Swim with Mike’s campaign total from the 42nd annual event produced $1.2 Million for endowment and current scholarship funds, thanks to the generosity of thousands of donors and Jersey Mike’s Subs. This fundraising success allowed the Swim with Mike Scholarship Council to award $615,000 in scholarship support for the 2023-24 academic year to 43 students (five attending USC) at 36 universities in 19 states across the nation.

Inside this newsletter you will meet our 11 new SWM scholars. These are impressive young people who have submitted stellar applications, were interviewed by our SWM Scholarship Council members and represent the qualities of the SWM mission: to change the lives of student athletes who have experienced catastrophic injury or illness by providing scholarships, creating community and instilling hope and purpose. Each accepted applicant proved that the SWM scholarship will make an impact upon their lives and hope to pass it along as they achieve their educational, professional and personal goals – continuing the SWM Ripple Effect. These new scholarship recipients join 32 returning students for this academic year.

We would like to take this opportunity to underscore the importance of SWM’s long-standing relationship with the University of Southern California, the impact of the USC presence and its commitment to supporting USC physically challenged scholarships since the beginning. We continue to honor the commitment to USC in recognition of our founding and tremendous institutional support. At the same time, through the generosity of friends of USC we are able to support our mission to serve physically challenged students where the gift of education will benefit them. SWM was founded and fostered at the University since 1981. Many of our benefactors, friends and supporters are Trojans. SWM scholarship recipients receive generous tuition support to attend USC.

Additionally, it was USC and Swim with Mike leadership and sportsmanship that led to offering SWM scholarships to other universities – opening up to a National Foundation and expanding our program – recognizing that it’s about the mission and not school colors.

SWM also enjoys an important relationship with the USC Uytengsu Aquatics Center, the home of our annual event since the 3rd Annual 1983 SWM. The UAC has a great deal of meaning to the SWM family as many friends and donors were a significant part of the UAC renovation completed in 2014. Fred and Kerri Uytengsu, for whom the facility is named are the primary donors to the aquatics center. Fred is a SWM Board member and was a USC Swimming teammate of SWM President Neil Macready. We also enjoy the Swim with Mike Room for our events and meetings.

SWM and the USC pool also share a relationship with the Summer Olympics. The 3rd Annual SWM event was the first event held at the McDonald’s Pool in 1983 for the 1984 Olympics and the Uytengsu Aquatics Center will serve as the Warmup Pool for the Olympic Games in 2028.

All of this would never have been possible without our loyal and committed donors and volunteers who tirelessly support our mission, and we greatly appreciate their efforts.
MEET OUR NEW SCHOLARSHIP

STEVEN AZARIAN
Arizona State University, BS Business Administration

At the age of 12, Steven experienced a life-altering event, sustaining a firework injury that resulted in the amputation of his right hand. Despite spending six days in the hospital, he determined not to let this setback deter him from pursuing his ambitions. On the seventh day, he eagerly returned to school, and as soon as his arm had healed, he wasted no time in returning to his true passion - swimming. He was determined not to allow this accident to prevent him from doing anything he had previously enjoyed doing.

With his father being an alumnus of USC, Steven had heard about Swim With Mike and attended two events at the Uytengsu Aquatics Center, where he had the opportunity to participate in swim clinics. He enjoyed the events and meeting Swim With Mike friends and family. Steven looks forward to realizing his bachelor's degree in business at Arizona State University.

BRANDON LOUIE
University of Arizona, BA Economics/Pre-Law

Brandon was diagnosed with surfer's myelopathy, which presents itself in the form of complete T-11 paralyzsis, as the result of swelling around the spinal cord after standing up on his surfboard, hyperextending his back in the process. Brandon has been active in the Boy Scouts, where he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, organizing troop meetings and volunteer opportunities, camping trips, and planning and fundraising for an Eagle Project to help a local church. He enjoys playing the guitar and was a member of the Melody Academy of Music where he conducted auditions and performed in recitals, and taught himself the main themes of classic movies and TV shows. He also performed songs on his guitar during worship at his church, playing guitar solos and recording music for online church services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brandon has gained some new hobbies since his diagnosis including wheelchair basketball and track and field. He is finishing up his second season for both sports and is committed to playing wheelchair basketball for the University of Arizona men's wheelchair basketball team. He has played on the BORP Jr Road Warriors for both seasons of basketball and competed for the Los Altos Track and Field Team as the first adaptive athlete in their program. He is grateful to have learned about Swim With Mike through one of his peers on his basketball team.

CHARLES DEGENNARO
Sacred Heart University, BA Sports Media & Communication

In February 2020, Charles suffered a non-traumatic spinal cord injury caused by acute transverse myelitis. At the time, he was a high school freshman and had just completed his junior varsity basketball season. Due to his injury, he lost significant use of his hands and arms, particularly his dominant hand. He cannot write or use his left hand for any useful purpose. He was able to regain his walking ability with a limp, but his balance is often an issue. As Charles continues to recover, everyday tasks are often quite challenging, but his passion for competitive sports has not wavered. He loves to watch and cheer on his favorite sports teams. One day, he hopes to participate in capacity playing, and his goal is to be a manager for a college basketball team. In his spare time, he also enjoys spending time with friends and family and playing video games.

RECIPIENTS FOR 2023-24

SYDNEY FOWLER
Anderson University, BS Business Marketing & Entrepreneurship

At the age of 13, Sydney was paralyzed due to a staph infection that seeded in her spine and compressed her thoracic spinal cord. After two emergency spine surgeries (laminectomies) to remove the infection and decompress the spinal cord, the compression resulted in significant, cross-sectional damage at the T-4/T-5 level, leaving her paralyzed from the lower chest down. Having excelled as a player on a nationally-ranked club volleyball team, she was soon introduced to the world of adaptive sports. That's when she realized she could still be an athlete and says, "it just looks a little different than it looked when I was upright."

She returned to CrossFit, and now competes in the adaptive division, and finished the 2022 CrossFit Games competition 8th in the world. Sydney also learned to waterski in a seated position with specialized equipment and trains regularly on a local lake with a Paralympic coach. She's a member of the Shepherd Skiers competitive waterski team with hopes of one day competing at the world level. After learning wheelchair tennis she was recruited to play wheelchair tennis as an affiliate player for Clemson University. Sydney is pursuing her Bachelor of Science in Marketing and Entrepreneurship at Anderson University.

MASON BRANSTRATOR
University of Denver, BA Psychology, Philosophy, Marketing & Design

In 2021, Mason went off a jump while alpine skiing that changed his life forever and ended his (upright) high-school sports career dead in its tracks. After landing on his head and shoulders, he instantly broke his T11-12 vertebrae leaving him an incomplete paraplegic from the waist down. From a young age, Mason has always had a passion for art, especially drawing and painting, and more recently, he has developed an active interest in filmmaking and graphic design. Bringing all these skills together, Mason tells his incredible journey of strength online to inspire others. He enjoys finding and sharing resources to help improve the lives of others with a physical disability and has grown his community by connecting with people through social media. In addition to his artistic pursuits, Mason enjoys the team-building and competitive side of organized sports, yard games, and working out. He loves to swim and play pickleball. He loves a strategy game where he can advance his in-game problem-solving skills. Mason enjoys working on a good board or card game with friends and family.

Referred to Swim With Mike by fellow recipient Myles Molnar, he is grateful to be a part of the Swim With Mike Family.

RACHEL MILLER
USC, BS Biochemistry

In January 2018, Rachel developed a viral infection, which started to destroy her connective tissue, leading to three months of hospitalization and two years of bed-bound rest and recovery. An active softball player and swimmer prior to her illness, her road to recovery has been a difficult adjustment. The discipline she developed as an athlete has paid off, as she has regained some mobility in her upper extremities because of intense physical therapy over the past 5 years. Rachel is proud to be a Swim With Mike scholarship recipient. Her friend and fellow recipient Myles Molnar referred her to the foundation, and she has since met Natalie Fung, another USC recipient. She happened upon fellow recipient Mason Branstrator while both were present at the 42nd Swim, and yet another friendship was formed. Rachel's mom was a lifeguard at USC, graduating in 1988, and she remembers Swim With Mike in its early days. Rachel is a triathlete, and her two sisters also attend USC.
KAILIN PIPPENGER
Morningside University, BS Biology

As a result of a car accident when she was a high school sophomore, Kailin’s spine had a displacement of vertebrae T4 and T5. She was diagnosed with a spinal cord injury and paralysis. While rehabilitating at Craig Hospital, she met fellow recipient Myles Molnar. A three-sport athlete in volleyball, basketball and track, Kailin graduated from Bainville High School in 2020. She was recognized with the Bulldog P.R.I.D.E Award, acknowledging a student who shows positivity, respect, integrity, determination, and empathy. In addition to this award, Kailin was recognized as the Salutatorian of her class and as a member of the Dean’s List. She enjoys spending time fishing, baking, spending time with her dogs and family, working out, and attending sporting events. She has recently acquired a new interest in cross-stitching and also competes in CrossFit. She heard about Swim With Mike while training for a national competition at a gym in Denver, Colorado. She had the opportunity to work out with another adaptive athlete who was a Swim With Mike alumni, who encouraged her to apply for a scholarship.

BRENDAN SHEA
University of Massachusetts Lowell, MS Accounting

Brendan works part time for the Massachusetts rehabilitation commission assisting people with disabilities pursue education and professional careers. As a volunteer and peer mentor for the Boston chapter of the United Spinal Association, he helps mentor and advise fellow peers who have also survived a spinal cord injury. Brendan’s hobbies and interests include lots of exercise and working out to regain his physical function. In addition, he enjoys being creative and using his construction knowledge to build physical therapy equipment around the house. He has modified his wheelchair and enjoys adjusting things around the house to make them more accessible for him to use. He builds physical therapy equipment and assistive technology. Physical therapy and exercise are extremely important to Brendan, and he continues to be creative in finding new ways to do this. Growing up, he worked several summer and after-school jobs helping with landscape construction, carpentry, and plumbing. He has found that these skills continue to be very valuable. He learned about Swim With Mike through the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation.

AJAY SHENOY
University of California Berkeley, MS Nutritional Sciences and Dietetics

A swimmer and water polo player, in 2018 a diving accident caused Ajay to fracture his C-5 vertebra, resulting in incomplete quadriplegia. He had just completed his B.A in Ecology & Evolutionary Biology at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where he was also on the water polo team. His hobbies include surfing, scuba diving, mountain biking, adaptive rowing, wheelchair rugby, listening to music, traveling, and weight training.

He learned about Swim With Mike through alumn Jake Olson and current recipient Myles Molnar. Ajay looks forward to getting involved in the organization after he attended the Swim With Mike event at the USC Uytengsu Aquatics Center in 2022. A native of San Jose, he has been accepted to UC Berkeley’s Master of Nutritional Sciences and Dietetics (MNSD) program and is a member of its inaugural class.

THE WAVE
Fall 2023 Edition
WWW.SWIMWITHMIKE.ORG

MEET OUR NEW SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

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2023-24 RETURNING SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Josh Brewer, University of Texas Arlington, BS Business Administration
Nadia Burns, University of Georgia, BA Fashion Merchandising and S Sustainability
Ruben Casas, UC Davis, MS Business Analytics
Dillon Connolly, USC, MS Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Abigail Curtis, University of Lynchburg, MS Education (School Counseling)
Gabby Durgin, Southern Oregon University, BA Psychology
Natalie Fung, USC, MS Communication Data Science
Hunter Garstin, Northern Kentucky University, MS Industrial Organizational Psychology
Alice Goldmeier, William James College, Doctor of Clinical Psychology
Parker Haller, George Mason University, BA Film and Video Studies
Nick Harris, UC Davis, BIS Psychology
Blake Hatler, University of Texas Austin, BA Economics/Government
Matt Hylen, Bridgewater State University, BIS Criminal Justice
Elia Ive, Louisiana State University, BA Business, Apparel and Textile Design
Jonathan Jimenez, USC, MS Integrated Design, Business and Technology
Amanda Joens, University of Nevada, Reno, BIS Kinesiology
Charles Kennedy, Hilkdale College, BA Economics
Ian Malesinski, Harvard Law School, Juris Doctor
Allison McManus, Georgia Tech, BS Engineering Management
Nick Miles, Arizona State University, BA Psychology
Myles Molnar, USC, BS Applied Mathematics
Rachel Norris, Texas Tech University, BS Biology
Jack O’Neil, University of Wyoming, BA Journalism
Joe Radanovich, Texas Christian University, BA Finance
Krista Ramirez-Villafuerte, UCLA, MA Design and Media Arts
Danny Smuts, University of Missouri, BA Secondary Education
Aaron Stant, University of Michigan, Master of Architecture
Jake Thibeault, Babson College, BS Business Management
Hayden Werdel, Seattle University, BS Psychology and Human Biology
Mark Wilbourne, University of Colorado, Boulder, BS Aerospace Engineering
Erica Wilson, Duke University, Doctor Occupational Therapy
McKenna Woodhead, Clemson University, BS Recreational Therapy

RECIPIENTS FOR 2023-24

AUSTIN SOMERVILLE
Clemson University, BS Biomedical Engineering

In May 2020, Austin was attending a friend’s pool party. The pool and hot tub were filled with dish soap, creating a layer of bubbles above the surface of the water. Due to the layer of bubbles, Austin was unable to see the depth of the water and hit his head at the bottom of the pool, breaking the C-5, C-6, and C-7 vertebrae in his neck which resulted in a spinal cord injury. He was immediately paralyzed from his high chest and throughout his body. A friend noticed that something was wrong and saved Austin from drowning. After a lengthy recovery and diligent physical therapy, he was able to regain some mobility and function throughout his body. Austin loves adaptive kayaking, watching college football, studying the Bible, and participating in Bible studies, building LEGO's, playing video games, watching documentaries, traveling, working, and learning about the human body, space, science, and astronomy. He is a peer mentor for the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation/Shepard Center Peer Mentor Program and participates in multiple community and church volunteer programs. He graduated in May 2023 and received the LIFE Scholarship for S.C. and graduated with honors.

ALEX UPPENKAMP
San Diego State University, BS Environmental Engineering

In 2019, Alex crashed his mountain bike by overshooting a 30-foot jump and broke his neck. Landing on his head, he fractured his C4-C6 vertebrae, but the doctors fused his neck from C3-C6. In San Diego, he was in ICU for 35 days before he was transferred to Craig Hospital for extensive rehabilitation. Growing up, Alex participated in sports like mountain biking, motorcycle riding, and Little League baseball. In high school, he became more involved in mountain biking and started participating in surfing, photography, and climbing. He rode at least 50 miles a week on his mountain bike. He was actively involved in the San Diego Mountain Biking Association and volunteered to perform trail maintenance. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering at San Diego State University.

2023-24 RETURNING SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

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Nadia Burns, University of Georgia, BA Fashion Merchandising and Sustainability
Ruben Casas, UC Davis, MS Business Analytics
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Abigail Curtis, University of Lynchburg, MS Education (School Counseling)
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Hunter Garstin, Northern Kentucky University, MS Industrial Organizational Psychology
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Jonathan Jimenez, USC, MS Integrated Design, Business and Technology
Amanda Joens, University of Nevada, Reno, BIS Kinesiology
Charles Kennedy, Hilkdale College, BA Economics
Ian Malesinski, Harvard Law School, Juris Doctor
Allison McManus, Georgia Tech, BS Engineering Management
Nick Miles, Arizona State University, BA Psychology
Myles Molnar, USC, BS Applied Mathematics
Rachel Norris, Texas Tech University, BS Biology
Jack O’Neil, University of Wyoming, BA Journalism
Joe Radanovich, Texas Christian University, BA Finance
Krista Ramirez-Villafuerte, UCLA, MA Design and Media Arts
Danny Smuts, University of Missouri, BA Secondary Education
Aaron Stant, University of Michigan, Master of Architecture
Jake Thibeault, Babson College, BS Business Management
Hayden Werdel, Seattle University, BS Psychology and Human Biology
Mark Wilbourne, University of Colorado, Boulder, BS Aerospace Engineering
Erica Wilson, Duke University, Doctor Occupational Therapy
McKenna Woodhead, Clemson University, BS Recreational Therapy
Swim with Mike Foundation Legacy Circle is a community of friends and family including SWMF in their estate planning and those who established endowed scholarships. We would like to acknowledge Board member and fellow teammate, Bruce Furniss, for his tireless leadership in establishing this endowment and planned giving program. Legacy Circle includes gifts from a Will or Trust; Life Insurance; Charitable Remainder Trusts and Charitable Gift Annuities; Appreciated Securities, Real Property; IRA and Annuity Beneficiary Designations; Business interests, Closely Held Stock and Partnerships.

We honor and recognize the following Legacy Circle Founding members who so graciously and generously provided a gift through their estate, a gift that will leave an enduring philanthropic legacy benefiting the Swim with Mike Foundation in perpetuity. Below, please find a brief glimpse into a few friends representing their relationships to Swim with Mike, our organization and commitment to our future.

**DON WINSTON**

Why you decided to include SWM in your estate plan and why SWM is important to you?

SWM was a great support for our son, Jim, when he was involved in a 1996 auto accident which caused him serious injuries and he became a quadriplegic. He decided to expand his previous career in film by attending graduate school at USC’s Cinema School and this educational activity and his support from SWM changed his life.

How long have you been associated with SWM?

I have been involved with SWM since its inception in 1981, and have had a long friendship with Ron. We worked closely together at the USC Athletic Department. SWM is a wonderful program that offers physically challenged athletes, their families and friends many opportunities when facing life-changing accidents. Marcy and I wanted set up an endowed scholarship to benefit other SWM scholarship recipients the way Jim has benefited. So, we set up an endowed scholarship partially with current funds and the remainder in our estate.

**MARA HUNTER REDDEN**

Why you decided to include SWM in your estate plan and why SWM is important to you?

Swim with Mike has been my passion and my treasured family. We are a family of scholar athletes who understand the importance of a good education and the life lessons we learn from sports. The SWM recipients far exceed our expectations in these areas. They are some of the most impressive human beings we have been blessed to know. They are bold, tenacious, and ambitious individuals who continually overcome unfathomable adversity to excel in life. We could not be prouder to be associated with the SWM recipients and to support this amazing organization.

When I was awarded the “Claire Snow Volunteer of the Year Award” in 2018, our oldest had graduated from USC and our other three children were still attending USC. My wife and I felt it was important to provide our young adult children with an example of giving to an organization that had been near and dear to our hearts for so many years. We produced the idea to leave a legacy by starting an endowed scholarship for SWM. We asked my three adult children with an example of giving to an organization that had been near and dear to our hearts for so many years. We produced the idea to leave a legacy by starting an endowed scholarship for SWM. We asked my three adult children (Marcy, Marcy and Steve) along with numerous friends to help fund the scholarship. I encourage more people to take on this challenge; it was a great experience!

I should add that SWM is a family affair for us. My wife and children have many fond memories of attending the annual swim with me and to this day, we have never missed a year. Additionally, when our daughter Brooke attended USC, she opted to do work study with SWM and our other three children were still attending USC. When I was awarded the “Claire Snow Volunteer of the Year Award” in 2018, our oldest had graduated from USC and our other three children were still attending USC. My wife and I felt it was important to provide our young adult children with an example of giving to an organization that had been near and dear to our hearts for so many years. We produced the idea to leave a legacy by starting an endowed scholarship for SWM. We asked my three adult children (Marcy, Marcy and Steve) along with numerous friends to help fund the scholarship. I encourage more people to take on this challenge; it was a great experience!

**Furniss family at Bruce’s 2018 Claire Snow Volunteer Award L-R Quinn, Brooke, Sharon, Bruce, Kyle, and Troy**

**Furniss family at USC Uytengsu – Daughter Brooke on deck; Front row L-R Susan Quinn, Troy, Kyle; Back row L-R Brothers Chip, Steve and Craig with Bruce in the Center.**

“**We can’t think of a better legacy for which to leave a portion of our estate. SWM scholarships assist such deserving and awe-inspiring individuals.**

Why you dedicated your efforts for the SWMF organization to recognize the community of donors? Why you decided to include SWMF in your estate plan and the importance of SWMF to you?

I was Mike’s USC swim teammate and his roommate in my junior year (his senior year). We had been friends since our early swimming days before attending USC together. I was devastated when I was informed of Mike’s accident. It didn’t take long before my teammates and I planned to do something big to help Mike with the exorbitant cost of procuring equipment, including a modified van. We didn’t think twice because we felt that it is just what friends and teammates do for each other. When Mike attended the first Swim For Mike and announced he would be back the next year for Swim With Mike, I easily fell in love with the whole event’s purpose because I could see firsthand that it not only eases the financial burden of a life-changing event, but it gives people hope for a great future. Mike is a living testimony to the SWM mission.

When our kids were young, my wife and I established a family trust, and though it has gone through a few revisions, we have always kept SWM as a beneficiary. In our trust, we chose to donate a significant percentage of our estate to the Swim with Mike Foundation once our trust is monetized and subsequently dissolved. Swim with Mike’s mission aligns closely with the values important to our family. We are a family of scholar athletes who understand the importance of a good education and the life lessons we learn from sports. The SWM recipients far exceed our expectations in these areas. They are some of the most impressive human beings we have been blessed to know. They are bold, tenacious, and ambitious individuals who continually overcome unfathomable adversity to excel in life. We could not be prouder to be associated with the SWM recipients and to support this amazing organization.

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I should add that SWM is a family affair for us. My wife and children have many fond memories of attending the annual swim with me and to this day, we have never missed a year. Additionally, when our daughter Brooke attended USC, she opted to do work study with SWM leading the student volunteers. SWM has always been fully ingrained into our family’s culture, and we hope our children will continue to carry the torch with their families and their children.
ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS
An Endowed Scholarship may be created with a gift of $100,000 or more to SWM, which is payable over a five-year period. The gift provides scholarship support in perpetuity using the interest produced from the corpus of the gift.

Jennifer Walsh General Endowed Scholarship Fund
Marilyn Mikos Endowed Scholarship
Rosemary Knauer Endowed Scholarships (3)
Yvonne Bogdanovich Endowed Scholarship
Mayer Leahey Endowed Scholarship
Patsy Dewey and Family Endowed Scholarship
Heidi Noothaar Endowed Scholarship
Furriss Family and Friends Endowed Scholarship
Shawni Mari Hunter Endowed Scholarship
Amir Elbattari Endowed Scholarship
The Sukraw Endowed Scholarship
David Van Wingeren Family and Friends Endowed Scholarship
Johnson-Elbier-Holm Lund Family Endowed Scholarship
Uyengsu Family Endowed Scholarship
Mara Hunter Redden Endowed Scholarship
Karim Larson Executive Director Chair
Will and Linda Gaisse Operating Endowment
Sue and Jim Pemino Endowed Scholarship

Visit our website for more ways to give: www.swimwithmike.org

We hope you will consider supporting the future of Swim with Mike with a gift to our Legacy Circle. Please let us know about your interest so we can steward you as part of the community. Please contact Ron Orr at 626.390.7675, or ronorr@swimwithmike.org to discuss these opportunities.

Scot Obier, our SWMF Treasurer is working with Capital Group managing the endowment, and he reports: “Our current endowment total is $6,497,074. Our endowment ensures our future of supporting physically challenged athletes to pursue the education of their dreams.”

“Since our founding at USC in 1981, volunteers have been at the center of all we’ve accomplished over the past 42 years. Now more than ever, as an independent foundation, Swim with Mike will stand as we continue our work for generations to come.”

All the best,

Swim with Mike Foundation

BECOME A CAMPAIGN LEADER

PLANNED GIVING – LEGACY CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP
Consider a charitable gift and become a Member of the Legacy Circle supporting the Swim with Mike Foundation. Please visit our website to download a planned giving guide.

ENDOWMENT
An endowed scholarship may be created with a $100,000 gift which can be payable over a five-year period. The principal of the gift remains intact and the investment income it generates provides budgetary support for SWM in perpetuity.

CENTOFANTE FAMILY ANNIVERSARY CLUB
Started on the 30th Anniversary of Swim with Mike, the fund was established to honor each graduate with a $300 gift. This year the donation level is $4,300 to celebrate our 43rd year.

LANE SPONSOR
Sponsor a lane at the event with a $1,000 gift. Donations are recognized at the pool on event day and in our annual yearbook.

THE MILLER CHALLENGE
Through the generosity of Stephen Miller, the foundation matches all $430 contributions, $10 each year for 43 years.

BECOME A CAMPAIGN LEADER
Visit www.swimwithmike.org/fundraise for more information.

Visit our website for more ways to give: www.swimwithmike.org

FOREVER CHANGING LIVES

Swim With Mike By The Numbers

43 Years
$29 Million Raised
295 Recipients since 1981
152 Universities Attended
47 States

Jason was a proud Trojan grad, Harvard MBA and Capital Group Companies executive who was an ardent fan and dedicated supporter of Swim with Mike and USC. We would like to share the insights of two of Jason’s longtime friends with you.

I first met Jason in 1986 when I had just joined The Capital Group Companies. Jason searched me out in the years. Beyond his financial contributions, he also devoted considerable time and attention over the years. Jason personally encouraged me in expanding the reach of SWM within the Capital Group Companies and with my own career development.

As his health deteriorated over the past five years, I was always pleased with his positive attitude, sense of humor, and the “fight to overcome” determination that so many of our own SWM recipients exhibit daily. In our frequent phone conversations, he often compared his fight with the fight our recipients fight.

I miss my dear friend...“the really big guy” as I often called him, but I know his spirit will be with us always.

Mike Nyeholt
SWM Executive Chairman

WE REMEMBER THE LEGACY OF DEAR FRIEND, JASON PILALAS

I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Jason Pilalas. Although he had been contributing to Swim with Mike for several years, he began sponsoring the Swim with Mike “Yell Leader Challenge” in 1994. This challenge brought together USC Yell Leaders squads from various decades, with alumni swimming in support of Swim with Mike.

At times, as many as fifty alumni would gather to swim over 8,000 laps in a single day. The challenge became an annual cornerstone event for Swim with Mike and continued for nearly 30 years until Jason’s recent passing. Jason, often referred to as “Mr. P,” and “Circle of Good”, bringing friends together, strengthening relationships and aiding young individuals who have suffered tragic accidents and illnesses.

His generous donations to Swim with Mike have provided scholarships and second chances to countless individuals over the years. Beyond his financial contributions, Jason also devoted considerable time and attention to both Swim with Mike and Yell Leader organizations.

His dedication make it clear how deeply he valued the individuals and causes. Jason was a gracious and kind man, and his sense of humor will be sorely missed. His positive impact not only enriched the lives within the Swim with Mike community, including Yell Leaders and scholarship recipients but also extended far beyond, touching the lives of many.

In honor of Jason’s legacy, the USC Yell Leaders will gather for a reunion at the 43rd Annual Swim with Mike event on April 6, 2024 at the USC Uytengsu Aquatics Center.

Troy Remelski
USC Yell Leader Alumn
ALUMNI SPOLIGHT

ALEX RUIZ USC, BA Journalism, Spring 2023

Many know the story of Alex, a high school quarterback, being presented with his first prosthetic leg by his childhood hero, Saints quarterback Drew Brees. But few know the story of former Rams tackle and Hall of Fame Jackie Slater sending a signed football to Alex while he was recovering from his injury. And fewer still know that Jackie’s son Matthew, a wide receiver with the New England Patriots, was also thinking of Alex and sent him a video message wishing him well and good luck with his impending surgery and recovery.

Fast forward to summer 2023. Alex has graduated from USC with his degree in Journalism and moved to Massachusetts for a new job in the public relations department of the New England Patriots. And who did he happen to see on the practice field there but his old friend Matthew Slater, who’s still with the Patriots. This sequence of photos (below) captures Alex and Matthew’s reunion and their recalling of the Slaters’ benevolence toward an injured young athlete.

“This transition has been a significant adjustment for me, as I have never lived outside of California. However, it has been an incredible opportunity so far, and I am eagerly looking forward to the upcoming season.” – Alex Ruiz

1880 CAPITAL INAUGURAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

SPECIAL GUEST - Swim with Mike Alum Jake Olson

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2023

Black Gold Golf Club
One Black Gold Drive
Yorba Linda, CA 92886

7:30 am  Check-In; Breakfast Sandwiches & Burritos
8:30 am  Shot Gun Start Time; 4-Person Scramble
12:00 pm  Lunch
1:00 pm  Awards, Cocktails & Appetizers

$500  Single Player
$2,000  Foursome

Register: Contact Heather Francine
Heather@1880capitalgroup.com
714-299-9829

42ND SWIM WITH MIKE EVENT - APRIL 1, 2023

Smiles all around as alumni, current and prospective recipients assembled after the program.

Includes in the Dewey Family, with Patsy beside Mike Nyeholt, and behind are SWM President Neil Macready and Jersey Mike’s Regional Manager Angel Valenzquez.

Longtime volunteer and co-founder of the SWM Family Association Jennifer Johnson received the 2023 Claire Snow Service Award from Mike.

Make a splash!

Patsy Dewey and her Family were honored with the inaugural 2023 Peter and Tatiana Cancro Making a Difference Award, which recognizes philanthropic individuals who truly make a difference in the lives of others.

Photo: Swim with Mike Alums Zach Pickett and Zack Wentz ruling the court on the final day of the SWM Wheelchair Basketball Tournament. This November, Zach Pickett will be competing in the Para Pan-American Games in Santiago, Chile as a member of the U.S. Para Table Tennis team.

“Off the deck and in the pool for innertube relay!”

L to R Alums Zach Pickett and Zack Wentz ruling the court on the final day of the SWM Wheelchair Basketball Tournament. This November, Zach Pickett will be competing in the Para Pan-American Games in Santiago, Chile as a member of the U.S. Para Table Tennis team.

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SAVE THE DATE
Saturday, April 6, 2024
Uytensu Aquatics Center
Swim with Mike Wheelchair Basketball Tournament
April 5 & 6, 2024
Lyon Recreation Courts
Official Hosts - USC Helenes and Trojan Knights

SWITH WITH MIKE FOUNDATION
Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship Fund
PO BOX 51000 PASADENA, CA 91115 • NEW PHONE NUMBER: (626) 390-7675
Please check out our website at www.swimwithmike.org to learn more about our fundraising activities.