

FITNESS PAYS OFF FOR MIDDLETOWN TEACHERS

By Laura Kolnoski

For eight weeks during October and November of last year, 135 teachers on 45 teams from schools throughout Monmouth and Ocean counties participated in a "Teachers Lose It" fitness challenge at the Atlantic Club's two locations in Red Bank and Manasquan. The eventual winners were the principal and teachers of Middletown Village Elementary School on Kings Highway, who earned \$5,930 for their school. Principal Karen Zupancic and fifth grade teachers Damien Font and Susan Dzugan joined forces as "Team Village" for the club's challenge.

"The loyalty, dedication, and stamina of our staff never cease to amaze me and I've been here seven years," said Carol Farina, co-president of Middletown Village Parent Faculty Association (PFA). "Middletown Village is a very special place, with a principal and teachers who always go above and beyond. This challenge is simply more proof of that."

The Atlantic Club's fitness challenge gave points for teachers and double points for principals to check in at the club, work out in the gym, attend fitness classes, participate in evaluations, and lose weight. Team Village woke up early, stayed late, and gave up their weekend time to attend specially tailored classes led by Atlantic Club instructors. Mrs. Zupancic was one of only five principals who signed up to participate. The trio took top honors, with 593 points over the course of the challenge. Each point was valued at \$10.

In addition to the monetary donation, the Atlantic Club has given Mrs. Zupancic, Mr. Font, and Mrs. Dzugan \$100 gift cards to the Milagro Spa. The funds will be used to support additional classroom technology purchases on the teachers' wish list. The club formally presented the \$5,930 check at the PFA's January 10 meeting.

For more information about Middletown Village Elementary School, please visit: <https://sites.google.com/a/middletownk12.org/village/home>.



(Left to right): Middletown Public School Board of Education members Vinnie Brand and Chris Aveta, Atlantic Club fitness director Adam Lara and Wellness Program manager Brigitte Meinders, principal Karen Zupancic, district superintendent Dr. William O. George, fifth grade teacher Damien Font, board of education member Sue Griffin, fifth grade teacher Susan Dzugan, and board of education president Joan Minnues pose with a really big check that will help fund technology purchases at the school.

WARM WISHES TO SAINT JAMES POLAR BEAR PLUNGERS

"Many Are Cold...Few Are Frozen"

On Sunday, January 8, a group of fearless Saint James School students, parents, friends, and their own principal, Mr. William Cardone, took part in the sixth annual Polar Bear Plunge of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Sea Bright. Over 500 plungers from 24 different schools jumped into the cold water to raise money in support of Catholic education. Led by the Hibernians' bagpipers, with water temperature at a chilling 47 degrees and the air temperature at 45 degrees, these fine folks braved the cold to plunge into



(LEFT PHOTO) SJS boys show 'no fear' and were ready to take the plunge! Left to right: Troy Hill, Kyle Hill, Mr. Brian Hill, Ryan Doherty, and Jonathan Abadair (RIGHT PHOTO) Saint James Elementary School Polar Plungers cheer in front of school sign at Sea Bright.

the frigid Atlantic surf, raising over \$9,600 for Saint James School. They did something crazy, they did something they will remember, and they did something to help someone else choose a Catholic education.

Thank you to the chilled polar bears and their sponsors for a terrific plunge. Everyone had a great time — even those who managed to stay out of the water!

The Polar Plunge is an annual event sponsored by the Ancient Order of Hibernians of Monmouth County, a Catholic men's organization. The purpose of the event is to raise money for Catholic schools. The cause - Catholic education - is both a mission and a goal to the hundreds who supported and participated. The purpose is to raise money in the form of scholarships for those families who want to provide a Catholic education for their children and who need assistance with tuition.

Hosted by Merri-Makers at Water's Edge on Ocean Avenue and sponsored by Guinness, this year's event featured more than 500 plungers and more than 1,500 spectators, according to AOH member and plunge organizer Jim Shaw of Middletown, who said that all participating Catholic schools would keep 100 percent of the funds they raised. All plungers raised pledges of at least \$25 each.



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