



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact

Tara Perkins, Director of Public Relations, PostScript, Inc.
444 South Union Street, Burlington, VT 05401
802.863.2568, ext. 11 / tara@postscriptinc.com

ChillyLYNX[®] Crew Takes Plunge Again for Special Olympics Vermont!

SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT—Jeff LaBonte, Branch President and Leader of the ChillyLYNX[®] Crew announced Merchants Bank's sponsorship of, and participation in, the 2007 Penguin Plunge. This will be the eighth year of sponsorship and the sixth year of staff participation for Merchants Bank. Approximately 14 employees and their family members are ready to brave the icy waters for Special Olympics Vermont.

"The cause keeps us warm," says LaBonte. "I don't go near the water in the summer time, but for Special Olympics Vermont, I'll jump in the lake in the middle of winter!" he continued.

Now, in its 12th year, the Burlington Penguin Plunge is one of the major fundraisers for Special Olympics Vermont whose mission is: "To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community."

The Burlington Penguin Plunge is part of the 15th Annual Burlington Winter Festival, which features the Penguin Plunge, held in Lake Champlain and on the shores of Burlington's Waterfront Park, and other activities, including: ice sculptures on Church Street in Downtown Burlington and a Kids' Expo at Burlington's Echo Center. Other Penguin Plunges in conjunction with Special Olympics Vermont are held in Newport and Bennington, Vermont. The Burlington Penguin Plunge is scheduled for 11am, Saturday, February 10.

For more information, please call (802) 863-5222, extension 106, email nboulangier@vtso.org or visit www.vtso.org. You may also contact Burlington Parks and Recreation Department by calling (802) 864-0123 or visiting www.enjoyburlington.com

The continuing mission of Merchants Bank is to provide Vermonters with a state-wide community bank that blends a strong technology platform with a genuine appreciation for local markets. It fulfills this commitment through a branch-based system that includes 36 community bank offices and 43 ATMs throughout Vermont, Personal Bankers dedicated to top-quality customer service, and streamlined products: FreedomLYNX[®] Banking, which consists of Free Checking for Life[®], a low cost Money Market Account, Free Online Banking and Bill Pay, Overdraft Coverage, Direct Deposit, Free Debit Card and Free Automated Phone Banking; TimeLYNX[®] Flexible Certificates of Deposit; AutoLYNX[®] Vehicle Loans; HomeLYNX[®] Home Equity Loans and Lines of Credit; RealLYNX[®] Residential Mortgages; CommerceLYNX[®] Business Banking; and Q-LYNX Quick Decision Business Loans. For more information about Merchants Bank, visit mbvt.com. Merchants' stock is traded on the NASDAQ National Market system under the symbol MBVT. Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.