

Big bucks raised for district groups

BY RON WOLF

THE Fort Frances annual Polar Plunge was an icy success as \$13,585 was raised by more than 40 brave souls who dove into the frigid water behind La Place Rendez-Vous on New Year's Day.

The event was sponsored by the Voyageur Lions Club.

Jim Martindale, event founder and club member, collected the most money — \$1,810. Muskie Sports Association was awarded as top group fundraiser — \$1,175. **Maureen Hahlala** sported the best costume when she dove into the water dressed up as a scarecrow.

Special Olympics, Knox United Church Group, Ronald McDonald House, the Rainy River District Festival of the Performing Arts, the Sunset Country Squash Club and Dancemakers are just some of the groups who will benefit from the fundraiser.

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Princess Lillian Gibbins of Big Island First Nation is the Rainy River District's first baby of the year.

Congratulations went out to proud parents **Jocelyn Gibbins** and **Ryan Big George**.

Their third child made her debut at 2:33 a.m. on Jan. 3 at La Verendrye Hospital in Fort Frances.

She came into the world about a week early but weighed in at seven pounds, 13 ounces.



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...
Aaron Petrin of Fort Frances will spend two weeks in the Republic of Fiji, but it won't be a vacation.

Petrin, a fourth-year commerce student at the University of Manitoba, was accepted for the Volunteer Eco Students Abroad (VESA) service learning project in July. Thirty students will be helping to restore access to running water in a remote village. Building a school and teaching English to the young will also be on the agenda.

While studying the country, Petrin discovered that the human poverty index in Fiji is about twice as high as Canada's, and that education would be a big help for the population to get those numbers down.

Petrin has to pay for the trip himself, and fundraising events will take place in February in Fort Frances to help him out.

Ron Wolf's column appears every other Tuesday.