

Dear Ronnie & Donnie,

I'm not sure if you have seen the article(s) about Mary Cain and the Nike coaching abuse. I wanted to forward it to you and express to you how grateful we are that you and your coaches provide such a positive coaching environment for the OA kids and my daughter, and how much putting "Character First" means to us.

I think you know that I also grew up a nationally ranked swimmer with dreams of competing at the highest level, but what is not commonly known is that those dreams were cut short by overtraining, constant verbal and emotional abuse, and chronic injury. I honestly never wanted my kids to ever swim in a year-round program as I had, and I had little hope that much had changed in our sport over the years. The Mary Cain coverage really hit a deep chord with me and caused me to reflect as her story was so similar to mine. But it also made me realize how grateful I am that my child joined Orinda Aquatics. It was with great hesitation that we finally let her continue her swimming dreams with a year-round program, but we put our faith into the positive coaching framework of OA's "Character First" mission, and we haven't looked back since.

Positive coaching and "Character First" have made all the difference and has restored my faith that there are people out there doing the right thing for our young athletes. We thank you and all of the coaching staff for providing a safe and healthy environment where our daughter can continue to thrive and grow. She has developed into not only an amazing athlete, but also a truly outstanding human being who cares deeply about others and doing the right thing...and best yet, she still has so much ahead of her.

When I was her age my swimming career was pretty much all but over and it took me a lifetime to put the gravity of it all behind. We are so grateful that, because of Orinda Aquatics, her journey has only just begun. Thank you for being such an important part of it and for being a shining example of what positive coaching really looks like. Best always