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Abington residents spearhead New Year's swim for good cause

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Courtesy Photo

Brave souls jumping into the Atlantic Ocean on New Year's Day in an event started by Abington residents.

By **Mikaela Slaney**
Wicked Local Abington
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died of cancer in September of 2007, and Deborah Landers Fraser, Brooke's mother, who also died of cancer in 1997 after a five-year battle.

Brooke and Bryan Woodford, who are Abington residents, created the jump in 2004.

"We do it every New Year's," Jennifer said Tuesday. "It was actually the biggest turnout we've had in terms of jumpers. I think they were joking that because the weather was so nice. I think they started the Facebook page,

and my boyfriend started a website, but the publicity got around and it was definitely the biggest year in terms of people jumping in. There was a pretty big crowd."

She added it's difficult to estimate how much this year's jump raised because donors continue to bring in checks for several weeks after the event, though she believes the total was at an estimated \$6,200 as of Tuesday night.

"It's important to Brooke and I because it's a memorial to our moms and we're donating money to cancer research, so it's personal to us," O'Brien said. "For everyone else it's a fun thing to jump in the ocean and raise money. It's fun, and it's not as cold as you'd think it would be, or as hard as you think it would be."

Abington — It wasn't what most people think of as a beach day, but at least the weather was clear as more than 20 people ran into the Atlantic Ocean, some in bathing suits—some in other interesting outfits —on New Years Day.

"I wore a bridesmaid dress from one of my friend's weddings," said Jennifer O'Brien, 28, a Hanover resident and Abington native.

At the shore of Rexhame Beach in Marshfield, dressed as Woody from the movie, "Toy Story," Bryan "Woodie" Woodford reminded his fellow jumpers of why they were there. His wife, Brooke was by his side.

Since 2004, the annual jump has raised close to \$26,000, without taking into account last week's earnings, to raise money through sponsorship for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, held every year in Abington.

This is the seventh annual jump and this year it was named, "Deb and Jackie's Jolly Jump" after Jennifer's mother, Jackie O'Brien who



Jennifer's boyfriend—John Waters of Hanover—and their friend, Jake Poulin, an Abington native, decided to hold a contest while in the frigid Atlantic Ocean waters.

"It was a \$20 bet and I think they were both in the same amount of time, about four minutes," Jennifer said.

After the participants jumped in, they went out for pizza at Venus in Marshfield.

For more information visit www.debsjollyjump.com or email debsjump@yahoo.com.

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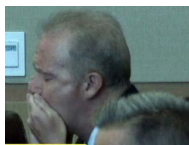
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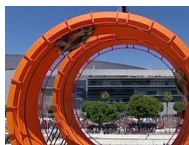
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