

# Thanksgiving Message from the Coaches

*"It is not happy people who are thankful. It is thankful people who are happy." unknown*

We hope everyone had a very **Happy Thanksgiving**. When we tell parents that we have swim practice on Thanksgiving morning, most people's response is the same, "you *make* people train on Thanksgiving", or "why would *anyone* want to practice on Thanksgiving? or, "you have to *work* on Thanksgiving?" To the contrary, it is one of the most positive and inspiring workouts of the year, and possibly in the country. After a team meeting and college swimmer introductions, we had eighty swimmers in the pool and swam 7,000 yards in our typical holiday "theme" fashion. It was a workout that replicated a Thanksgiving meal (see attached workout and photos) and although we got a few "I'm not hungries," the kids did a great job. I am not sure how many teenagers find themselves training hard with an extraordinary group of dedicated, high-character peers on a holiday morning, but I can assure you there is *nothing* negative about it. I would also suggest that if any of those parents that question "training" on Thanksgiving could see our group and our environment, they would unquestionably want their children to be a part of it.

We cannot tell you how rewarding it is to see all of the college swimmers return. We had over thirty at practice, from; Indiana, Georgetown, Pitzer, Cal Poly, UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego, Redlands, Rice, NYU, Boston College, San Diego State, Cal, Whitman, Davis, Carnegie Mellon, Bucknell, TCU, Iowa, Willamette, Johns Hopkins, UCLA, Dartmouth, and West Point. We see them swimming very well and becoming leaders and captains on their respective teams. We assure them that they are not just swimmers; they are extraordinary examples of student-athletes at the highest level, and *great* role models. While we always look for success in the pool, it is our sincere hope that who these swimmers become outside of the pool ultimately defines their experience, their success, and who they are as people. In addition to the college swimmers in attendance, we had almost twenty OA alumni and college graduates stop by to visit while in town. It is truly heartwarming to see them and to follow their life paths.

At this time of giving thanks, we thank our swimmers not only for their commitment to the sport, but also for their commitment the team, to our culture, and to something outside of themselves. We would also like to thank the parents for your support of Orinda Aquatics and of your children to be student-athletes at this level. On a day of thanks, you are at the top of the list! We are also very thankful to have the added support, passion, and team commitment from our new coaches Dominic Patterson and Kati McDermott.

And for us personally, we could not be more grateful for this incredible opportunity that we have. Our passion and life dream is also our career. In our forty years of coaching, we have never referred to it as "work." And what makes it so rewarding is not the success achieved but the daily interaction with these extraordinary young adults and the great team environment *they* create.

With sincere gratitude,

The OA Coaching Staff: Donnie, Ronnie, Matt, Marc, Dom, and Kati

*"We should certainly count our blessings, but we should also make our blessings count." N. Maxwell*



