

WINTER 2017

SWIMSWAMI

RACE SWAMI'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SWAMIS KICK OFF ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

In 2016, Race Swami launched the Swami Enrichment Program, which encourages and engages our swimmers in a number of activities to enhance their educational paths. Directed by Swami Board member and co-founder Mary Chris Finnigan, the idea is for the Enrichment Program to promote leadership, discipline, hard work, and excellence among its student-athletes. It has always been Race Swami's mission to strive to enrich the academic, athletic, and life skills of its participants, developing "character first" among all its swimmers.

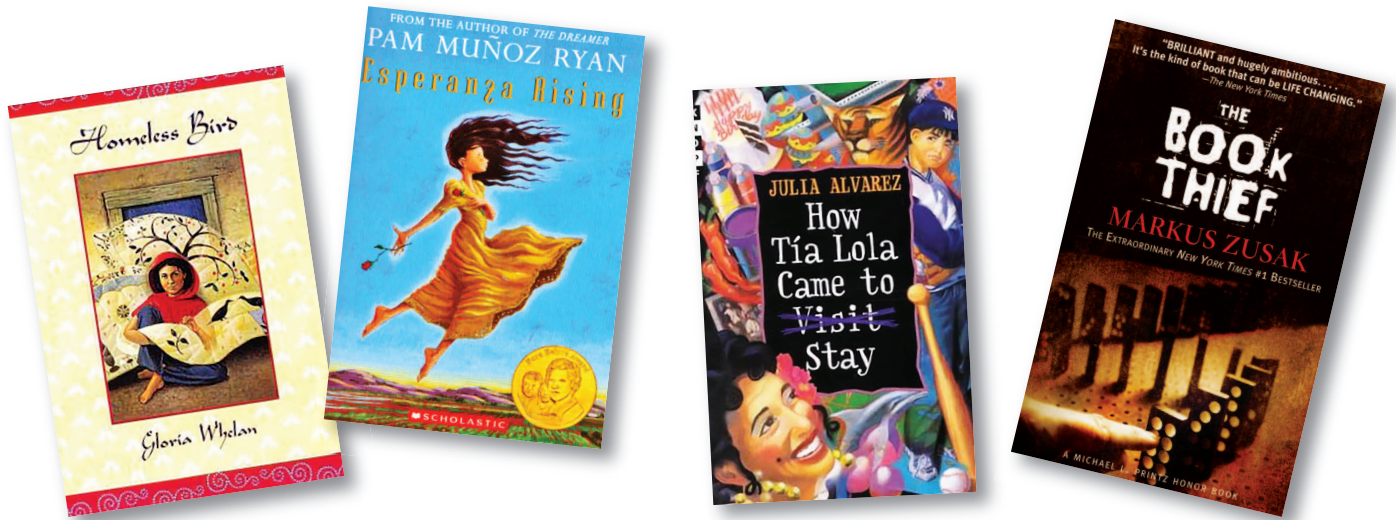
This past summer, Race Swami offered its swimmers a Summer Book Club. More than 30 children participated in weekly groups held at two west side Salt Lake City libraries. The children participated in group discussions and journaling based on books focusing on race, class, and gender issues.

Last spring, Race Swami held its second consecutive "College Day at the U," where more than 50 SWAMIs—accompanied by parents and siblings—spent a day at the University of Utah, getting treated to hands-on activities directed by college students from several departments including computer science, art and ceramics, and political science. SWAMIs also listened to an Admissions representative from the U and tackled such things as the concept of "going to college" as well as how financial aid works. The SWAMIs ended the day by taking a tour of the expansive campus and getting to see all the new additions to the school.

This program will continue to grow, with the vision of offering regular tutoring services for those who need it. We are very encouraged and excited with the ongoing growth of our Enrichment Program and how we can best serve our families.



Race Swami launched the Swami Enrichment Program, which encourages and engages children in a number of activities to enhance their educational paths, including the Summer Book Club (top), and College Day and the U.



SWAMI

**Swami Swimmers
Dive into Epic Summer
Reading Program**

BOOK CLUB!

This summer our swimmers ended up diving into more than the pool. Our long anticipated Summer Reading Program launched and reports from all fronts are glowing.

The vision, planning, and direction of Race Swami co-founder Mary Chris Finnigan coupled with the assistance of a handful of amazing volunteers and thirty SWAMI swimmers resulted in seven Swami book clubs coming together this past summer.

The book clubs were divided by grade with the youngest group being our 2nd and 3rd Grade readers. Led by Marilee Yerkovich, these primary readers focused on choosing good picture books and were benefactors of Marilee's expertise as a former librarian.

Ed Muñoz shared his Spanish book collection as well as his bilingual skill to lead a group of students in a book club that focused on reading and writing in Spanish.

Our 4th grade group led by Angie Roberts traveled with their characters from New York City to Vermont in, *How Tia Lola Came To Stay*. Through the experiences of the family in the book and discussions the group came to find that communication is the beginning of all understanding.

The 5th grade group met at Chapman Library in the west side neighborhood of Poplar Grove and found that the first assignment of writing thank you notes to donors was a great exercise. Addressing an envelope is a skill often overlooked with our use of email and these kids were quick studies. This group's selection of *Esperanza Rising*, led to another writing assignment. The kids were encouraged to speak to family members and find their family story and share it with the group. Allyson Dugan led this group and was happy to have the chance to interact with students and to practice her Spanish.

Race Swami's Summer Reading Program will continue this summer. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in volunteering, please contact Mary Chris at (801) 381-6240 to learn more!

“I really loved the summer book club; I got to swim and read books and share insight with all my friends!” **Caroline Cooper, Junior Swami**

The 6th grade group, led by Sally McMinimee and Sarah Buck, started out reading, *Homeless Bird* together and used the first month to explore reading for a book club. Each week several chapters would be assigned along with several questions which were recorded in their journals. The next meeting the discussion would come from these questions. In addition to reading the story the group fact checked some of the information in the book including geography to gain a better understanding of the story. The second month the kids made their own book selection and then tried to sell the group on their book.

The 7th and 8th grade group led by Deepika Reddy and Kate McMinimee chose a more challenging and

longer selection that took the full two months to complete. The brilliant selection of, *The Book Thief*, is an award winning book narrated by a girl about the same age as this group of SWAMIs. Like the character, the participants were a bit hesitant to share at the first meetings but over time developed comfort from the story and the confidence and skill to discuss this amazing book.

Angie Roberts was the volunteer extraordinaire who led both the 4th grade group and took on Race Swami’s high school group. This group chose, *The Queen of Water* for the summer selection. They were challenged to make connections from the book to their own life and there was no shortage of topics. Writings and discussions from the group included the themes of immigration, police brutality, and race relations. The teens came away realizing her story was new but her struggles familiar.

The grand finale was held at the Marmalade Library and attended by all of the book clubs. A local author, Emily Wing Smith spoke to the group and shared her story of being involved in an accident which resulted in brain trauma and also the discovery of a brain tumor. Her story was not only inspiring to those in attendance but became the story line for one of her books, *All Better Now*. Emily shared excerpts from a journal she started, when she was in grade school, at the urging of a teacher. In closing she encouraged the SWAMIs to take risks and believe in themselves. The event concluded with a book swap and much passion for the written word.



Top photo: Marilee Yerkovich reads with 7 year old Alan, a Rising Swami 1 swimmer. **Above left:** Junior Swami swimmers write Thank You notes to donors with Mary Chris Finnigan supervising. **Above right:** Swami swimmers Nora and Caroline share a book at the Swami Book Swap.



WELCOME COACH PAM!



Race Swami announced the addition of Coach Pam Chamberlain to the staff in September 2016. She will serve as the Head Age Group coach for the renowned outreach program. Coach Pam began her coaching career in Southern California with the NGSV Gators. She grew the team from a small

age-group program to a perennial top three 12 and under team at the SoCal Junior Olympics. While coaching there, Coach Pam coached numerous National Top 16 and Top 10 swimmers, zone qualifiers, zone Champions and future Jr. National Team members, National Team members and Olympic Trial qualifiers. During this time Pam was named a Zone Coach for the SoCal Team and was awarded SoCal - Orange Section Age Group Coach of the year in 2006.

In 2008 Coach Pam moved to Utah and worked with the Brighton High School Swim Team, during this time both Boys and Girls were 5A State Champions. Coach Pam also coached at Cottonwood Heights Aquatic Team where she again was privileged enough to coach numerous state champions and zone qualifiers.

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What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as who you become by achieving your goals. Henry David Thoreau

In 2011 Pam moved back to California to become the Division Director for the 13/14 Age Group at the Mission Viejo Nadadores. During this time Pam was able to learn from and coach with some of the Nation's best coaches and swimmers. She was also able to reconnect and coach many of her former NGSV Gator swimmers. In 2012 Pam moved to Germany and then onto London in 2015. During this time Coach Pam was able to volunteer during the summers of 2013 and 2014 for Race Swami where she decided this was where she wanted to work when she returned to the US.

Coach Pam's philosophy for Age Group swimmers is have fun, teach the basics including stroke technique and good habits, and keep swimming exciting! She is hoping to bring this enthusiasm to all the Race Swami swimmers.

Pam graduated from Central Connecticut University with a degree in education, is married with 2 children and one beautiful grand-daughter.



RACE SWAMI

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