

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Hard Work Pays Off for Special Olympics Wisconsin Law Enforcement Torch Run®

by Christina Harris

"The State of Wisconsin is looked at as a role model in the world of fundraising for Special Olympics," said Nick Stachula, Police Training Officer for the West Allis Police Department after he attended the recent International Law Enforcement Torch Run® Conference in Connecticut this past November.



Wisconsin's delegation at the International Law Enforcement Torch Run® Conference

Stachula's dedication to Special Olympics began nearly 10 years ago. "I was talked into running numerous miles on the way up to Stevens Point for this thing called the LETR," he said, explaining that a veteran officer from the department organized the event and recruited new officers, like him, to participate.

Nine years later, Nick is now the experienced officer convincing rookies to sign up. "After that first year participating in the LETR, I was moved and understood why we are involved in the LETR," he said. "When you see the facial expressions of the athletes as the police officers arrive at each leg, you know deep down inside why you are a part of the LETR."

This year, Stachula joined more than 1,000 law enforcement officials and Special Olympics staff from around the world at the 26th annual International LETR Conference. The group returned home with three highly-respected awards and a handful of fundraising ideas.

For the 6th consecutive year, Wisconsin's LETR earned the prestigious Diamond Level of Excellence Award for raising \$1 million, as well as a 1st place award for having the Largest Increase in Gross Revenue, a whopping \$299,297.57 increase from last year.

Special Olympics Director of Development Julie Buedding, attributed this achievement to the collaboration with law enforcement officials, "This is a team effort and everyone plays an important role in our success. Wisconsin's LETR continues to grow because of all of the wonderful law enforcement officers and organizations, like WPPA, who support our athletes."

"It's our darn Midwest work ethic!" said Officer Kurt Wege from the Town of Madison Police



Right: Martha Hill and Loretta Claiborne, the keynote speaker at the Conference; Claiborne holds honorary doctorate degrees from Quinnipiac University and Villanova University. She is the first person with an intellectual disability known to have been conferred with such academic distinctions.

Take the Plunge!

The Polar Plunge is a unique opportunity for individuals, organizations, and businesses to support local Special Olympics athletes by jumping or running into the icy waters of Wisconsin.

This year there are twelve Plunges statewide to choose from. If you're **too chicken** to make the splash, you can still participate. Sign up as "Too chicken to Plunge" or show your support by making a pledge for a braver soul.

Get your **License to Chill** and take the Plunge! Visit www.specialolympics.wisconsin.org or find us on Facebook.

Muskego Polar Plunge

January 31, 2010
Muskego County Park

Central Wisconsin Polar Plunge

February 6, 2010
Grand Rapids Lions Club

Menomonie Elk Point Plunge

February 6, 2010
Elk Point Resort

Oshkosh Polar Plunge

February 20, 2010
Menominee Park

Madison Polar Plunge

February 20, 2010
Olin Turville Park

Whitewater Polar Plunge

February 20, 2010
Cravath Lakefront Park

Wausau Polar Plunge

February 27, 2010
Sunnyvale Man Made Park

Green Bay Polar Plunge

February 27, 2010
The Watering Hole

Pleasant Prairie Polar Plunge

February 27, 2010
Lake Andrea Rec Plex

Eau Claire Polar Plunge

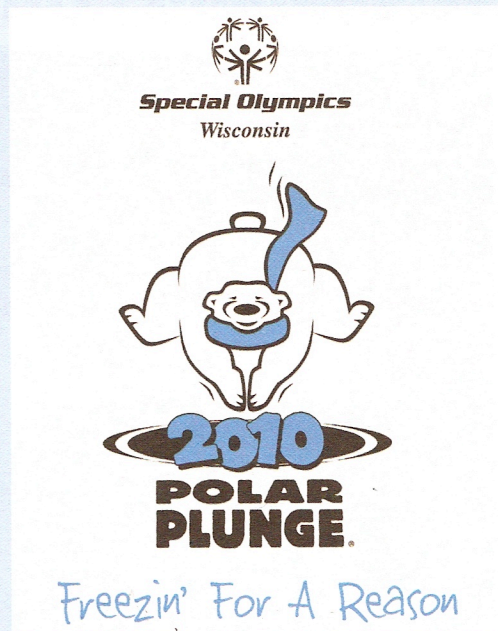
February 28, 2010
Half Moon Beach in Carson Park

Coulee Region Polar Plunge

March 6, 2010
Petitbone Beach

Milwaukee Polar Plunge

March 6, 2010
Bradford Beach



Department when asked what contributed to Wisconsin's success. "Our officers seem to become emotionally invested in events they participate in and help organize. When we begin taking ownership in events, we will do anything to see that it's a success."

With the challenging economic climate this past year, officers admitted raising money required some creative-thinking and persistence.

"Realizing money is tight for nearly everyone, attempts were made to get more people involved at lower dollar levels," said Officer Kurt Wege. "In our area, we're also seeing an increase in new donors, such as high schools, which helped boost donation figures."

Stachula added, "I think the great results in this economy resulted from two components; the hard work of the Special Olympics staff that work countless hours and are constantly brainstorming for new ideas and the great citizens of Wisconsin, who donate their time and money to a cause that they know needs to be addressed."

In addition, Special Olympics Wisconsin's program had the Fifth Highest Grossing Program internationally, raising \$1,852,998.59.

"I was shocked to hear that we were in the top five in the world. I was even more surprised that the total raised was over 1.8 million

dollars," said Stachula. According to Stachula, the awards were just one component that reignited the officer's dedication to the LETR Committee and the athletes.

"It was absolutely amazing to watch Special Olympics athletes from Connecticut confidently speak to a group of that magnitude and entertain while doing it," said Wege. "At that point I realized Special Olympics isn't just about sports it's also about encouragement and producing confident citizens."

Martha Hill, Special Olympics Athlete, Athlete Input Council Member and Law Enforcement Torch Run® Committee member said, "It's important for the other members of the Committee to hear an athlete's perspective. It's also important for the Committee to realize how important what they do is for all the athletes."

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics Wisconsin is definitely a top-notch success in the eye of many around the world including Wisconsin's 10,000 athletes who consider the states 1,000 LETR officers' absolute heroes.

"Overall, listening to the athletes and their families speak had to be one of my favorite parts," Stachula said. "One word can sum up what I took away from the presentations. MOTIVATION."