

Hello Everyone,

I recently attended the Eastern Zone Diversity Summit at the University of Maryland. The summit was a combination Select Camp for swimmers with diverse backgrounds and business/education meeting for D&I chairs and coaches. Beyond myself representing Niagara Swimming were a swimmer from GCOM Sydney St. Rose-Finear and Head Coach from Rochester Rapids Shane Logan. During the meetings, chairs and coaches had the opportunities to discuss matters such as:

1. Transgender/ sexual orientation/ religious acceptance- Discussion led by Bill Kirkner, USA Swimming National Committee D&I Chair
2. Best practices- Discussion led by Mike Switalski, Niagara D&I Chair
3. Hosting camps/clinics- Discussion led by Virginia D&I Chair, Peter Maloney and Pacific Swimming Veronica Hernandez
4. Seasonal Planning- Discussion led by Nation's Capital Head Coach Peter Morgan
5. USA Swimming D&I Strategic Plan and National Programs- Discussion led by USA Swimming D&I Specialist Manny Banks
6. Funding/Grants/Budgets/Policy Development for D&I at the LSC Level- Discussion led by Nadine Jesionek, New England Swimming

Here is the link to some of the handouts:

<http://usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=2778&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>

Perhaps the most important discussion of the weekend was with the hypotheticals, addressing acceptance of transgender athletes, athletes of other sexual orientations and religion. Guidelines for working with these populations will come from USA Swimming soon. It is something that will ultimately affect every club in USA Swimming. Our committee will definitely need to distribute these guidelines and hypotheticals to our clubs.

Thoughts that I walked away with for Niagara Swimming are:

1. Create an application for people to join our committee
2. Add links to the National Drowning Alliance and International Water Safety Day on our website
3. Host Quarterly Conference Calls
4. Post meeting minutes on Niagara Swimming website
5. Establish a Niagara Swimming Multicultural All-Star Team that travels to Multicultural Meets (athlete must have ethnicity box checked on their registration to be eligible)
6. Develop Championship Entry Fee Waiver for Outreach Athletes.
7. More advocacy needs to be conducted with USA Swimming Foundation about the challenges USA Swim Clubs face pursuing grants.

Finally, many coaches and D&I Chairs at the meetings expressed an interest in Niagara Swimming hosting the 2017 Eastern Zone Diversity Summit. I have asked some people to start investigating the possibility and have started making calls myself. If you have thoughts for the Summit please forward them. Three programming tracks have to be addressed: Swimmers/ Coaches/ D&I Chairs. For entertainment, I think the obvious choice is Niagara Falls as one. A second that I thought would be fun is scuba diving.