

Ideas and Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion in local USMS programs

Short Title:

Adult To Learn Swim Graduation/Competition

Description:

A few weeks ago at our Dixie Zone Championship in Greenville, SC, the local team (Greenville Splash) had a recent ALTS graduate participate. He is a Hispanic young man who had never swam before in his entire life. He took a few ALTS classes and with some encouragement and support from the instructors, he was signed up and swam the 50m Freestyle! The local team did an amazing job to make sure he was comfortable – he swam in a heat all by himself, in a lane closest to a wall, and went off the block! In an act of true Masters Swimming culture, ALL swimmers on deck (and fans) stood and lined the pool to clap and cheer him on!

What Worked/What Didn't:

What worked:

The team was able to encourage him to participate – this is a HUGE hurdle. With the right confidence in the water, he wanted to try swimming in a meet. By having him swim in a heat by himself, it removed the fear of swimming against other swimmers.

What didn't work:

Nothing. The only watch-out is to make sure they feel comfortable whether swimming by themselves or alone. Many folks might worry/feel too self-conscious swimming all alone with everyone watching. To address this once we get ALTS graduates to sign up for a meet, we make sure they know exactly what is going to happen and talk through any concerns or potential fears on their end.

How does this strategy promote diversity and inclusion?

Many of the participants in ALTS are ethnically and racially diverse. Providing them the tools to feel comfortable in the water with a goal to reach will keep them engaged, coming back for more lessons, and once they accomplish that goal, the sense of pride is priceless. All the while, their story will be shared amongst friends and family, potentially leading to more ALTS (and meet) participants from all backgrounds!

Local Contact Person:

Leslie Scott – Greenville Splash | Greenville, SC

Diversity and Inclusion Committee



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Cesar Valera, Burlingame Aquatic Club, Pacific LMSC
110 members (60% female), 90% Caucasian, 5% Asian, 5% Hispanic

Coach Interviewed: Cesar Valera

Interviewed by D and I Committee Member Sarah Welch

Cesar coaches at Burlingame Aquatic Club and has his own Triathlon coaching business as well as being a trainer and fitness coach to support primarily triathletes of all levels from novice to profession competitors.

He has some diversity in his masters program and does not advertise but relies on word of mouth, bringing friends and having a great time at practice. His swimmers roughly are 60% masters swimmers who've been swimming since they were young and 40% who come because they're attempting a triathlon or training for an advanced triathlon. The Bay Area has growing diversity and many second-generation Asian swimmers participated in their USA-S team and are migrating to masters.

Cesar likes working with Triathletes and has a lot to offer being a former professional at a high level. His multi-sport coaching business and background is a real plus with these athletes when they come to the masters program.

Cesar finds that it's the experience of doing a first Triathlon that brings diverse athletes to his group rather than the idea of becoming a masters swimmer. The program is a means to meet their goal of the Triathlon. He finds people who haven't been exposed to any sport growing up think about doing a beginner Triathlon. Then they join his masters group to try to get a handle on the swimming part. He admits it's harder to teach older folks to master the swimming. These newcomers may be proficient biker/runners, but do not have the swimming skill to even compete in an event. They come to him quite intimidated by the thought of swimming. The BAC has adult lessons in a series of three levels so, depending on their ability and confidence, he will refer newcomers to the lesson program. After a while they can transition into masters swimming.

His group doesn't compete in meets; they do some open water swimming to prepare for an event. His primary goal with his masters group is to have fun and build their skills. He uses a variety of techniques such as drills and technology to help with training. He finds videos particularly helpful for small group training and feedback.

Currently the Burlingame pool is being renovated, so his group does some open water and a few days with a few lanes in a nearby pool.



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Chris Campbell, Mtn. View Masters

Interviewed by D & I Committee Member: Jeff Commings

Chris Campbell is the head coach of Mountain View Masters, nestled in the heart of Silicon Valley in California. He's been the coach there for nearly 20 years, making the move from a largely white population in rural Illinois.

"I remember coming from an age-group club that was all-white," Campbell said. "One of the big things one year was having an exchange student from Brazil."

The team is one of the largest in the country, with more than 240 registered members that have 16 workout times available seven days a week. Their sole training location, Eagle Park Pool, is an eight-lane 25-yard pool.

As one might expect for a Silicon Valley-area swim team, Mountain View Masters has one of the widest ranges of swimmers from various ethnic backgrounds. According to the diversity survey, only half the team identifies as Caucasian. The largest ethnic group on the team, according to Campbell's responses on the survey, is Asian (20 percent of membership).

"It's a remarkable melting pot here in Silicon Valley," Campbell said. "It's about as diverse as you can get in terms of ethnicities."

Mountain View Masters isn't the only Masters team in the city of 80,000 residents, but Campbell said he does next to nothing to promote the team, and most find their way on deck through word of mouth or Internet searches. That also means there's very little work that needs to be done to bring in swimmers of diverse backgrounds onto the team.

"We take it for granted that we don't have to recruit (different ethnic groups)," he said. "That's just the population that comes to see us."

Though it's not difficult bringing prospective athletes to the pool deck, Campbell says he promotes an environment of inclusion to make sure the new swimmers stay. No one is made to feel uncomfortable because of the color of their skin or social background. Once in the pool, they are immediately welcomed and made a part of the group. Everyone is there to swim, Campbell said, and if there is any degree of prejudice or racism on the team, he barely notices it.

"When I look in the pool, I don't see ethnic groups anymore," Campbell said. "I see swimmers. All we want to do is manage the different goals and motivations of a pool full of people. That's where we have to work really hard. Other than that, we don't care who people are. We just put them in a lane and go from there."



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Dai (Caucasian)
Perfect Fit Cycling and Triathlon (Virginia)
20 members, 70% female
1 African-American, 2 Hispanic, 1 Asian, 1 Swiss, 1 Brit
1 who is 5'7", 230# being coached for half-ironman

Coach Interviewed: Dai Roberts, Owner & Head Coach, Dai Roberts Group
(757) 752-6569

Interviewed by D & I Committee Member, Carol Nip

This bike service and repair business serves the customer by offering coaching on all aspects of triathlon. Their \$100 annual fee gives their members access to all group workouts – one open water swim, four bike rides and two runs each week.

Dai Roberts specializes in beginners who come in all shapes, height, weight and sizes, hoping to teach them the ropes of triathlon. He is so persuasive that he talked me into becoming a triathlete – even though I never run more than a quarter mile at my age. Triathlon has been a middle-aged Caucasian sport, but now women and kids are entering this field in growing numbers. With this growth, African-American, Asian and Hispanic women are included.

Coach Roberts does nothing to diversify his clientele, but he is certainly inclusive when it comes to teaching swim in open water. This is where USMS is helpful to him as he offers clinics. Through USMS materials, athletes get a much better understanding of what it means to swim. He helps to run open water activities at the beach in his area from May to the end of September.

People coming into this sport are in their 30's, 40's and 50's with a background in running or some swimming, but little background in biking. He is proud to have coached his wife who is still frightful of biking, but she has achieved the half ironman, an 8-hour trek in her sixties. Dai believes the term “ralking” originated with his group to describe what his wife does, what older runners do.

When it comes to asking questions and learning, women are the ones asking for help. Men don't ask. By the time they get to ironman, an athlete may stop getting coached. “The successful ones get coached continually,” Dai emphasized. He provides structure, knowledge in each skill, motivation and accountability, taking note of their Garmin updates.

Most rewarding to Dai is coaching the obese person who comes to him for help, no matter their racial background, and to achieve together what they thought was impossible. We can diversify and include overweight people in America as this is where the health crisis in our country really is.



Ideas and Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion in local USMS programs

Short Title:

Diversity and Inclusion Mission Statement

Description:

A D&I committee member mentioned on one of our calls that they were at a swim meet where a statement of diversity and inclusion was given after the National Anthem, prior to the start of the meet.

This could be a good practice to include at meets in order to reach swimmers, coaches, volunteers, and spectators to make swimming more approachable for adults as a whole.

This is also scalable...maybe it's not a statement at the meet, but rather, it's included in the meet info. Additionally, this could also be scaled to the team level and shared on social media, team website, newsletters, etc.

What Worked/What Didn't:

What worked:

I think implementing this is fairly easy. Make the statement your own voice and hold true to morals that guide your team.

What didn't work:

Might be difficult to include as part of the meet entry form – would people read it?

How does this strategy promote diversity and inclusion?

It provides guardrails and a strategy for cultivating a culture of diversity and inclusion. When you implement it and your D&I Mission Statement to help guide decision making, how folks engage with each other, and place importance on it, that's when the magic happens where D&I suddenly isn't something that needs to be called out, but rather, is engrained in everyone without a second thought.

Local Contact Person:

Janelle Munson-McGee – NE LMSC

Diversity and Inclusion Committee



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Kevin Majoros, Treasurer, treasurer@swimdcac.org, 410-382-7205
DCAC Aquatics Club, Washington, D.C.

www.swimdcac.org

145 members (normally 200 members), 50% male/50% female
5% African-American, 10% Asian, 15-20% Latino

Diversity Committee Interviewer Carol Nip

DCAC was formed in 1987 as a gay water polo and swim team. As an eight-year old team, they were cheered as IGLA's 1995 world champions in Montreal.

Consistent with the interview is their mission. "DCAC is a high-energy swim team and social club whose mission is to promote swimming for fitness, health and wellness and competition for the LGBT community and their allies in a team-oriented, coached setting. Whether you are looking to make friends, get in a great workout, or compete against top swimmers from throughout the region, the nation or the world, DCAC is the team for you. All ages and ability levels welcome."

At six 90-minute practices a week (4 evening, 2 morning) in four different locations, everyone can be found: trans, gay, straight, men, women, younger and older swimmers, former Olympians and newbies. LGBT-based, but very diverse, DCAC attends both gay and straight meets.

To build youth into the team, DCAC actively recruits Under 30 swimmers by offering scholarships. For example, instead of paying \$175/quarter, a 22-year old swimmer pays \$125. When that swimmer applies for the pool scholarship, the cost drops to \$50/quarter. DCAC wants youth on their team. 75% of their budget is a combination of coaching salaries and pool fees so fundraising is important.

DCAC actively participates in community events such as Beer Gardens and Dunk Booth to raise funds. They will also reach out to the 35 people interested in Try Masters Swimming. Their big meet is at IGLA Worlds June 24, and they host an OW race in July.

Of their eight coaches, three are USMS certified. The others are USAS coaches, some of whom work at Nation Capital's Swim Club where Katie Ledecky trained.

DCAC is located in a progressive city, and this team reflects the values of Washington, D.C.



Update Diversity Task Force

Submitted by Sarah Welch

The Diversity Task Force continues to work on the objectives from the Strategic Plan adopted by the BOD in July 2017. For 2018 our focus has been 'developing resources'. Primarily our work this year has been to complete a survey of USMS coaches.

Strategic Area: Developing Resources: The purpose of the survey was to generate a list of coaches who, on the surface, are making a difference and/or have a complement of swimmers of color on their groups. The survey gathered information about racial/ethnic participation among the coaches' clubs as well as the diversity of the coaches themselves. It was not an opinion poll. Our goal was to keep it simple for our purpose. I'm sharing some the results with the Board. The interviews by the Task Force members are ongoing.

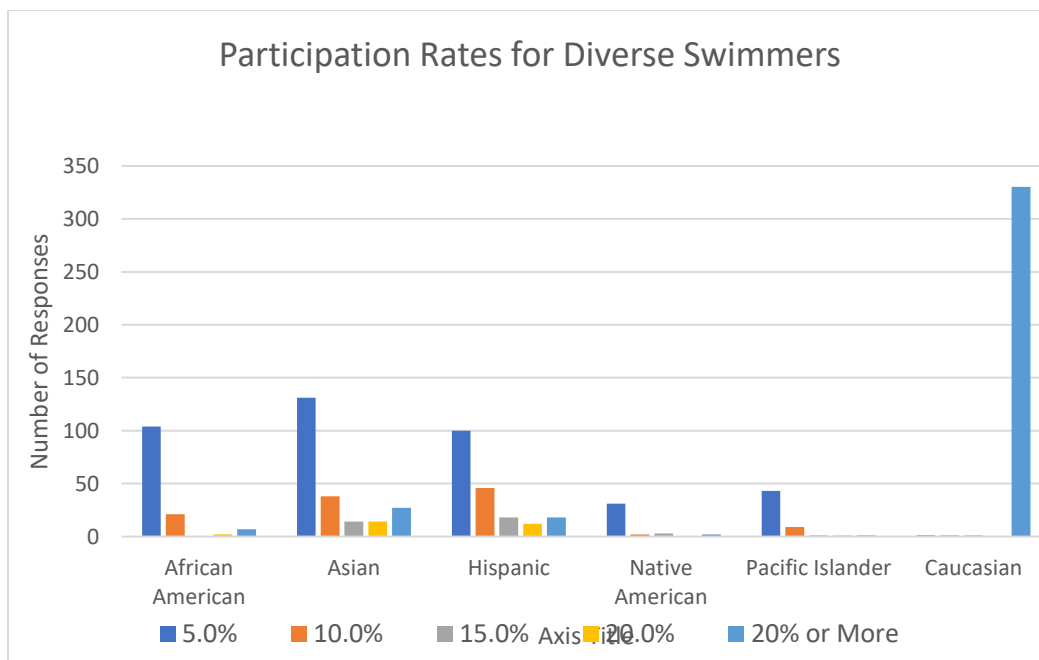
1. Who Participated?

407 people responded to the survey. Of these, 84% or 340 respondents answered the questions regarding the diversity of the coach and the diversity of their swimmers. All LMSC's were represented in the survey and, using an average club size, we extrapolated that approximately 30% of our members were covered by the survey responses. Some clubs had more than one coach respond and we eliminated duplicate club responses where we could. Responses were primarily from coaches, although some club board members and aquatics directors responded for the club.

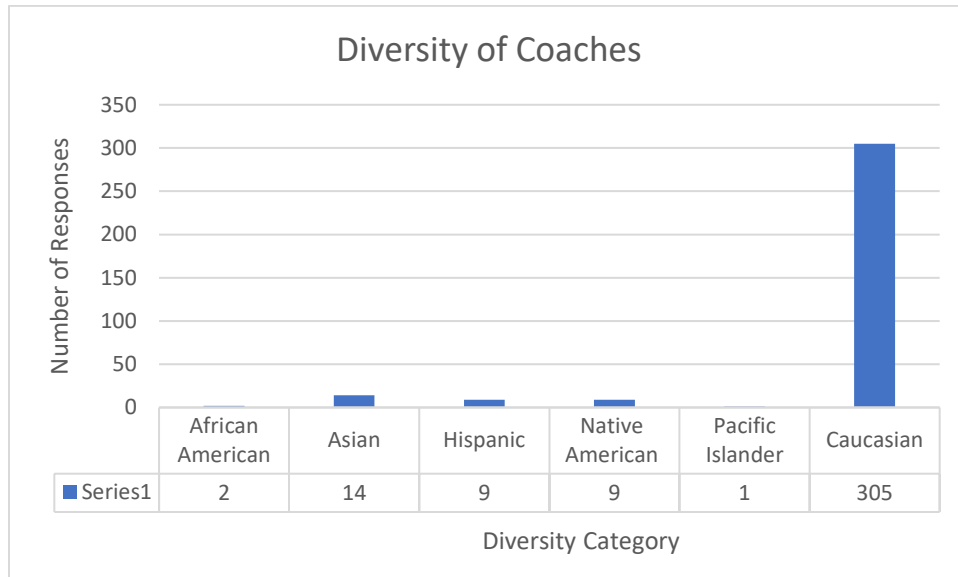
2. What did we learn?

Many clubs have some diversity AND

The level or percent of diverse swimmers is most often 5% of the club or less.



We have some diversity amongst USMS coaches



3. Themes from Interviews and Next Steps

As we work through our interviews with about 20 coaches who are coaching a diverse club, some themes are emerging. Again, these are anecdotal responses from a small group, but the task force members find these themes consistent with our work on diversity.

- Coaches of color on deck make a difference to attracting swimmers of color. Especially if these swimmers are new to the sport the intimidating factor can be insurmountable and finding a coach on deck who is a person of color can be re-assuring.
- Especially for Hispanic and African-American/Black swimmers, participation in Triathlons is their point of access to seek out a masters program
- Learn to swim and adult lesson programs are a way to attract swimmers, however, just a small number from adult lessons join a masters group. Most coaches interviewed cited the availability of adult lessons and learn to swim programs as a factor of attracting and/or retaining swimmers of color. They also attribute a low rate of transition to masters as due to the large gap between learning to swim and joining a club. They see 'bridges' between programs as critical.
- Asian swimmers, especially 2nd and 3rd generation Asians are more often than other swimmers of color to come from a high school or age group swimming background when compared to other ethnic groups (Hispanic, African-American, Native American or Pacific Islander). Hispanic and African American swimmers generally are newer to the sport and have learned to swim as adults.
- Some of the programs with higher percentages of swimmers of color are smaller programs. These coaches reported that being small they are subject to external impacts to their programs (such as closures or moving hours) that they believe would not be experienced as much by the larger clubs.

The task force is wrapping up the interviews with coaches and will write up responses. The goal is to learn from these interviews to provide resources to all clubs and LMSC's as part of our strategic plan.

Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Donita Flecker, Head Coach

Sebastopol Masters Aquatic Club (SMAC)

22 USMS registered members

80% Caucasian, 20% LGBTQ, 10% Australian, 10% Native American, 10% Canadian, 10% Malaysian

Diversity Committee Interviewer: Carol Nip

Donita Flecker started Sebastopol Masters Aquatic Club (SMAC) in 2012. Donita worked at the facility as a lifeguard, offering swim lessons, then coaching age group kids. When her boss asked her to coach masters twice each week, it was “masters practice” unaffiliated with USMS. Donita built the group by recruiting lap swimmers. Soon, the team officially became sanctioned when swimmers wanted to form their own identity and swim for Sebastopol.

What made recruitment easy was lifeguarding on a daily basis, but Donita no longer guards. Instead, swimming is marketed through the involvement of their masters swimmers in a free local community programs, such as “Vamos a Nadar” (Let’s Go Swimming). This involves teaching the predominantly Hispanic community about swim, a solution to the problem of frequent drowning in the nearby Russian River. Swim lessons for kids and water safety training for parents is offered year-round, rotating through different facilities in the area.

Although sheltered from competitive swimming as a child, Donita loved the family events at the lake and swimming in backyard pools. It never occurred to her that she could compete. It wasn’t until she took swim classes in college and joined the junior college swim team that she discovered the joys of competitive swimming.

Nowadays, Donita competes with SMAC, fondly racing in back-to-back “SMAC attack relays.” At the 2019 Pacific Masters SCY Championships, her team placed 17th out of 50 teams, an accomplishment for a small team. Donita hopes to live the dream of learning and growing her skills, working many years as a coach. She looks up to Stu Kahn of Davis Aquatic Masters and Marcia Benjamin of Marcia’s Enthusiastic Masters of Oakland, her heroes of the sport and great coaches in Pacific Swimming.



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Jennifer Brehob (Caucasian) – one of the coaches
Head coach, YNS (Massachusetts)
110 members, 75% male
5% African-American, 35% Asian, 10% Hispanic

Diversity Committee Interviewer: Carol Nip

Caitlyn Clark (Caucasian), Head Masters Coach, YNS (Massachusetts)
<https://www.teamunify.com/team/neynssmt/page/home>

Recognized by the New England LMSC, YNS of Massachusetts is YMCA of the North Shore. This team has seven USA-S coaches working with their 400 age-group swimmers, and eight masters coaches for their 110 masters swimmers on their roster. Both groups schedule workouts at six different locations with several master coaches also working with age-group swimmers.

Caitlyn's background is in USAS swimming. She has coached masters for three years, including experience as Head Masters Coach over the past year. YNS offers 22 coached masters workouts each week. She agrees with the statistics collected about their masters swimmers - 75% male, 5% African American, 35% Asian and 10% Hispanic.

Both the USAS and USMS coaching staff is Caucasian, with the exception of two masters coaches (in the past), one African American and the other East Indian. Coaching certification for their masters team was never a priority, and only in the last month, Caitlyn pursued certification as a USMS coach. She is the only certified masters coach on the team. Additionally, their swimmers are generally not USMS members, wondering why there is a fee and are "scared" of the cost for USMS membership.

YNS develops diversity and inclusion at their Sunday workout, open to all masters swimmers, in an 8-lane, 25-yard pool. Typically, there are 25 participants. To build inclusion, YNS hosted a small masters meet in 2019 with 35 participants. It was run as a "recognized" meet, not USMS registered. Parents of kids on their USAS swim team and lap swimmers participated in that meet. It was the first of its kind in several years. On a smaller scale, team socials encompass going to coffee or dinner after workout. Diversity and inclusion is also encouraged by one of Caitlyn's masters staff members, Coach Jennifer, their strongest recruiter who reaches out to everyone with energy, passion and 20 years of experience with masters swimming – she does a great job to adapt the workouts to include nationally ranked swimmers, triathletes and new members on the team.



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Caitlyn thinks their masters team is lucky that a large YMCA “happened” upon them. These days, however, their masters team is trying to be a part of the community by acting more as a stand-alone swim team, not just a part of the YMCA. They’ve recently updated their website. In the past, they may have struggled to become a competitive masters team as their swimmers were not challenged.



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Marty Hendrick is the head coach of Swim Fort Lauderdale (SFTL), a 300+ member USMS club with multi-faceted diversity at all levels.

Diversity Committee Interviewer: Sarah Welch

Marty Hendrick is the head coach of **Swim Fort Lauderdale (SFTL) in Ft. Lauderdale**, a dynamic urban community. Marty works for the City of Fort Lauderdale and has been the head coach there for 18 years, after a successful career as a human resources manager. He has several assistant coaches ranging from 20 to just a few hours a week. His program has 367 registered masters swimmers all of who are required to join USMS to participate. At any one time his program includes about 200 swimmers.

“I have every type of diversity on my club. These days I’m working on being inclusive to a diverse number of non-English speaking swimmers....from Russia and eastern Europe’. I’m also working to provide services to swimmers with severe mental and physical challenges within the context of a swim team.

‘My club is certainly less diverse than our city population which has been named the most diverse city in Florida. Compared to some other USMS programs we have substantial Hispanic and black swimmer participation. I’m an openly gay coach and make that fact known, so many members of the LGBTQ community participate with us because they know they are welcome. We have every facet of diversity at SFLT.’”

When new swimmers come to SFLT, Marty pairs them with another swimmer to support them. Frequently, language is a challenge and Marty draws on his members to help translate ‘swimming terms’. Marty had to learn that a direct translation of our masters terminology doesn’t make sense. He’s had to figure out that ‘leaving on the top’ and ‘descend’ don’t easily translate! He relies on lane mates to help new swimmers get oriented and comfortable. He can also use ‘google translate’ for example with a Russian speaking swimmer where he had no ready translator available.

Marty is fortunate to have the expansive Hall of Fame pool to work in with 16 SCY lanes and 10 long course lanes. Every practice he offers 3 basic groups with sub-groups. Initially, he had Groups 1, 2, and 3 but those groups/speeds didn’t meet everyone’s needs. Then he added group 0 and 1 ½ to reflect the speed/intensity differences. All groups practice at every workout. They offer 4 workouts per day weekly plus Saturdays, alternating between yards and long course pool configurations. All workouts are 1 hour. He expects people to show up on time and provides a specific coached warm up...not giving swimmers a self-directed warm up. Every minute of the hour counts. See their web link:

<http://www.swimfortlauderdale.com/TabGeneric.jsp? tabid =55239&team=fgflac>



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Swimmer ability is a huge consideration in diversity whether it is experience at swimming or the diversity that comes from working with an aging population. When running 16 lanes. SFLT has the ability to provide lane space for different abilities, including swimmers with mental challenges such as autism where they can get individual attention.

SFLT facility opportunities enhance the program's ability to serve a diverse group of swimmers. Marty's philosophy is to design workouts based on ability, so he has time to send off each group and so they all 'come in' together. He also needs to allow time for lane mates to interpret as needed for non-English speaking members. It's a choreographed workout with the coach taking time to make sure lanes understand the purpose and instructions for each set. Marty uses the basic coaching building block for all workouts: pace per 100 freestyle. Every swimmer knows his/her send off and pace as the basis for training. He quizzes them frequently and requires them to know their pace.

All his workouts are presented in writing (can be posted on a kickboard) and explained orally. This helps also with language challenges because often his non-English speaking swimmers can read the workout better than hearing it.

Like many other public facilities, SFLT is not allowed to offer adult swim lessons; these are the responsibility of the parks department. Marty would like to see opportunities in this area as there is not a good 'bridge' between lessons and his program. He would like to promote ALTS programs but can't within the City of Ft. Lauderdale structure.

As for marketing, people come to his program through word of mouth. The more diverse his membership is, the more diverse population he can attract. People who are passionate about swimming bring their friends. His job and that of his coaches is to make sure everyone feels welcome and included. He offers try out week and 'bring a friend' promotions.

Marty left me with a couple by-lines for his program and his years of head coaching experience: "Treat everyone with respect". That's what masters swimming is all about. And, "Never panic" It's just swimming; it'll all work out.



Ideas and Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion in local USMS programs

Short Title: Masters 101

Description: A series of 4-6 swim clinics for newcomers to Masters swimming. 30 minute to 1 hour sessions held in successive weeks and offered for free or nominal entry fee. This clinic is for swimmers who can swim 1 length of the pool and who want to explore masters swimming.

Swimmer/coach ratio no more than 1-6 participants. Swimmers are divided by swimming ability in a shallow pool. Skill instruction includes: basic freestyle stroke, kicking, breathing. Basic information to include basic swimwear-suits, goggles, cap and orientation to the pool deck and facility and what to expect when arriving for a masters practice.

Clinic sessions include an introduction to a pace clock and workout structures and language they will encounter in a masters practice (send off, interval, warm up, heart rate and how to take HR); types of equipment and use of equipment (fins, alignment board, snorkel, tempo trainer, pull buoy) and the opportunity to work with and practice with different types of equipment with recommendations by the coach as to what works for what purposes.

What Worked/What Didn't:

- What worked was having a good initial assessment of the swimming ability of every participant and have coaches/instructors available to work with people individually and in small groups. What didn't work is having a widely differing set of participants and lacking individual attention.
- Teaching about equipment takes time and it's best to introduce just 1-2 pieces of equipment during a single session. Also, sponsors were willing to donate equipment which the club retained to be able to offer future clinics and to donate for those unable to purchase their own.
- Working the new swimmers into regular practice happens best after they have attended 2-3 of the clinic sessions so they can see what they know and don't know and come back to the clinic and ask questions.
- Holding the clinic when you have at least 5-6 new people is better than doing individual instruction because they learn from one another.
- Holding the clinic in a pool where there is already a masters group or as part of the masters practice by reserving 1-2 lanes really helps because swimmers can move into the program rather than having to go out and find a program after the clinic is complete.

How does this strategy promote diversity and inclusion? By having a strategy to overcome the traditional barriers to masters-a masters 101 series can bring in new people who think of masters as intimidating.

Local Contact Person: Sarah Welch, Clinics Coordinator, PNA LMSC 206-359-2588 sarahwelch@comcast.net



Ideas and Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion in local USMS programs

Short Title: New Swimmer Clinic and Practice Swim Meet

Description: This clinic offers the newer masters swimmer a clinic and orientation to their first swim meet. PNA has offered such a clinic in January for swimmers who contemplate swimming in our annual ‘champs’ meet in April. The purpose of the clinic and practice meet is to offer skills that swimmers might not get in regular practice and to break down the apprehension swimmers that can keep a swimmer from competing. We offered the clinic for a nominal fee (\$25) for a 5-hour time period and for 25 participants with 6 coaches on deck. The format included 5 ‘stations’ the swimmers rotated through: 1) Officials orientation-walk around the pool deck, introduction to rules; 2) start-dives and back stroke starts; 3) turns including flip turns and open turns; 4) medley turns and 5) race strategy (pacing, ‘nerves-talk’, race prep, nutrition/hydration, etc.). Each station took 35 minutes with a 5-minute shift change. The clinic was followed by a mock meet. Swimmers selected 2 individual events and the meet was run with 50’s and 100’s heats. Heats used 4 lanes so swimmers could practice in the other two. Swimmers divided into ‘red’ and ‘blue’ teams. Coaches met swimmers for feedback after each of their races. The meet concluded with freestyle relays and medley relays such that each swimmer swam in one of each. Swimmers received a ‘goodie bag’ for their participation.

What Worked/What Didn’t:

- The clinic needs a minimum of 12 participants to achieve the desired outcome-to have relays and the fun and excitement of a swim meet. One time only a few signed up and that wasn’t effective.
- Adequate staffing/coaching is essential because swimmers want and deserve individual feedback.
- Most swimmers were completely unfamiliar with dives/starts. A double session on starts is recommended. We had several swimmers who had never dived, much less off the blocks. Teaching them about in water entries and diving from the side helped them realize they had options.
- Inviting an official really added credibility and valuable teaching.
- Feeding (and hydrating) the group is important. A 5-hour clinic is really long especially if they’re in the water most of the time. They also need to know to bring warm deck clothes.... just like a swim meet!

How does this strategy promote diversity and inclusion?

We found that fitness swimmers and those without a swimming background felt they ‘could never’ participate in a swim meet. This clinic built confidence and excitement especially for women who never envisioned themselves competing.

Local Contact Person: Sarah Welch, Clinic Coordinator, PNA sarahwelch@comcast.net 206 359 2588



Ideas and Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion in local USMS programs

Short Title:

Recognition of New & Current Members

Description:

Many teams have a newsletter on some sort of timeline, whether weekly, monthly, bimonthly, etc. The goal here is to highlight brand new members so current folks can say hello and welcome them!

Additionally, the newsletter can highlight current members. This is a fantastic tool let new members match faces with names, and allow existing members to be spotlighted for achievements in and out of the pool. This can help foster a greater sense of community and camaraderie.

What Worked/What Didn't:

What worked:

Publicly recognizing members for achievements helped empower others to lift each other up. Peer support is far more beneficial than a coach's acknowledgement. This act allowed folks to be more inclusive of multi-sport athletes that also have lofty goals that sometimes go unknown from lack of interaction.

This can also lead to mentorship in and out of the pool especially when folks learn the work in the same company, same field of study, etc.

What didn't work:

Being the only one recognizing new members. It takes some time to get this type of verbalized recognition going without the coach leading it. Once in place, it becomes part of the culture.

How does this strategy promote diversity and inclusion?

A few months of facilitating introductions via recognition in newsletters helps build a welcoming culture. This includes diverse backgrounds, but also, multi-sport athletes begin to also feel valued members. This type of attention can lead folks to get outside their comfort zone by trying something new with someone they would never have interacted with, without some sort of nugget of information to start conversations.

Local Contact Person:

Janelle Munson-McGee – NE LMSC

Diversity and Inclusion Committee



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Dan Doremus, dandoremus@gmail.com
Head coach, Ohio Splash (Ohio)
80 members, About 70% male
30% African-American, 30% Hispanic

USMS Club Contact: Robert Eblin, 614-507-8731, robert.eblin@gmail.com
50 members, 40% women, 60% men
60% gay, 40% straight
25% under 30 years of age, 75% over 30
Mostly a Caucasian team

Diversity Committee Member Interviewer: Carol Nip

Robert Eblin, has five years' experience with this team, serving as USMS Club Contact, Board Treasurer and Meet Director. He explained that the Head Coach was traveling at the time of this interview.

Ohio Splash was founded as a LGBT team in 1996 on the foundation of IGLA, International Gay & Lesbian Aquatics. These days, there are a "ton of non-gay members" as they have diversified and included the straight community as well as more women on the team. There was a period of time when there were no women on the team, but it helps to have a woman coach who is part of the Board.

In their swim community of 50 registered swimmers, ages range from the 20's to the 60's. Geographical diversity. Three evening practices each week are held at three different locations, depending on the time of the year. Racial diversity is minimal – their team is mostly Caucasian, with 2 African American swimmers and some Asians and Hispanic (not 30%).

Swimmers mostly find out about their team through the USMS website. They also encourage friends to bring friends. Board members open their homes to team socials, drawing 20-30 people. Recently, Robert received 15 emails for the "Try US Masters" promotion, but (with 8 more days to go) no new swimmers have shown up. They do not advertise that they are a gay team.

For the first time in 5-10 years, Ohio Splash hosted their State Championship Spring meet. It was fun and well-received with 85 swimmers. In 2018, their team was represented at the Paris Games as they are at IGLA's annual events, and every four years at the Gay Games. Gay Pride is being held this month with the IGLA meet on June 24th in New York. 500 swimmers are anticipated.



Ideas and Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion in local USMS programs

Short Title:

Para-Athletes Can Help The Whole Team

Description:

Para-Athletes participation can help your team grow in new ways. Their physical abilities can allow coaches to think differently teaching stroke technique to the larger team in a more abstract, concept based approach. Work with the athletes to help them learn all four competitive strokes through various adaptable drills.

What Worked/What Didn't:

What worked:

Thinking about swimming technique in relation to over-arching fundamentals. Mass in the water is still mass; thinking about a para-athlete's body as mass can be a game changer. The concept of balance and the anatomical structure of joints is very much the same as an able-bodied athlete. The connection of what is the same amongst all athletes will make those para-athletes feel more included and inspired.

What didn't work:

Continued thinking of body part movement being similar to able-bodied athletes.

How does this strategy promote diversity and inclusion?

By working with para-athletes in creating/teaching adaptive drills and techniques will help those with physical limitations to be empowered and included.

Local Contact Person:

Janelle Munson-McGee – NE LMSC

Diversity and Inclusion Committee



Ideas and Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion in local USMS programs

Short Title:

Personal Invitation to Try Masters Week

Description:

Create and send a “personal invitation” flyer to your team for distribution with a focus on diversity and inclusion. We don’t want to single any group out, but challenge your team to personally invite someone who might benefit from Masters Swimming and the programs offered.

What Worked/What Didn’t:

What worked:

The team included wording at the end of the invitation stating “all adults and abilities welcome.” This was the sentence that most guests named as the reason for trying Masters swimming.

What didn’t work:

Verbally inviting someone. It didn’t get remembered and there were fewer new participants.

How does this strategy promote diversity and inclusion?

A digital flyer was the perfect way to invite folks. In this format, folks could e-mail, post on social media, or print and give to a potential new swimmer. They had all the information they needed, plus contact information should they have any questions, and it lent some perceived credibility rather than just someone telling them it was “Try Masters Week.” This alone gave them the idea that there would be other new folks along with them making it seem less intimidating.

Local Contact Person:

Janelle Munson-McGee – NE LMSC

Diversity and Inclusion Committee



Ideas and Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion in local USMS programs

Short Title:

Representation Matters

Description:

Take advantage of social media and technology's ability to connect people. Post photos of swimmers of all identities in various activities – swimming, social, etc.

What Worked/What Didn't:

What worked:

Posting photos of wide ranges of participants helped swim lessons seem approachable and less embarrassing for older adults who never learned to swim as a youth. Sharing a photo of a para-athlete helps break stereotypes and turns them into a source of inspiration (always ask for permission!)

What didn't work:

Getting in the way of ourselves. We have many coaches of diverse backgrounds and while we all hate admitting how much representation matters, because we want to think it doesn't matter, but the fact is – representation does matter.

How does this strategy promote diversity and inclusion?

Because representation matters, we want to promote that Masters swimming isn't just for people who are "swimmers" or "triathletes." Masters Swimming has a connotation of being an organization for a "master" swimmer, when in reality it is for anyone over 18 with an interest in swimming! Nothing to do with skill level, but everything to do with inclusion. This is precisely why we are here!

Local Contact Person:

Janelle Munson-McGee – NE LMSC

Diversity and Inclusion Committee



Ideas and Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion in local USMS programs

Short Title:

Club Ambassador Program

Description:

At Palmetto Masters, we have volunteers at each of our pools/locations that is our “Ambassador.” In this role, they are alerted any time we have visitors express interest in joining us while in town visiting, a new member joins, an athlete wants to try us out, etc. While the entire team is typically welcoming and says hello, this Ambassador takes some extra time to introduce the new athlete to the coach, explain how we are set up in lanes (fastest to slowest), shows them where the locker rooms are, where they can get some communal swim equipment, etc. Basically gives them the lay of the land and also someone they can feel comfortable asking all questions to.

What Worked/What Didn't:

It's a great program with tons of ROI. The only watch-out is making sure the Ambassador is actually there on the day/s when the new person will be joining. When this happens, one of our Board Members (if present) usually steps in. If not them, then we usually have no shortage of folks on the team who bring them into the fray.

How does this strategy promote diversity and inclusion?

It genuinely makes the person feel welcome, which is a HUGE first step in making sure someone has a fantastic experience and wants to come back. If you have ever traveled and swam with a different team, you know there are nuances and cultures within each team.

Have you ever joined a team as a visitor and gotten the cold shoulder? It doesn't feel so good. I guarantee you'll remember that feeling if you find yourself back in that community and will not return to swim with that group.

Local Contact Person:

Mike Malik – Palmetto Masters | Charleston, SC

Diversity and Inclusion Committee



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Coach: Tom Luchsinger, Team New York Aquatics TNYA

Tom Luchsinger has been the Team Manager for Team New York Aquatics located in New York for the past year. TNYA consists of over 900 members in New York City and have practices at six different locations located throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens. Luchsinger says their team consists of hundreds of New Yorkers and is a very inclusive aquatic community that consists of masters swimmers, water polo players, divers, and synchronized swimmers and is open to everyone and anyone. The team does have quite an ethnic background but cannot quantify the percentages at this time. The special thing about their team is that they are founded and led by the LGBTQ+ community and allies. Tom says, “there’s lots of personality on our team which adds flavor.”

TNYA have morning and evening practices at their facilities ranging from 6-9am and 6-8pm with one Head Swim Coach on deck. The team offers a one-week free trial to interested potential members. Upon joining TNYA, there is a membership fee plus a monthly subscription fee, depending on how many practices you want to do.

One of the biggest competitions Team New York Aquatics hosts are the International Gay and Lesbian Aquatic Championships or “IGLA” which is one of the largest aquatics competition event in the area as they celebrate New York City’s first WorldPride and commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. The team also hosts special social gatherings like “Happy Hour” at Hell’s Kitchen and events like the “Pink Flamingo Palooza.” Luchsinger says that “having a social outlet is the most amazing thing when it comes to swimming.”

Luchsinger explains their team has a specific group of people at each facility that their specific job is to welcome the new swimmers, which he affectionately calls the “daykeepers.” Their job is to reach out to these new swimmers at practices and make them feel comfortable and included. “Anybody can walk into practice and feel comfortable and welcome,” Luchsinger says, “but it’s the friendly and loving environment is what matters.” On their teams website they also have a “Member Highlight” section to showcase some of their new members.

Tom says that the most wonderful thing about swimming is that the pool has no boundaries. Interestingly, Luchsinger says their teams biggest rivalry is with San Francisco’s coveted The Olympic Club.



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Jennifer Brehob (Caucasian) – one of the coaches
Head coach, YNS (Massachusetts)
110 members, 75% male
5% African-American, 35% Asian, 10% Hispanic

Diversity Committee Interviewer: Carol Nip

Caitlyn Clark (Caucasian), Head Masters Coach, YNS (Massachusetts)
<https://www.teamunify.com/team/neynssmt/page/home>

Recognized by the New England LMSC, YNS of Massachusetts is YMCA of the North Shore. This team has seven USA-S coaches working with their 400 age-group swimmers, and eight masters coaches for their 110 masters swimmers on their roster. Both groups schedule workouts at six different locations with several master coaches also working with age-group swimmers.

Caitlyn's background is in USAS swimming. She has coached masters for three years, including experience as Head Masters Coach over the past year. YNS offers 22 coached masters workouts each week. She agrees with the statistics collected about their masters swimmers - 75% male, 5% African American, 35% Asian and 10% Hispanic.

Both the USAS and USMS coaching staff is Caucasian, with the exception of two masters coaches (in the past), one African American and the other East Indian. Coaching certification for their masters team was never a priority, and only in the last month, Caitlyn pursued certification as a USMS coach. She is the only certified masters coach on the team. Additionally, their swimmers are generally not USMS members, wondering why there is a fee and are "scared" of the cost for USMS membership.

YNS develops diversity and inclusion at their Sunday workout, open to all masters swimmers, in an 8-lane, 25-yard pool. Typically, there are 25 participants. To build inclusion, YNS hosted a small masters meet in 2019 with 35 participants. It was run as a "recognized" meet, not USMS registered. Parents of kids on their USAS swim team and lap swimmers participated in that meet. It was the first of its kind in several years. On a smaller scale, team socials encompass going to coffee or dinner after workout. Diversity and inclusion is also encouraged by one of Caitlyn's masters staff members, Coach Jennifer, their strongest recruiter who reaches out to everyone with energy, passion and 20 years of experience with masters swimming – she does a great job to adapt the workouts to include nationally ranked swimmers, triathletes and new members on the team.



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Caitlyn thinks their masters team is lucky that a large YMCA “happened” upon them. These days, however, their masters team is trying to be a part of the community by acting more as a stand-alone swim team, not just a part of the YMCA. They’ve recently updated their website. In the past, they may have struggled to become a competitive masters team as their swimmers were not challenged.



Coach Interviews-Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Zing Allsopp (Asian)
Head coach, Fort Bend Masters (Texas)
45 members, 60% male
5% Black, 25% Asian, 10% Hispanic

Coach: Interview: Zing Allsopp Ft. Bend Masters, Ft. Bend, Texas
Diversity Committee Interviewer: Diana Triana

1. Tell us about the ethnic makeup of your swim team. (list the racial/ethnic makeup categories consistent).

Zing told me there are about 3 Filipinos, 2 African American, 2 Indians & 3 Hispanics in her team and the rest are Caucasian. Her team is a small team with currently 30 members

2. How has the number of minorities on your swim team changed in the past five years? Ten years?

Jane Harper created this team many years ago and under her coaching it was a pretty sizable team of about 50 members at each practice. Then the community pool, which is an Olympic-size pool, where they practice had to close down and the program was suspended. Finally, the pool was re-done and when it opened back up, Jane had moved, and the program had to re-establish from scratch. They started back on December 2017 with only 4 swimmers for a while. During the time the pool was closed, swimmers made connections with other pools in the area and other masters programs were created so now there are three different Masters teams in a 15-mile radius.

3. What have you done to get the number of minorities on your team to grow?

Nothing. The coach being Asian plays a huge role according to her and also the fact that her team is mainly triathletes and she believes the tri community is extremely mixed and they tend to congregate and to be more communal.

4. What is keeping your team from increasing the number of minorities on your team?

Nothing. Her team is a "struggling team." Everyone who wants to join is welcome regardless of ethnicity. The fact that her team is such a small team make the numbers in percentages seem a lot bigger than the real number

She would love to be more involved. She owes a lot to USMS. Everything she knows about swimming and coaching is thanks to USMS.

I promised to call her back at the end of the summer to follow up on a cross marketing idea she has in order to increase or attract master swimmers. She will be coaching her very first junior league at a country club this summer and thinks her presence in this program and marketing Fort Bend Masters as main sponsor may attract some members. I am curious to hear the results.

