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Polar Dip raises record amount for Grand Valley Food Bank

Written By **Sam Odrowski**

Over 50 brave souls took the plunge into the freezing Grand River to ring in the new year on Jan. 1.

And those participants ensured that the Grand Valley Lions 33rd Annual Polar Dip saw a record amount of money raised, with $5,709 going to the Grand Valley Food Bank.

?It was an excellent day,? said Randy McClelland, Lion Club member who helps organize the annual event. ?There was no ice on the river this year and everybody seemed to have a good time.?

With 51 people registered to take part in the polar dip, McClelland said there's a growing number of dippers participating each year. In particular, there have been more young people joining in on the New Year's Day fun.

?They come back, and they're repeating it each year. They see that it's a fun event, and raises some money for a good cause,? McClelland noted.

Last year was the first polar dip since 2020 due to the pandemic. The event had 48 participants and raised $5,337.50 for the Grand Valley Food Bank.

Prior to the pandemic, around 30-40 people would participate.

McClelland said he'd like to thank the many volunteers and community members contributing to the polar dip's success each year.

?We'd like to thank our community for supporting it. Obviously, it's not just the Lions Club doing it; it's a whole community that is working hard to make it happen,? he noted.

The Grand Valley Lions Club holds several fundraisers throughout the year to enable their charitable donations to other not-for-profits like the Little Lions Learn to Skate program, Grand Valley 85 Air Cadets Squadron, Grand Valley Food Bank, and Headwaters Health Care Centre.

Coming up next is the Grand Valley Lions Krispy Kreme donut fundraiser, with prepaid orders being accepted up until Jan. 21. The glazed donuts are $12 for a dozen and can be reserved by emailing randymcc@rogers.com. Pick-up is at the Grand Valley Arena's south entrance at 90 Main St. N, Grand Valley, from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Jan. 25.

Proceeds from the donut fundraiser will go towards the Grand Valley Air Cadets and the Grand Valley Lions Club. For more information, call McClelland at 519-943-5471.

Looking further ahead, the Grand Valley Lions Annual Duck Race is taking place on May 25. Tickets will launch in the spring and be available at the Orangeville Lions Home Show from Apr. 5 to 7.