

## PARENT/SWIMMER INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE LETTER

Dear Parents and Swimmers,

Hello! My name is Sharon Weiss, Head Coach of Lakeridge Swim Team, and Doctoral Candidate in Counseling and Educational Psychology at the University of Nevada, Reno. What an exciting time in the sport of swimming! With the Beijing Olympics on the horizon, USA Swimming is preparing to send perhaps its strongest squad ever.

I am writing to you today to invite you to participate in my doctoral dissertation study on swimmers' beliefs about what they are like and what they think others think they are like. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Since 1971, I have had the great fortune of being involved in competitive swimming, first on the age group and collegiate levels, then as a swim instructor, next as a coach in USA Swimming (since 1986), and finally as a swim parent (from 1992 to present). In the past several years, I have also had the wonderful opportunity to learn more about human growth and development in my doctoral program at the University of Nevada, Reno. During my time both in the classroom and on deck, I have developed a special interest in understanding young people's ideas about themselves.

The purpose of my study is to take a look at how swimmers see themselves and how they think others see them in certain areas, such as athletics, and also to look at the beliefs of parents and coaches regarding their swimmers in these areas. What I hope to learn from this study is more about how different people's ideas might be related, which could help researchers, educators, parents, and coaches have a better understanding of young people's beliefs about themselves.

All individuals who agree to participate (swimmers, parents, and coaches) in this study will be asked to fill out their own online-questionnaires, estimated to take approximately 20-25 minutes for swimmers and approximately 5 minutes each for parents and coaches.

Parents, specific information I will ask of your child, in addition to their questionnaire responses, will include their age, gender, current GPA, and current Best Times in their three best events. If they don't have best times yet, they will simply put 'NT' for No Time in the space provided. If they do have best times, but don't have them recorded, these times can be found in the USA Swimming database at <http://www.usaswimming.org/usasweb/DesktopDefault.aspx> (see Times/Time Standards). No other information about your child will be requested at any time. Again, all information used to help me match swimmer, parent, and coach questionnaires, like names, will be destroyed immediately upon receiving questionnaires, with only code number being used for the remainder of the study, and no information will ever be published or shared with anyone, including other participants.

Every participant's right to privacy will be respected at all times throughout this study.

You will not be personally identified in any reports or publications that may result from this study. To assure the confidentiality of the information obtained in this study as well as protect the privacy of each participant, questionnaires are formatted (with Hypertext Preprocessor, or PHP scripting language) for use online. No questionnaire responses or information will be cached, or remembered by the computer on which the survey is completed and submitted. What this means is that once a survey is submitted, if any individual tries to return to the survey using the back button or the computer's history, the computer will recall the page from the server only, and reload an empty page, thus not revealing any responses given by a participant. Therefore, computer cookies will not be used and at no time will IP addresses be collected or forwarded with survey responses. Next, all the information that you provide will be sent directly to me, using what is called a Secure Socket Layer (SSL). This means that all the information you give is secretly coded (encrypted) until it arrives safely in my private email, and I am the only one with the password. All of your responses will be kept strictly confidential and no information that may identify you will ever be published or shared with anyone other than myself, including other participants. Once I receive your questionnaires, all information I use to identify you, for example, names that help match swimmer, parents, and coach questionnaires, will be replaced with participants' code numbers and destroyed immediately.

For all parts of this study, from recruiting volunteers to collecting and analyzing data, I will honor and obey my certification for conducting research with human subjects. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time, without penalty or consequence. I do not expect any direct benefit to you as a result of your involvement in this study. I do, however, hope that in addition to the possibility that you may have a sense of satisfaction in knowing that you made a contribution to the understanding of human development, the information that you provide will help researchers, educators, parents, and coaches have a better understanding of individuals' beliefs about themselves.

While there may be unknown and/or unforeseeable risks associated with your participation in this study, I do not anticipate that participants will experience any harm or personal discomfort from their involvement in this study. The questionnaires used in this study are among the most commonly used questionnaires in research with early adolescents and have been administered to a wide range of early adolescents and adults. The time commitment of 20-25 minutes for the swimmers, on the other hand, might be experienced as an inconvenience. This potential risk has been minimized in two ways. First, instead of administering one of the questionnaires (What I am Like) in its entirety, only those items that have to do specifically with this study (beliefs about academics, athletics, and physical appearance) have been used, thus reducing the number of questionnaire items from 45 down to 20. Second, the time factor for swimmers has also been addressed by offering the questionnaires online. Online administration is estimated to take less time than the traditional paper and pencil method. In addition, filling out questionnaires online will also offer more privacy and confidentiality for participants than the more common group administration in the classroom setting, also reducing any potential risk that questionnaire responses would be seen by anyone other than the researcher. Finally, all participants are

asked not discuss their responses with each other, unless each participant feels comfortable doing so, and then, only after all questionnaire responses have been submitted.

You may ask about your rights as a research subject or you may report (anonymously if you so choose) any comments, concerns, or complaints to the University of Nevada, Reno Social Behavioral Institutional Review Board, telephone number (775) 327-2368, or by addressing a letter to the Chair of the Board, c/o UNR Office of Human Research Protection, 205 Ross Hall / 331, University of Nevada, Reno, Reno, Nevada, 89557.

If you would like to participate in this study, simply email me, Sharon Weiss, at [sharonaw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sharonaw@sbcglobal.net) and let me know you're interested. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them. Thank you again for considering participation in my doctoral dissertation study.

Sincerely,

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