

Sarah Mostoller

Central Area Swimming Scholarship Essay

The constant aroma of chlorine that never seems to go away, the hot and humid air on deck that envelops you like a hug, the incredulous feeling of weightlessness and an odd peace when submerged in the water. These are the reasons I fell in love with the pool at a young age. As a child, my family and I would take regular outings to the local pool for open swim. These outings started off mundane and uninteresting to me, but I soon caught myself looking forward to this time in the water. It was not long until these swims were routine and the highlight of my week. My mom took note of this aquatic interest, and asked if I would like to be a part of the Nome Northstar Swim Team, and of course I said yes. The following week I had a new suit, a new pair of goggles, and a swim cap and I was ready to swim. I enjoyed the time in the water and having the ability to improve my strokes, but I had no idea the magnitude of the impact on my everyday life it would have, and even on the person that I have become. Throughout the years, swimming has taught me many defining characteristics that I am grateful I have learned.

Dedication is an important concept in life and can be easily learned through the sport of swimming. Coming to practice is the first step in the right direction, and for some this simple task can be grueling. It can get tedious and difficult jumping into a frigid pool, knowing that you will soon be enduring the excruciating sets your coach has planned for the day. Once morning practices and daily dryland are added into the scheme of things, the pool can easily be seen as a cruel place of torment, which can easily terrify many into not coming. Attending all practices, even on the worst days, along with constant reminders from coaches that attendance is

crucial, has taught me what true dedication is and why it is so important. This learned attribute has not only helped me in my athletic endeavors, but in my academics as well.

Another characteristic swimming has implemented in me is confidence. Swimming is unique in that it is a team sport, yet most races are swum alone. These races take strategy and a lot of mental energy, which can be a burden if one is not completely faithful in his or her abilities. For the first few years of my high school career in club swimming, I had trouble with my mentality towards my races and myself. Coach Ben Kitchen was the biggest contributor to helping me find the confidence within myself. Every morning practice before school, we would work on technique. This usually consisted of us doing 25's for the duration of practice. We would stop and he would tell each of us what we needed to work on and send us off on another 25. He knew I struggled with confidence, so before I pushed off of each wall, he would make me recite a silly positive statement about myself before I could continue on with my 25. It seems simple, but this was ultimately the reason in the elevation of my spirit and courage.

Finally, the last thing this sport has taught me is that I have many opportunities to give back in both the swimming community and the local community, and is a personality trait I have taken to heart. Being a part of the swim team has opened the doors to give back by teaching children, and even some adults, how to swim. This is a life saving technique that I believe is very important to learn how to do, especially because we live in a place where the ocean is a big part of everyday life. I am a swim instructor at both Northern Lights Swim Club and The Alaska Club, teaching children of various ages the basics of swimming. Having the ability to teach someone a skill that they will hold onto for their entire life is indescribable and I am so grateful

for these opportunities, ones that I would most likely not have without being a part of the swimming community.

Giving back extends to outside of the “swim family” as well. During my high school career, I have tutored students mostly in math subjects. Around the house, I help my younger siblings with their homework as well. It is a fantastic way to share my knowledge and help out other students who are trying to succeed in their academics.

Swimming has provided me with many characteristics that define who I am today. Learning these traits and the techniques to keep them ongoing, combined with practicing them daily has helped me apply these to my everyday life. This sport has gifted me lifelong friends, some outstanding pieces of advice along the way, and irreplaceable memories. Although I am not continuing swimming in college, the unforgettable knowledge I have learned through this sport will follow me for the rest of my life.