



2019 YMCA Swimming Coach of the Year Ed Steinnagel, East Hartford YMCA (CT)

Ed Steinnagel has been coaching with the East Hartford YMCA for 33 years. In that time, he has been the driving force in the survival and growth of swimming, not only in the local YMCA but in the East Hartford community as well. He brought the team from a mere 17 swimmers to annual membership over 120. Ed sets a strong example for his swimmers and has established a culture that demonstrates and celebrates the core values of Honesty, Caring, Respect and Responsibility. He is described as a "wonderful mediator and moderator, involving the kids in problem-solving" whenever possible. He primarily coaches age group swimmers and supports them both in and out of the pool.

Ed is constantly looking for ways to motivate and empower his team. An avid bike rider himself, he knows that several of his swimmers ride their bicycles to practice. He regularly helps team members repair and maintain their bicycles safely. He also leads a team effort to clean up the streets of East Hartford, teaching his athletes how easy it is to take pride in their community.

While he works most directly with younger swimmers, he supports and follows the efforts of those swimmers throughout the program. More than a decade ago, as the team was growing in size and levels of success, Ed started his own fundraising effort that he calls "Nickels for Nationals". This program helps swimmers pay for the trip to YMCA Nationals when they qualify. He personally collects donations of aluminum cans and turns them in, consistently raising more money each year. Even after they have graduated, Ed takes time to encourage and celebrate them through college and careers.

His generosity seemingly knows no limits. He provides suits, caps and goggles to those in need and spends his extra time helping the local high school and conference run their meets. The team holds an annual food drive for the East Hartford Food Bank.

In his nomination, a former swimmer who is now a team parent and coach, talks about the sense of family that Ed creates by making each individual feel valued as an important part of the whole. He truly uses the lessons of the sport to teach the lessons of life. He speaks to each person each day and is not afraid to dance, jump, shout and draw tattoos on himself to get his swimmers excited to swim.

Ed is a truly selfless and dedicated coach who embodies the YMCA's core values and focus on achievement, belonging and relationships.

