

From the Mayor's Desk...March 1, 2012

As many of you are aware, this Saturday is the Irvington Recreation & Parks Department sponsored "Penguin Plunge" or "The Hudson River Shiver" for the poets reading this e-mail. While the first goal of this note is simply to alert you to this wonderful event, I would like to go further and use this event to point out a pleasant, albeit unexpected, trend.

Over the past four years, the Recreation & Parks Department budget has been reduced by nearly a quarter million dollars (or nearly 20% of their budget). With last year's cut amounting to more than \$100,000, the Department was faced with a choice: they could either drastically cut the programing they were going to offer or they could increase revenue, largely through fundraising, to be able to continue running its many programs and special events. At my urging, a group of dedicated volunteers came together with Department staff to save the programing and special events that were marked for elimination. With that, the Fundraising and Community Events (or FACE) Committee was born. The Penguin Plunge is the FACE Committee's first major fundraising effort.

Frankly, it would have been easier for the FACE Committee members to go door to door, asking for donations to support their worthy cause. Instead they chose to turn a simple fundraising idea into a community-wide event that will surely garner much attention and, hopefully, much needed funds. Why else would hundreds of people willingly stand with their neighbors on the shores of the Hudson River in the middle of the winter? Not only will the funds raised from this event save many worthy programs and special events, but we now have a *new* special event to bring us together. That's the trend I see, and I like it!

I, along with many of our neighbors, will be "taking the plunge" this Saturday, March 3rd. Please show your support for our efforts by visiting www.irvingtonplunge.com. You'll find all the details there, including a very easy way to "Click & Pledge." Even if you cannot make a donation, I hope we will see you at Matthiessen Park this Saturday at 11:30 a.m. for what should be a great new tradition...A new tradition that will help us to fund, and thus keep, other traditions that make Irvington so special.

Brian C. Smith, Mayor
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