

Keith Stansell

From: Rounds, Byron [ROUNDSB@charleston-sc.gov]
Sent: Sunday, August 14, 2011 4:09 PM
To: Rounds, Byron
Subject: The City of Charleston Recreation Department/Aquatics Division achieved history this summer!
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Under the leadership of Laurie Yarbrough, Recreation Director, Stella Fruit, Recreation Superintendent, Byron Rounds, Aquatics Manager, Freddy Lentz, Asst. Aquatics Manager, parents, volunteer coaches, SMRT, JAWs Swim Shop and the Logan Rutledge Foundation, the City of Charleston Recreation Department/Aquatics Division helped introduce thirty seven plus swimmers to the world of competitive swimming and fun. The majority of these swimmers had never competed before and many could barely make it across the pool without stopping or needing assistance at the beginning of the summer. At the final swim meet on August 5, 2011, swimmers were racing across the pool swimming every competitive stroke. Our goal was to offer children who never considered competitive swimming a chance to be exposed to the great sport of swimming while having fun. It was definitely a great reward to see the growth in each swimmer and how much they learned in seven weeks.

This is the first time the city of Charleston ran an Intramural Swim League, to my knowledge and records. The idea was talked about amongst parents from the community surrounding the Herbert Hasell pool and Mrs. Diana Yarbrough emailed the Recreation Director to request that a team be offered this summer 2011. I started planning in February to kick this off in May and interest initially seemed slow, building up the interest but word of mouth started getting around what we were doing at HH pool and parents started coming. Our first day of practice began with only three people and our last practice ended with 37 swimmers with others on the side line ready to join. Our season started off with me leading the entire league through two weeks of basic fitness training on the field and in the pool. After our two week training swimmers, broke out to their practice spots between MLK, HH, and WLS pool. The coaches then continued training the swimmers on Mon, Wed and Fri. We offered a swim meet every other Friday where parents and swimmers gathered to compete for fun and race against the other pools and each other. Our USA competitive swimming program, SMRT, under the leadership of Head Coach Mike Lewlyn offered his staff to run two swim clinics and Keith Stansell SMRT booster president mentored our parents along with Coach Tara and Ben on how to run a swim meet. Swimmers and parents are looking to try again next summer and build on what we all accomplished this year.

The historic part is that we accomplished one of the goals of our honorable Mayor by serving our diverse Charleston community. The intramural swim league served 48% African Americans, 48% white, and 4% other swimmers. The diversity of competitive swimming has been an ongoing goal of USA swimming and the City of Charleston Recreation. This is definitely a step in the right direction. It was the highlight of my summer to see with my own eyes how well the coaches (Harleston, David, Lyndsay, Mona, and Lawrence) interacted with the swimmers and how well the young swimmers from various cultural, economic and racial backgrounds all enjoyed the league together while learning to improve their swimming. In economical challenging times this was made possible by having special organizations and individuals step forward to lend a helping hand. Below is a special thank you to all those who gave a little or helped a little to take a little swim league and make it into big experience for 37 swimmers and families.

Special thanks to:

Parents- for supporting and motivating your swimmers
Harleston Ashby - for stepping forward first to volunteer to coach
David Cassamassa- for coaching and recruiting the MLK pool swimmers and making it fun
Lyndsey- for bringing her expertise from college to offer our swimmers
Mona- for bringing her passion and teaching
Diana Yarborough- for being our team Mom and keeping everyone informed
Freddy & Harleston - for making the lane lines work at HH pool
Stella - for taking pictures and leadership
Laurie- for listening to the parents and giving it a try with a tight budget
Whitney - for handling a big chunk of registration
Shamekie- for following up with parents and recruiting
Mark Rutledge- for sponsorship through the "Logan children's Rutledge Foundation" covered all the swimmers swim suits (\$2,000 scholarship).
SMRT - for being a mentor team to the Intramural League
JAWs Swim Shop - for taking the time to help us make sure every swim suite fit and cutting the cost for suits
Ashley - Serving as Meet Director
Bett- Serving as Event Coordinator
Pam- for planting the seed for the swim league two years ago
City Aquatics Staff – for running safe pools
37 swimmers - who made a commitment to swim weekly,
Mayor Riley/City Council - for the vision to serve our community through recreation/aquatics

Having the honor to work and coordinate this year's league made a very hot summer worth it. Looking back I was extremely blessed to work with our parents, swimmers and especially our coaches.

Sincerely,

Byron Rounds
Aquatics Manager
City of Charleston Recreation Department