

The Montana Swimming Reach Out grant program awards funding to Montana Swimming teams to provide opportunities for low income/outreach, minority, LGBTQ, and disabled athletes to participate in swimming through such activities as learn to swim camps, scholarships, providing training equipment or swimsuits and more. In October the **Hardin Otters Swim Team** was awarded \$2500 to purchase a quality sound system for their pool. The system they were using was owned by a parent whose swimmer graduated last year. The sound system will allow them to continue to host quality age group and high school meets. In addition, a portion of the funds will be used to offer scholarships to needy team members. This spring the Montana Swimming board voted to award \$2500 to **Syler Pizzolato (BAC)** top help fund his trip with Team USA to the 2025 Deaflympics in Tokyo, Japan. Congratulations to the Hardin Otters and Sy Pizzolato!

I would like to thank Montana Swimming Athlete Representative Aeri La (MYST) and Finance Vice Chair Beth Storey (HDST) for serving on the grant committee. Thank you everyone for the continued support of the program. The fall 2025 grant applications and 2026 spring grant applications are posted on the website.

Information about the Montana Swimming athlete outreach membership policy can be found on the website. In 2021 we voted to add swimmers with a disability to qualify for outreach membership. Part of the qualifying process requires teams to submit a letter to their club registrar verifying the athlete is disabled and the athlete must register as a disability athlete in the appropriate category (P1, P2, P3). Low-income families may submit a letter to their club registrar showing the family is qualified for SNAP, WIC, TANF, Medicaid or other programs including the federal free or reduced hot lunch program to qualify for outreach memberships. A year-round outreach membership is \$7.00 per athlete. If a family member has lost his/her/their job or had hours reduced, you've experienced the loss of a parent or guardian, or gone through a divorce and your finances have been impacted, please check out the outreach membership as your children may qualify.

I would also like to encourage conversations between coaches, athletes with disabilities, and officials at swim meets to determine needed accommodations for a swimmer. Posted on the website is a form that can be completed by the athlete, athlete's parent or coach requesting accommodations and modifications at a swim meet. Accommodation and modifications may be granted at one swim meet but may not necessarily be granted at another meet for various reasons including different layouts of the pool and locker rooms. Always reach out to the meet referee in advance if you need accommodation.

I would like to encourage all our athlete members and non-athlete members to check the box for ethnicity when registering with USA Swimming this fall using the SWIMS online member registration (OMR) process. The information is used by USA Swimming and helps them understand if programming and resources are of value to everyone in the organization. The information does not identify individual people.

The USA Swimming Policy 19 for transgender athletes is posted on the website. The policy explains how a transgender athlete may compete in USA Swimming. It is also posted on the USA Swimming website.

The Montana Swimming website features a tab for diversity and inclusion as well as disability swimming. Numerous resources can be found there.

I am the Western Zone DEI Coordinator. As part of my duties, I chair the WZ DEI committee, post information on the WZ website, participate in the National DEI committee calls and the Zone Coordinators group calls, and disseminate information to the WZ DEI chairs. I am also a member of the LSC Outreach Manual update subcommittee. The WZ DEI Committee is in the early stages of planning for a possible WZ DEI camp and multicultural swim meet in 2027 and hopefully 2029.

If you have questions about diversity and inclusion, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Huckleby
Montana Swimming DDEI Chair
May 20, 2025

Thank you letter from Sy Pizzolato:

Hello Montana Swimming Board Members,

I would like to thank each and every one of you for your generous contribution to fundraising for the Tokyo Deaflympics in the fall of this year. Your support means a lot to my family and me, as does your continuous contribution to my swimming career both in and out of the pool.

Just years ago, I wouldn't have believed that I would be going to Tokyo, Japan, or Argentina to compete in the Deaflympics or Deaf World Championships. The experiences I've had due to these newfound opportunities are what keep me still in the sport, along with the relationships I have formed within the Montana Swimming environment. I am very thankful for Montana Swimming as a whole because it brought a sense of family to what is a pretty big state.

The connections and moments every one of us experiences throughout life are what give our lives purpose and meaning. Attending the Tokyo Deaflympics is a dream come true and an experience I will never forget. I will be able to meet individuals from other countries and regions of the globe and establish relationships I never thought were possible.

Even though I head off to college, pursue other life goals, and become a contributing member of society, I will not forget the memories from these once-in-a-lifetime moments. But more importantly, I will never forget the memories club swimming has given me. It is an honor to have the support of Montana Swimming, and without you, I do not know where I would be today.

Thank You,

-Sy Pizzolato
April 3, 2025