



News Release

Contact:
Jason Parent
Development and
College Relations Office
33 Edgemont Drive
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: (207) 768-2808
Fax: (207) 760-1101
jparent@nmcc.edu

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NMCC's "Freezin' Falcons" to participate in "polar dip" for good cause

Aroostook County - A team of Northern Maine Community College students and employees will travel to Pleasant Point on the coast of Downeast Maine on Friday, February 8, to take a "polar dip" into the frigid Atlantic Ocean. This annual event, featuring around 100 dippers from colleges and universities in both Maine and New Brunswick, supports Maine's Ronald McDonald House charity.

The NMCC group, appropriately named the "Freezin' Falcons" – to honor the school's mascot – will be led by Dr. William Egeler, dean of students and a veteran of past polar dips. Egeler is currently recruiting students, faculty and staff for his team, which will consist both of members who will enter the water and others who will serve as 'towellers' and watch out for the dippers during and after the swim.

"The services provided by the Ronald McDonald House to the people of Maine, and especially to the people of Aroostook County, are vital. I am pleased to participate in an activity, alongside students and employees from NMCC, that will benefit so many individuals in such a profound way," said Egeler. "Community service activities such as this not only benefit the intended recipients of the service; all who participate benefit."

Among those taking the icy plunge this year will be Lori Keith, a 2006 NMCC graduate, who is now employed in the College Bookstore. This will be Keith's fifth consecutive year participating in the polar dip. In 2004, she joined the team as a toweller. The past three years she has taken the plunge herself, and this year will participate for the second time as an employee.

"I know everyone thinks we're crazy, but it really isn't as bad as it sounds. For the dippers, our adrenaline is pumping at maximum capacity and usually the water temperature is warmer than the air temperature, so it actually feels balmy when we run in. The towellers, on the other hand, have to stand and wait for us to run in and come back out so it is very cold for them. I have been on both sides of the coin and have to admit that I would much rather be the dipper," said Keith. "I honestly do enjoy this event. We have a lot of fun doing it and it is a wonderful opportunity to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House in Bangor and show what caring, giving people we have here at NMCC."

The annual event, sponsored by the Washington County Community College student senate, has raised more than \$100,000 in the past seven years.

A new twist has been added to this year's festivities. Polar dip participants are being asked to adhere to the theme "Awesome 80's." Whether that will mean big hair and spandex is yet to be determined for the NMCC team. Egeler is looking to his fellow County dippers to bring their creativity along with their courageousness and have fun while supporting a great cause.

"The goal is to raise as much money as possible," said Egeler. "You don't have to look very far to find someone in Aroostook County who has benefited directly from the Ronald McDonald House. Over the years, I've known students, employees and friends who otherwise could not have afforded to be with their child or loved one during a most difficult time. We ask people to be as generous as they can."

To support the efforts of the NMCC "polar dip" team and contribute to the Ronald McDonald House of Maine, individuals are asked to forward donations to the NMCC student affairs office, 33 Edgemont Drive, Presque Isle, ME 04769.

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Veteran Northern Maine Community College "Polar Dippers" Dr. William Egeler (left) and Lori Keith test the temperature and check out this year's team sweatshirt as they make preparations for an annual dip into the frigid waters off Pleasant Point in Washington County on February 8. The annual dip in Downeast Maine benefits the Ronald McDonald House charity. The NMCC team is looking for both for additional participants and generous donors to support the worthwhile cause.