

Friends of Rockbridge Swimming, Inc.
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Friends of Rockbridge Swimming, Inc. Local Community Impact, 2025

During 2025, FOR Swimming provided on a weekly basis at the Rockbridge Aquatics Center:

- 56 hours per week of open public lap swimming and family swimming;
- 9 hours of weekly Aquacise classes targeted for the older adults, many for whom regular land; exercise is out of the question.
- 16 hours of weekly swim programming for youth ages 4-18.

In 2025, we had 358 individual members. Well over half our membership is held by individuals over 65. In addition to our regular members, we had 2,465 daily, non-member visitors with an average of 205 per month. We feel that our facility is a key resource to our community for safe physical activity and connection. Rockbridge Aquatics Center employed 29 individuals – 28 from the three localities and one from out-of-state.

The Rockbridge Aquatics Center supported four teams – Rockbridge County High School Wildcats (RCHS) (*27 swimmers*), STORM (club swimming team affiliated with USA Swimming, primarily for elementary and middle school age children) (*139 swimmers over the course of the year*). We also support Southern Virginia University (SVU) by providing additional practice times for them outside of their regular schedule and a facility to have a home swim meet. We hosted the STORM Halloween Sprints meet in October 2025, more than 100 participants came from all areas of Virginia as well as West Virginia, Ohio, and even three swimmers all the way from Hawaii. These swimmers and families brought support to our town's local hotels and restaurants as well as providing \$4,000 of net income for our facility. We were thrilled to host RCHS home meets in 2025 as well plan to host their district meet for 2026.

Each year FOR Swimming has ensured that every child enrolled in 3rd grade at Waddell Elementary School receives free swim lessons through our Make-a-Splash program. In 2025, 53 third graders from Waddell participated in the program. Each participant received three swim lessons, free of charge, during the regular school day. FOR Swimming was able to utilize the outdoor pool as the venue for these 2025 Waddell lessons.

In 2025 we were once again able to offer our spring and summer swim lessons at the indoor pool. These lessons were taught in 30 minute classes by our talented FOR swimming instructors. We taught 146 swimmers between April and July. We also continued our Guppies & Grown Ups class, teaching 19 swimmers under age 4 June through August. We are looking forward to continuing these swim lesson offerings in 2026.

This summer we were also able to offer free swim lessons to 74 swimmers from the Rockbridge County area through our FOR Swimming scholarships and with support from the Rockbridge

Community Health Foundation. These lessons were taught at the outdoor pool during the weekday mornings to expand the reach of our water safety programming. Each class included four, 30-minute sessions. This was only a portion of our scholarship funded instruction for this summer. We were also able to teach swim lessons through four different summer camp programs during the summer months. The Washington & Lee summer camp program for local children included 25 participants who came to the pool to celebrate summer and receive water safety instruction in June. We were excited to welcome 70 swimmers from this year's Lexington Police Camp to learn water safety and swimming skills in June.

In all, we are delighted to have provided swim lesson instruction across all our spring and summer programs to **387** children in the Rockbridge County area.

Our Red Cross certified instructor, FOR Swimming's Aquatics Director Leslie Ayers, trained 41 lifeguards this year. Leslie taught classes this year to help train lifeguards for Buena Vista, Lexington City, and Rockbridge County pools. Leslie leads an efficient blended learning course that maximizes opportunity for in person skills training and uses online learning resources to accomplish the mandatory 27 hours of training required for all Red Cross certified lifeguards. The course is rigorous and focused on important water skills and CPR/AED skills over two days to complete the certification. The course is offered at least twice per year.

We were able to again manage the outdoor Municipal pool in Summer 2025. We are very grateful to the City for entrusting us with that task. We had a successful, wonderful and safe summer swim season. Our staff did a fantastic job keeping the facility clean and visitor friendly.

FOR Swimming Board members in 2025: *Shannon Dryden (President), Kacie D'Alessandro (Vice-President), Tuck Bowerfind (Secretary), David Mayersky (Treasurer); Anita Givens, Irene Townsend, Kjrsten Keane, Ben Huger, Kathleen Bulger-Barnett*