

swimswami

RACE SWAMI'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



Race Swami Lands Swim Gear

With the help of the **Larry H Miller Charities** foundation, west side-based Race Swami, which serves under represented youth from Rose Park, Glendale and surrounding communities, recently secured new training gear for its young SWAMIs. At the top of the wish list were three VASA Trainer swim benches (pictured above), which have been shown to help swimmers in several ways—by developing strength, enhancing endurance and in improving stroke technique. By having these VASA Trainers readily available near the pool deck, Swami athletes can simulate motions they make in the water right there on deck, where coaches can instantly make proper adjustments to any given stroke pull.

Other equipment additions acquired from the LHM Grant included Finis products, including alignment boards and Agility Paddles. The later product has become renowned for it's strapless design and ability to improve pulling strokes in the water to allow for greater efficiency.

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Race Swami girls donning the new team suit, made possible by a donation from the **Kem Gardner Family**

RACE SWAMI UNVEILS A SPANKIN' NEW TEAM SUIT!

This fall marked a first for the upstart Race Swami swim program, when the team unveiled a team swimming suit, the first ever for the program. The team suits, furnished by Finis, were made possible from a generous donation by the **Kem Gardner Family**.

In the past, Race Swami athletes generally wore whatever they could afford—or what was donated by other families. This method created an obvious mishmash of colors, varying suit designs, and general chaos. In fact, the only item that gave any indication of which swim team a SWAMI athlete represented was the green and gold Race Swami swim cap.

"It was very difficult because we were the only swim club without a team suit at the meets," team president Leslie Motley recalls. "Our kids picked up on that. They always wondered why we didn't have a team suit."

Now, the new swimming suits give the swimmers additional pride and respect for their beloved local team. "These suits feel and look really cool!" exclaimed 11-year old Angie Fregoso. Added teammate and fellow 11-year-old Jesus Corona, "I feel more proud to call myself a RACE SWAMI. and to represent such a cool team."

The suits are marked with Swami's signature forest green, along with what is described as a colorful "Mexican-style motif," adorned on the front of the girls' suits above the Swami logo, and supplemented by a rich, floral design on the backside.

The boys jammers are a little more simple but

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SWAMI ICELEBRATION!

On Saturday, October 4th, Race Swami hosted its first community fundraiser to benefit underserved youth who reside in Salt Lake City's west side neighborhoods including Rose Park, Glendale, Poplar Grove, and the surrounding communities. More than 60% of Race Swami's athletes are on free or reduced lunch, meaning they live below the poverty level. The money raised from the Swami Benefit goes directly towards supplementing scholarships, lane rental costs, and meet fees.

The benefit was held at Frida Bistro not far from Race Swami's two facilities located in Salt Lake City's west side community. According to Julie Lu, Race Swami Board Member and Co-Chair of the Race Swami Event, a little more than 100 guests attended. Supporters were treated to some of Frida Bistro's famous cuisine, along with a video presentation highlighting the Swami organization and athletes and learning more about the program. The six minute video was produced by Pat Thompson.

"The focus of this night is obviously the kids," Julie said, pointing out that there were nearly 30 large posters on the walls, highlighting the stories of many of the Swami swimmers. "This is what the program is all about... great kids, who despite some of the challenges they face, are accomplishing great things—and who deserve this opportunity. This event helps tell that story and how important the ongoing support from the community is."

Race Swami is a nonprofit organization serving primarily ethnically diverse, low-income families. Ages of the athletes range from 6 to 17, and the majority—about 75%—are female. Because the organization trends towards serving underprivileged youth, Race Swami relies on annual gifts from foundations, corporations, associates and individuals. The founders believe Race Swami is more than just a swim program, it's a place for kids to build character and learn important life skills.



"For most of these kids, if Race Swami didn't exist—who knows what they'd be involved in," Julie said. "Affordable programs in Salt Lake City are scarce, and perhaps more so in our west side communities."

Team president Leslie Motley added, "Many parents have personally shared with us that if not for Race Swami, their kids would most likely be at home, sitting on a couch,

watching tv. This program offers them discipline... It offers them focus... and goals to work towards. These are positive and empowering qualities and they learn them right there at the pool—regardless of whether they can afford the program or not."

As Executive Director and Head Coach Matt Finnigan put it, "We just want to continue making a difference for our kids and for those kids we will serve in the future. And the only way we can do it is with the continued support and help from our community. We thank all those who came out to support us tonight, and we thank all those who have believed in us and what we're trying to do here. They have truly made a difference and we can't thank our supporters enough."



Race Swami's 11-12 Girls Relay team comprised of, from left to right, **Arianna Holsten**, **Natasha Franco**, **Angie Fregoso**, and **Peyton Ledbetter**, starred at the Utah Long Course State Championships this past summer, placing in the Top 15 in all three relay events.

SWAMI'S UTAH STATE CHAMPIONSHIP MEET RECAP!

On behalf of the Race Swami Coaching Staff and our tireless, amazing Volunteers, we just wanted to share some highlights with you in regards to the recent Utah Long Course State Championship Meet, which was held at the Kearns Oquirrh Fitness Center on July 10-12, 2014.

With more than 2000 total participants at the meet, covering ages somewhere between 7 and 43 (yes, there was actually a 43 year old from Park City who competed), our SWAMIs shined in a very big way, as they continue to make huge strides at the championship level—all the while representing our west side neighborhoods with extreme pride!

If there is to be any "headliner" for Team Swami, it would need to begin with the 11-12 Girls Relay team comprised of **Natasha Franco** (11), **Angie Fregoso** (11), **Arianna Holsten** (11) and **Peyton Ledbetter** (12). These girls showed plenty of heart and tenacity and grit in moving up the ranks in all three relays that were offered over the course of the three day meet. On Day 1, the SWAMIs swam the 200 Free relay to a 10th place finish after being seeded 18th. They followed that awesome effort up on Day 2 with a 9th place finish in the 200 Medley relay after having been seeded 16th going into the competition. On the last night of competition the girls raced to a gallant 13th place finish, moving up 5 spots in the process and scoring points for Race Swami! It should be noted they were the only relay team competing with three 11 year old athletes.

The Swami Girls Team finished 17th overall in the final standings and they were by far the smallest team to finish in the Top 20 at State. Next year Race Swami expects to double our State Team as our SWAMIs continue to grow and flourish in this great sport, gaining more experience in the water in the process!

To top the meet off, our very own Swami team president, Leslie Motley, received the Utah Swimming Volunteer of the Year award, voted on and given to the top volunteer from one of the 40+ USA Swimming swim clubs in Utah. We are so proud and fortunate to have Leslie guiding our team, and the award, though a long time coming, was well deserved!

Race Swami exists to empower youth to be champions—in and out of the water for a lifetime. We provide opportunities in swimming for underserved youth from the west side of Salt Lake City. Our goal is to develop our participants' physical and mental health in a fun and unique environment, deeply rooted in self-discipline, teamwork, and whole-body awareness. At the same time, we value and welcome the rich cultural knowledge and experiences of the youth and communities we serve.

Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in.

Martin Luther King Jr.

RACE SWAMI TEAMS UP WITH NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

Neighborhood House, a non-profit organization committed to providing quality, affordable day care and support services to children and adults based on their ability to pay, joined forces with Race Swami in March 2014 to offer free swim clinics to school aged children attending Neighborhood House's afterschool program. The clinics will include swimming basics and general water safety tips and techniques intended to prepare qualified children to join the Race Swami swim teams this summer.

"It's a great opportunity, not only for our kids to learn about water safety, but for us to partner with another local organization," says Shannon Jensen, Education and Training Manager at Neighborhood House. "It's a great way to empower our children, our families, and our community."

Neighborhood House is just one of several organizations to partner with Race Swami, which "exists to empower youth to be champions – in and out of the water for a lifetime." Established in January 2011, Race Swami was the first swim team mounted on Salt Lake's West Side and offers unique, inexpensive swimming opportunities to a community that might not have them otherwise.

"These kids are underserved and haven't had the opportunity to participate in swimming," says Race Swami Team President, Leslie Motley. "The percentage of kids who drown is significantly higher in children of color. We want our kids to be successful for a lifetime. Swimming is one part of that."

The Neighborhood House swim clinics begin by teaching children ages 5-12 (grades K-6) swimming basics and water safety. Those who are able and willing to continue will then have the opportunity to join the standing Race Swami swim teams and travel to meets throughout the Salt Lake area and the state.



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Senior Swami swimmer **Marcela Vasquez** models the new Swami team suit with Swami age group coach David Valdes.

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compliment the girls' version by having the Swami logo on the front and a "¡Sí Se Puede!" proclamation on the back side.

Said co-founder Mary Chris Finnigan: "We wanted to reflect the cultural aspects of our team and the communities we represent. That's why we implemented the floral-influenced design. We think they're beautiful, and we can't thank the Gardner Family enough for such a generous contribution on behalf our kids. They're very pleased to wear the Race Swami colors and designs at every swim meet. There is a tremendous amount of pride and a lot of happy faces."

RACE SWAMI LANDS SWIM GEAR

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"I'd say the most important aspect for a young swimmer to hone in this sport is to develop proper technique," Race Swami head coach Matt Finnigan said. "It's always been the most important aspect of our training regimen at Race Swami when we're developing these age groupers. Give them the foundation to build great looking and water efficient strokes and I guarantee we'll start seeing better swims. And, so the products we enjoy implementing into our daily training are those items which have generally been proven to vastly improve their mechanics. We're really excited to have this new equipment available for our kids and it couldn't have happened without the generosity and care of Larry H Miller Charities. We thank them profusely for this gift."