

Charles Teague and Atim Kilama – 2016 Short Course YMCA Nationals Devotion

Charles:

Hello, I'm Charles Teague, and I've been swimming for eleven years, seven of which have been spent with the Brandywine-Delaware YMCA. Being part of a small team from a small state, I've swum with the same group of teammates since we were all 9 years old. We've been with each other through a plethora of massive time gains, massive time drops, the torturous hours of training and chlorine-infested air, the giddy ease of long-awaited taper practices, meets that feel like more correctional activities, and meets like YMCA nationals, which remind us that everything we've done has been worth it. Going through so much with a group of people cultivates family-level friendship, which is only heightened by the value the YMCA places on teamwork and camaraderie. The Y program's encouragement of responsibility as one of its four core values also leads us to become more organized and responsible out of the pool. While I often feel entirely jealous of non-swimmers at my school who get home at 2:30 and have 7 or 8 hours to do their homework, I've realized that the increased diligence, work ethic, and positive rewards that everyone gets out of swimming 100% outweigh the sacrifice.



Atim:

Hi, I'm Atim Kilama and I have been on the Brandywine YMCA for about 8 years now, and I am sad to say this will be my last short course nationals as I will be leaving for study abroad in China this August, but the countless memories I have made on the team will not be forgotten. When I think of the YMCA I think of friendships, family and a place I can go to when I need help with my problems. Joining the YMCA is probably one of the best things I've decided to do in my life. Joining the Y changed me for the greater good. The family unity you form during your swimming career lasts a lifetime and, as my coach always says "You guys may fight like cats and dogs but you are still brothers and sisters." Cherish the moments that you have with you friends because these will be friendships that will last a forever. If I didn't join the swim team as an 8 year old I don't know where I would be now. I have really come a long way from being that little girl who couldn't even do one lap of fly to the girl who now has to try avoid doing the 200 fly, which my coach always likes seeing me swim for some reason. I am so proud to be part of a team where we can be ourselves and have the support we need from our teammates. We all made it here today because of the hard work we have put in, the countless morning practices, the test sets that we all seem to groan at every time coach starts writing it on the board, but these have made us better swimmers, they've made us stronger and they've made us ready to compete and show everyone what we are capable of, so I want to wish everyone here good luck tonight and to be great because you never know who you're inspiring and I would like to end with a prayer. Dear lord give me patience and faith with you and in you, all things are possible, Amen.