

Welcome to the 2026 Cool School Challenge!
Friday, February 6, 2026 // 9:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.
3001 Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach // Big white tent
Contact: Izzy Nelson 804.929.2344

PLEASE READ - IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR EVENT DAY!

Special Olympics Va is not responsible for paying for parking or towing.

THOSE NOT ARRIVING BY SCHOOL BUS

- Please plan to carpool and arrive early to find parking. It is our recommendation that you park in the 31st parking garage which is connected to the Hilton (\$10).
- Additional parking is at 25th St. and at 19th lots – see the link below.
- Some on street parking is available near the Hilton; please adhere to all parking signs.
- **DO NOT PARK in a TOW ZONE or at the HAMPTON INN oceanfront - they will tow you.**
- Below is info on parking lots and fees they charge. Please note – prices can vary.
<https://www.vbgov.com/visitors/transportation-parking/Pages/beach-parking-garages.aspx>

THOSE ARRIVING BY SCHOOL BUS

- School busses can drop off students/teachers in front of the Hilton, 3001 Atlantic Ave.
- **Teachers must have a way to communicate with bus drivers, so be sure to exchange numbers.**
- After dropping students/teachers off, busses will need to park at the Virginia Beach Sports Center. Arrangements have been made with the City of Virginia Beach for school busses to park there.
- Once CSC is over, teachers should call the bus driver and everyone can be picked up in front of the Hilton.
 - **At the end of the event, please do not call your bus until you are 100% ready.** DO NOT call the bus while you are still changing/gathering your items. Once the bus is in front of the hotel you must be ready to load and free the space for another school/bus.
- The Sports Center is located at 1045 19th St. Please follow the mapped-out directions on how to unload at the Hilton, park at the Sports Center and then load back at the Hilton. Written instructions are below and a detailed set of directions with photos will also be provided.
 - **To unload at the Hilton**
 - From 264 Eastbound- Take 21st Street to Pacific Avenue. Turn **Left** onto Pacific Avenue and head North to 37th Street.
 - Turn **Right** onto 37th Street eastbound and turn **Right** onto Atlantic Avenue southbound.
 - Drive to the **Laskin Road** stoplight to unload participants.
 - **To park at the Sports Center**
 - Head SOUTH on Atlantic Ave
 - Turn RIGHT on 18th Street
 - Turn LEFT on Cypress Ave
 - Turn LEFT on 19th St
 - Continue on 19th Street past the sports center

- Turn LEFT into the Sports Center Parking Lot
 - **No Lateral Parking Back up to curb. Do not park along curb taking up multiple parking spaces**
- **To load participants at Hilton after the event**
 - Leave sports center heading **east on 19th street to Baltic Ave.**
 - Take Baltic Ave to 18th street and turn left to Pacific Ave
 - Turn left on Pacific Ave. And continue to **37th street.**
 - Turn **right on 37th street** and continue to Atlantic Ave.
 - **Turn right on Atlantic Ave.** And continue to designated pick up location
- A printed map with these instructions will be given to all bus drivers upon arrival.

SAFETY

- Special Olympics Virginia wants our participants to be safe at Cool School. If you see anything that looks suspicious or if someone looks out of place, please alert someone immediately.
- There will be members of the Virginia Beach Sheriff's Office onsite during the event.
- **Students need to stay inside the tent. All snacks and drinks will be located in the tent. No one should be leaving the tent until given the official go ahead to Plunge.**
- Students **MUST** listen to the safety briefing that takes place at approx. 12:00 pm.
- Should there be an emergency and we need to evacuate the tent, all students and teachers should go inside the Hilton to Ballrooms B & C on the second floor. There teachers will take attendance and await further instructions.
- Call Izzy if there are any incidents: 804.929.2344

TENT AND CHECK IN

- The 14,000+ sq. ft. heated tent is on the beach behind the Hilton and next to the Neptune Statue.
- Your bus will drop you off outside of the Hilton where a SOVA staff member will be waiting to greet you. They will hand you a packet of instructions and a map to share with your bus driver.
- Next, they will send you to the direction of the tent! There will be people there to greet you and help you get inside. Please stop at the table and let us know what school you are from.
 - Please turn in any checks or cash you may have at the check in table. Checks can be made to Special Olympics Virginia.
 - Send 1 teacher/chaperone representative to the table to get your check in-packet, and then the rest of the crew can head to your tables!
 - Use the check-in list inside the packet to let us know who is present and how many bibs you will need.
 - Then, have 1 representative bring that list back up to the table to turn it in and receive your bibs.

TABLES

- Tables (with a few chairs) will be clearly marked with signs.
- If you do not have enough tables, DO NOT take tables from another school, let us know and we will find you a table/s.

FOOD

- All schools will be receiving pizza! Please see the 1/23 logistics email for details on the options and number of pizzas being provided for your school.

- **For those who wanted to take the pizza back to school/eat on the bus:** As you load the bus to leave, we will hand you pizzas to cover the number of students and teachers you brought to the oceanfront. Then, feel free to eat on the bus or have a pizza party back at school!
- **For those who wanted to eat in the tent:** Pizza will be delivered around 11am to the tent for you to eat it at your tables before plunging.
- Students may also bring lunch/snacks/drinks as you please.
- NO glass or anything breakable is allowed on the beach.
- Wawa has donated cookies & brownies, Starbucks will be providing hot chocolate AND Bluebell will be giving away free ice-cream. It will all be located on tables in the tent (opposite end of the stage) and will be serve yourself.

TOWELS, SHOES & SWIMSUITS

- It is recommended that students wear a pair of socks/water shoes/old sneakers while under the tent and when they plunge.
- Please dress appropriately for cold weather - although the tent is heated it will still be cold.
- Students need to bring towels and warm clothing to put on after the plunge.
- If students choose to wear a swim suit – they need to respect others and wear swim suits that are appropriate for a family environment.
- Costumes are encouraged as there will be a costume contest!

INCENTIVES & PLUNGING

- You will receive all incentives, for those who earned them, when you arrive on Plunge Day. There will be a bag of items, and a list of who earned what, on your schools table.
- Only students who reached a fundraising goal on their page (\$100 – t-shirt, \$300 – towel & \$750 – sweatshirt) will be eligible to receive an incentive.
 - You should have received an email about transferring team funds ahead of time – no transfers will done the day of.
- While all students must have reached a goal on their page to earn incentives, Plunging eligibility is determined by the team fundraising amount.
 - For example: If a team has \$5,000 that is enough for 50 students to Plunge. We will not transfer money to individual pages but rather make sure the team average comes out to \$100 per person taking the Plunge.
 - This is in an effort to make the Plunge an accessible event for all students!

WATER WHEELCHAIRS

- There will be water wheelchairs available to any participants needing assistance entering the water. They will be lined up on the outside of the tent! Let Izzy know if you have trouble finding one.

CHANGING TENTS

- There will be 4 changing tents - 2 for girls and 2 for boys. They will be marked on the map and will have signs on them.
 - Girls – 2 in the park
 - Boys – 1 in the park and 1 on the boardwalk
- Teachers/adults must supervise students when getting into warmer clothing.
- Students need to be discreet & respectful of others while getting into warmer clothing.

PARTY IN THE TENT

- DJ Julian will be playing music from 10-12, so be ready to dance!
- SOVA athletes will host a Costume Contest.
- Just Dance on the TV screens
- **New this year:** Merchandise will be sold in the tent. Key chains, stickers, beanies and tote bags (all ranging from \$3-20). We can take cash or card onsite!
- SOVA athletes will be present to mingle and will give a speech as well.
- Fun activities like face painters, stilt walkers, balloon artists and a caricature artist and will be onsite, as well as a photo booth station!
- Snacks, ice cream and hot chocolate for all! Then pizza for those who requested it in the tent.
- Be sure to mingle and meet all of the other amazing students and teachers that share the same passion about Special Olympics that you do!

SERVICE ANIMALS

- Only identifiable service animals are allowed under the tent.

DEPARTURE

- Once students have changed from the Plunge, they should return back to their table in the tent.
- As busses start to line up, we will call each school out as their bus arrives via the DJ.
 - **REMINDER:** Do not call your bus until you are 100% ready to go. Once a bus pulls up outside the Hilton you must be ready to go and load so we can clear the space for another bus/school. So, please wait until all students are full changed, have all their items and are lined up.
- **Any students NOT riding the bus back to school and being picked up by a parent on site – please bring a list of those names with you!!**
 - This list will also need to be shared with your bus driver so they are aware of who will not be getting back on the bus before they head back to school.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- **9:30-10:30am** - Schools arrive
- **9:30-11:15am** – Tent Activities: event entertainment, activities, dancing, photo booth, ice cream, snacks and more!
- **11:15-11:30am** – Opening Ceremony and athlete speaker
- **11:30-11:50am** - Costume contest parade and awards
- **12pm** - Safety briefing with Diver Ben
- **12:15-12:20pm** - TAKE THE PLUNGE!!!
- **12:20-12:45pm** - Change and load the bus home

If you have any questions, please contact:

Izzy Nelson

inelson@specialolympicsva.org

Event day contact number: 804.929.2344 (C)