

Date: April 22, 2018

To: Minnesota Swimming House of Delegates

Subject: Junior Athlete Representative Report

Dear House of Delegates,

It has been a whirlwind of a year as your Junior Athlete Representative. I cannot thank all of you enough for giving me the opportunity to represent the LSC over this past season and I look forward to continuing my service into season to come. Throughout this year I have had a heavy focus on community service, networking with other LSCs, sharing a common athlete voice on many topics, and now, as the season is winding down, my focus is shifting to finding athletes interested in joining our Athlete Committee for the 2018-19 year.

Community service was a tremendous element to many of the meets I attended this year. The summer was filled with swimsuit drives for the Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board, and I am happy to report that we as state donated over 500 suits to swimmers in need! It was very fun to see our athletes and families throughout the state demonstrating such interest in helping others to have the opportunity to enjoy swimming as much as we all do. Looking forward to this next summer, I hope to continue these suit drives by finding more organizations looking for aid so we can all once again enjoy the pleasure of helping out the less fortunate of our community. Another service that many athletes became involved with over the course of the past year were the food drives that were hosted in various occasions throughout the year. Personally, I helped coordinate a food drive for the Mankato-area Backpack Foods Program during our January meet. This program provides meals to the numerous children throughout the community who are dependent on school lunches for food, and are often left to fend for themselves over weekends and breaks. The support for this was overwhelming and after speaking with Backpack Food Program, we were able to feed meals to 800 children! The amazing support for all of these programs makes me proud to be a part of such a generous swimming community that we have here in Minnesota.

Branching off of community service here locally, I have been speaking with athletes from other LSCs (both inside and outside the zone) about what they do for community service. Many have loved the idea of doing swimsuit and food drives. We plan to continue talking over the next few months to pick organizations either nationally or locally to do both of these drives. In the meantime, they are planning on organizing their own food drives! Together we figured that this would be a great opportunity to unify the athletes and families of USA Swimming behind a common goal. I truly hope this takes off and becomes something rather great.

Speaking out and sharing the various athlete opinions has always been one of my favorite parts of this position. I love learning about the different sides of each issue as seen through the athletes of small clubs, large clubs, outstate clubs, and metro clubs. While their opinions and ideas differ tremendously sometimes, they all share a common goal of providing the best experience possible for both themselves, and their teammates throughout the LSC. One issue that has come up multiple times throughout my involvement in Minnesota Swimming this past year regards the state championship meets, specifically; a proposal to have both Age Group and Senior State Meets on the same weekend at separate locations has come up often. The overwhelming majority of athletes have voiced the opinion, no matter where they live and swim, that this would not be the ideal scenario and we would like to avoid this outcome if at all possible. They feel that to place these meets in the same weekend would put unnecessary strain both on smaller clubs with few coaches and on families with different aged athletes by forcing members of the LSC to choose to support either one meet or the other.

Finally, as we approach the end of the year, I have begun reflecting on the performance of our Athlete Committee over the past season, and considering ways to improve our effectiveness moving into the future. A huge thank you is in order to everyone who was involved with the committee this year and I look forward to working with you all next season as well! Next year, I would like to have monthly meetings, just as updates about meets and situations happening in the various parts of our LSC, as well as reports from the athletes on other committees so we know what others are thinking.. Recently in the past month, I have been speaking with more clubs about having an athlete on the committee. The more we increase our various opinions, the more we increase our voice as a whole. I especially want to include members from outstate clubs because they attend different meets. I am excited to see what our athlete committee does next year! Also, a new addition to our athlete committee next year will be the implementation of t-shirts and hats for the members of the committee as an incentive for participation!

Thank you to everyone who has supported me and my fellow athletes this past year! Now, onto the 2018-19 season!

Respectfully Submitted,
Megan Burrows
Junior Athlete Representative
Minnesota Swimming