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FDU(A) marks silver anniversary with Christmas Daddies

By *Lt(N) Edward Stansfield*
JTFA PAO

For the 25th consecutive year more than 60 members of the Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic) (FDU(A)), along with family members and volunteers, took to the road in support of this year's Christmas Daddies on Sunday, December 6.

The Fleet Divers touched every major city centre as they made their way from 12 Wing Shearwater through Dartmouth, Sackville, Bedford and into central Halifax for the final cheque presentation at CTV's Robie Street Studio. FDU(A)'s grand total of money raised this year is \$44,756.55.

PO2 Gordon Williamson is the coordinator of this year's event. When asked why FDU(A) has remained so committed to running 50km in the winter for Christmas Daddies, he said "We are divers... it is bred into us, through all our training, to stick with a project no matter how tough it is."

The work started months earlier in September with tasks that included arranging road permits, working with sponsors like McDonalds, Basha Pizza and Tim Hortons, designing shirts and securing a slew of volunteers to collect donations took months of planning, but it paid off for needy children in Atlantic Canada.



Divers from FDU(A) run 50km as a Christmas Daddies fundraiser.

The funds they raised came from donations collected along the relay route and the annual auctioning of a Mark Five diving helmet with Big Leagues making the winning bid. FDU(A)'s contribution is more than five per cent of the \$827,700 total raised by Christmas Daddies this year.

"That money helps a lot of people and if we don't help raise that money a lot of people don't get help over the holidays," said PO2 Williamson, adding that the runners, volunteers and donors get as much benefit as the needy children who directly benefit from donations. "I believe that everyone has been touched in some way by the great things Christmas Daddies stands for."

The annual FDU(A) participation started in 1984 as a challenge among three divers, and the unit never looked back. History, pride and determination keep the Christmas Daddies close to the hearts of FDU(A) participants and their families, helping evermore needy families in Atlantic Canada.

"Every person that shows up on the first Sunday in December is a champion," said PO2 Williamson. "There are a few that have run the entire 50km several times but they are no more champions than the people that count the change on the bus or drive the vehicles. Everyone that participates does it for their own reasons and just the fact that they are there makes them all champions."

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