

USMS Swimming Saves Lives Foundation April Adult Learn-to-Swim Month Program Guide

Table of Contents	Page
U.S. Masters Swimming Vision	2
Swimming Saves Lives Foundation	2
Purpose of April is Adult Learn-to-Swim Month	2
Adult Learn-to-Swim Program Requirements and Guidelines	3
General Tasks	4
November/December	4
January/February	4
March	5
April	6
May	6
Communication Message for your Website	7
Registration Template	8
How to Apply for a Proclamation From Your State	9
Marketing Support From USMS	10
Testimonial from Sue Jensen	11

DISCLAIMER: USMS teaches an [Adult Learn-to-Swim Instructor Certification](#) program. [USMS ALTS Instructor Certification](#) is for instructors who are in or want to be in the business of teaching adults. The information in this guide and in the teaching guide are offered as informational resource to assist volunteers who are donating their time for the April Adult Learn-to-Swim initiative so they can be better prepared for their volunteer teaching experience.

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U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING VISION

USMS will be the premier resource for adult aquatic fitness in the United States and will make fitness through swimming available for as many adults as possible.

USMS SWIMMING SAVES LIVES FOUNDATION

The Swimming Saves Lives Foundation is U.S. Masters Swimming's charitable program. Formed in 2012 through the generous contributions of USMS members, SSLF has awarded more than \$125,000 in grants and resources to programs that are providing opportunities for adults to learn to swim and improve their swimming ability.

PURPOSE OF APRIL IS ADULT LEARN-TO-SWIM MONTH

According to Sports & Fitness Industry Association, Americans aspire to swim more than any other activity. Yet, according to the Center for Disease Control, one third of American adults can't swim the length of a swimming pool.

The purpose of April is Adult Learn-to-Swim month is to encourage Masters Swimming programs and USMS members to give of their time teaching other adults the skills of swimming that will instill confidence and hopefully a desire to continue swimming with a Masters Swimming program in their community.

Declaring April Adult Learn-to-Swim month brings visibility and attention to the cause while serving as the month when USMS members actively giveback through this volunteer program.



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ADULT LEARN-TO-SWIM PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

There are a few basic requirements that SSLF requests you follow when participating in the April Adult Learn-to-Swim month program:

Requirements

- Learn-to-Swim is a covered activity under the USMS insurance program meaning all adult learners must be 18-years of age or older;
- Instructors must be current registered USMS members and all adult learners must be current registered members of USMS or they must sign the [30 day guest membership](#);
- The learn-to-swim lessons are to be offered in a swimming pool.

Guidelines

- Volunteer instructors should be provided and asked to read the April Adult Learn-To-Swim Volunteer Teacher Swim Lesson Guide;
- The lessons should be offered during the month of April and may continue into other months;
- While one-to-one instruction is ideal, there should be no more than (1) instructor for every six (6) adult learners;
- It is recommended adult learners be offered five (5) 30 to 60-minute lessons;
- Adult Learners who complete the five lessons hopefully can complete the five Red Cross basic water competencies;
 1. Step or jump into the water over your head;
 2. Return to the surface and float or tread water for one minute;
 3. Turn around in a full circle and find an exit;
 4. Swim 25 yards to the exit;
 5. Exit from the pool without using the ladder.
- Adult Learners who complete the learn-to-swim lessons should be provided an opportunity to continue swimming with a USMS program;
- So we may communicate and recognize your program as an SSLF partner, please register your adult learn-to-swim program with USMS.

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GENERAL TASKS

The following outlines general tasks that should be accomplished to make your April Adult Learn-to-Swim program successful.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

Masters Team Commitment: **You can't do this alone.** You need buy in from members of your USMS club or workout group. Share with your fellow Masters Swimmers why you want to participate in the April Adult Learn-to-Swim initiative. Show your members the feature written by Sue Jensen of the New England LMSC. Sue shares the impact offering an adult learn-to-swim program had on the volunteer instructors, adult learners, and facility operators. Show them the resources and templates provided by the USMS Swimming Saves Lives Foundation.

Define Your Goals: How many of your fellow Masters Swimmers will volunteer their time? And which days? Complete your volunteer sign up list. This information will be important when you meet with your aquatic facility director and ask for pool or lane space. It will also help define how many adult learners you can serve.

Give the April Adult Learn-to-Swim Volunteer Teacher Swim Lesson Guide: Give the guide to those who are volunteering. If you are able, set some days in February or March when the volunteer instructors can meet to discuss the teaching progressions offered in the guide. Establish which volunteer instructors wants to work with participants interested in stroke improvement and those wanting to help participants who are new to water. As indicated in the guide, each requires a very different approach and some volunteers are NOT interested in helping non-swimmers.

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Aquatic Facility Commitment: Meet with your aquatics/facility coordinator to get buy in for the initiative and secure pool space during the month of April. Share with the aquatics coordinator that April is Adult Learn-to-Swim month and how donating pool space will be of benefit to the facility. If the aquatics director can't donate pool space, ask them for a discount to reduce costs. Use the time provided by the aquatics coordinator as the windows you will offer to adult learners.



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Send Your Contact Information to SSLF: SSLF has an online form we ask you to complete so we may communicate with you and recognize your program as an SSLF adult learn-to-swim provider. Completing this form will allow you to be recognized at usms.org/learntoswim and order resources from SSLF.

Apply for a State Proclamation: You may use the proclamation template on page 8 to apply for a proclamation from your governor. If you receive a proclamation, please send the original or a PDF copy to USMS so we may publish it.

MARCH

Promotion: March is when you will be signing up adult learners based on the pool space available and number of volunteer instructors you have. The following are ideas for how you may promote your adult learn-to-swim program:

1. Banner in your facility – USMS will provide a complimentary banner if requested.
 - a. TIP: The front or greeting desk personnel of the facility are likely to get questions about the program including costs and how to sign up. Make sure you have spoken with them so they can be educated ambassadors for your program.
2. Your website – Include information on your website that encourages adult learners to contact you.
3. Fliers – USMS makes available a template flier you may use to generate promotion.
4. E-mail – Send an e-mail invitation to your friends and community colleagues.
5. Be Creative! – If there is a USA Swimming, USA Water Polo, USA Synchro or USA Diving club that practices at your facility, give fliers to the coaches and parents. Invite employees of the facility who want to learn. Invite your Mayor, city leaders and colleagues who work with you and would like to learn.

Registration: Use the SSLF participant registration to manage the schedule. It is recommended that you have only one point person who will be available to answer questions by phone or e-mail.

Instructor Training: Make sure your volunteer instructors have the April Adult Learn-to-Swim Volunteer Teacher Swim Lesson Guide.

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APRIL

Day of Lessons: Be sure all instructors are current registered USMS members. Be sure all adult learners are current registered USMS members or sign the [30-day guest membership](#). Learn-to-swim is a covered activity under the USMS insurance program just like practices and meets so it's important you follow these instructions so that you will not void the insurance coverage provided to your instructors, participants and facility by USMS.

Logistics For Day of Lessons:

- Have a print out of the class rosters including volunteer instructors
- Will you provide snacks and drinks for your instructors?
- Where will the adult learners sign in and be introduced to their volunteer instructor? This is also the point at which you provide them with an SSLF bathing cap.
- Where do supporters of adult learners sit during lessons?

Have fun. Take pictures/videos and publish to social media #AdultLearnToSwim

Participation Certificate: When an adult learner has completed their last class, give them the Swimming Saves Live Foundation participation certificate. Hopefully your facility will share in the pride of the new adult who has learned and consider offering them an incentive such as a discount if they continue swimming with your Masters Swimming program.

Volunteer Certificate: When a volunteer instructor has completed their contribution, give them a Swimming Saves Lives Foundation volunteer appreciation certificate.

MAY

Social: Host a social in May when adult learners and volunteers can come together to celebrate. Distribute participation and volunteer certificates. Write a wrap up story for your Masters Swimming club/workout group newsletter and website.

COMMUNICATION MESSAGE FOR YOUR WEBSITE

April is Adult Learn-to-Swim Month

<Insert Your Masters Program Name> is pleased to participate in April Adult Learn-to-Swim month. We will be offering five days that any adult, age 18 and older, may come learn to swim with our instructors. The program will be offered at <Insert Pool location and address>. <Insert cost for an adult learner to participate>. Lessons will be offered on the following days and times (examples below, insert your days/times):

Tuesday, April 22, 5-7 pm
Thursday, April 24, 5-7 pm
Saturday, April 26, 11-1 pm
Sunday, April 27, 11-1 pm
Tuesday, April 29, 5-7 pm

Adult learners may sign up for a 30 minute or one hour session by e-mailing (insert e-mail address). Space is limited. First come, first serve.

If you are a member of (insert your Masters Swimming program name), and would like to volunteer to teach other adults to swim, please send an email (insert e-mail address).

****“April Adult Learn-to Swim Month is a national campaign endorsed by more than 10-states that have issued proclamations. The Swimming Saves Lives Foundation (the charitable arm of U.S. Masters Swimming) is an advocacy for the cause that adults should be provided an opportunity to learn to swim and be provided an opportunity to continue swimming with a Masters Swimming program in their community. The Swimming Saves Lives Foundation receives contributions from the members of USMS and provides grants and resources to programs that are teaching adults.*

Day _____ Date _____

Class Time _____

Level Key: A - Afraid, B - Beginner, NB
- Non-breather, SI - Stroke



Volunteer Instructors - Level A		Participants - Level A
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Volunteer Instructors - Level B		Participants - Level B
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Volunteer Instructors - Level NB		Participants - Level NB
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Volunteer Instructors - Level SI		Participants - Level SI
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



HOW TO APPLY FOR A STATE PROCLAMATION

Any resident with an address in a state may apply for a proclamation from their state. Generally, there is no cost to apply and applications can be submitted online through your state website by searching “proclamations.” States do not write the proclamation language. Applicants must submit how the proclamation should read. Below is approved copy from USMS of what should be submitted. Once approved, the state may mail or e-mail you the proclamation. They may also invite you to the state office for a picture ceremony. It is advisable to apply for the proclamation in January for an April proclamation. Once you receive a proclamation, please send the original or scanned copy to USMS at cwoods@usms.org.

DRAFT PROCLAMATION FOR THE GREAT STATE OF <INSERT STATE>

WHEREAS *U.S. Masters Swimming (USMS), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; and*
WHEREAS *USMS represents 60,000 adult members who swim with its more than 1,500 local adult swim programs across the country; and*
WHEREAS *The Centers for Disease Control estimates that 37% of American adults could not save themselves if they fell in water over their heads. With the inability to swim affecting people’s lives in a broad spectrum of ways with direct negative implications on American’s quality of life; and*
WHEREAS *Adult drowning is a problem we can solve—teaching adults to swim is the cause of the USMS Swimming Saves Lives Foundation; and*
WHEREAS *The USMS Swimming Saves Lives Foundation has provided grant resources to Masters Swimming programs in <INSERT STATE> so they may teach potentially thousands of adults who might not otherwise have the opportunity in <INSERT STATE>; and*
WHEREAS *The grants and resources to the adult swimming programs for the Adult Learn to Swim program is privately provided by the charitable and generous contributions of 60,000 USMS members and supporters; and*
WHEREAS *April is the ideal month for this designation as pools and other bodies of water open for the spring and summer seasons; and*
WHEREAS *Nationally, April is being recognized as Adult Learn to Swim Month, and with the help of state governments throughout our great nation highlighting this lifesaving effort, the commendable goal of making water available for fun, fitness and health to our fellow non-swimming neighbors can be attained.*

NOW, THEREFORE, I, _____, Governor of the State of <Insert State>, do hereby declare April 2014 as Adult Learn to Swim Month in the great State of <Insert State>.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of <Insert State> to be affixed in the year two thousand fifteen.



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MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL SUPPORT FROM USMS

Upon request, USMS will provide complimentary swim caps for your participants, t-shirts for your instructors, and an Adult Learn-to-Swim banner that you may hang in your facility. Request the number of caps you would need, your banner and t-shirt from Claudia Woods at 941-556-6271 or cwoods@usms.org

To ensure you receive on time, please make your requests prior to February 15, 2015.



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Below is a flyer Blue Wave Aquatics created to promote their volunteer effort for April Adult Learn-to-Swim Month

April is Adult Learn-To-Swim Month

FREE SWIM LESSONS

for the **BEGINNING ADULT SWIMMER**

at the *Federal Way Community Center*

Pre-registration required.
Call (206) 793-9391 or go to
www.bluewave-aquatics.com

Wednesdays:
April 2, 16, 23, 30 | 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Saturdays:
April 5, 19, 26 | 9:30-10:30 a.m.

FREE
swim cap
and goggles
with your
registration



BLUe
wave
aquatics



May 19, 2014

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Swimming Saves Lives

Makes Big Splash in New England

For the poet T.S. Eliot, “April is the cruellest month... mixing memory and desire, stirring dull roots with spring rain.”

But for U.S. Masters Swimming, “April is Adult-Learn-to-Swim Month.” This April, therefore, eight New England Masters swim teams mobilized their teammates – undoubtedly mixing childhood memories with desire, helping adults make the transition from land to water, stirring local communities with their expertise in and love of swimming. Each team brought non-swimmers, fearful swimmers, beginning swimmers, and intermediate swimmers out of the spring rain and into the pool.

For one month, eight New England Masters swim teams - Cambridge Masters Swim Club, Johnson State College Masters, Martha’s Vineyard Masters, Pace Makers Masters Swim Club, Pittsfield Polar Bear Masters, Stowe Masters, The Edge Swim Club, and Worcester Area Masters - offered free swimming lessons to adults. In total, exactly 100 Masters swimmers from these teams volunteered to teach approximately 400 lessons to a total of 175 participants.

These eight NE Masters teams participated in the April Adult Learn-to-Swim initiative, along with 14 other Masters teams from across the country. New England’s disproportionate contribution was due to the singular passion and drive of Bill Meier, Chair of the New England Local Masters Swimming Committee, and Head Coach of Pace Makers Masters Swim Club in Great Barrington, Mass.

Bill and his Pace Makers have offered free learn-to-swim lessons for the past two years. Based on the success of his program, Bill dreamt of expanding throughout New England. He applied for and received a \$5,000 grant from the USMS Swimming Saves Lives Foundation. The grant allowed each participating program in our LMSC to be funded with approximately \$600. Not a poet but perhaps a budding marketer, Bill then coined the slogan “April is Adult-Learn-to-Swim Month.” U.S. Masters Swimming has now adopted it for its national campaign.

“I am incredibly excited that the *Swimming Saves Lives* program was so broadly adopted by New England masters teams this year,” said Bill. “The Masters swimmers in the participating eight NE teams,” he added, “have given adults in their community an incredible gift - a gift that, in many cases, could save their lives. I’m looking forward to having all the states and many more of the clubs in our LMSC (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island) participate in the *Swimming Saves Lives* program in April 2015.”

Swimming Saves Lives (SSL) offers many benefits.



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The greatest benefit of course is to the learning adult swimmer. They arrived at their lessons, all ages, shapes, and sizes, in a wide array of swimming suits and trunks, each with desire to improve their stroke. For some, just showing up demonstrated courage to confront life-long fears. Each participant was offered up to five lessons taught by a Masters swimmer, in most cases one-on-one or in small groups, for 30-60 minutes.

Among them were beginning swimmers with no swimming experience at all, some never having immersed themselves in a body of water. That included those who needed to start by spending much, or all, of the first lesson learning to get comfortable with the water, sometimes sitting by the side of the pool, talking about their feelings about swimming and dangling their legs in the water. Some came to the lessons with great fear of water, having experienced, at some point, a water-related trauma. Masters swimmers, said Bill, “take their own comfort and pleasure in the water for granted.” But for many beginning swimmers, he said, the experience of immersion is “comparable to standing on the edge of a cliff.”

“For most of my life,” wrote one participant, “I’ve been peering at large bodies of water with great fear. The instructors at Cambridge Masters led me gently into the water and I realized there was so much less to be fearful of.” Another participant, “overcame her fear from a near-drowning incident as a kid,” said instructor Jeff Holmes of Cambridge Masters. “Within an hour,” he added, “she went from feeling uncomfortable putting her face in the water to doing perfectly balanced 10-yard Superman glides.” One woman, who feared drowning her entire life, wrote, “I am forever thankful for this opportunity. These were my first formal swim lessons and they really helped me overcome (some of) my fears. I now feel motivated to keep learning and hope to swim at least 25 yards by the beginning of this summer!” Kim Fry, coordinator of the SSL program at The Edge in Williston, Vermont, said, “We had six participants who arrived as complete beginners and most had fear of the water. By the end of classes, all were successful and much more confident in the water.” Cathy Dickson of Worcester Area Masters noted that one novice swimmer she taught, “never knew he could float.” She hadn’t anticipated, she said, “how quickly adults could pick up the basics of swimming, many times in just one or two lessons.” One participant taught by Charlotte Brynn of Stowe Masters said, “I used to panic when the water was over my head. Now [after SSL] I feel more relaxed, the panic has subsided, and I’m thrilled. I never thought swimming was a fitness option for me.”

Two comments from participants were common: “I’m doing it! I’m swimming!” and “This program was life-changing for me.”

In addition to beginner swimmers were swimmers that wished to improve their technique. Not surprisingly, trouble breathing while stroking was among the most common issues. One intermediate swimmer said, “I gained a level of confidence that was entirely new and unexpected.” Polar Bear Masters’ Georgette Keator said, “Our CEO of the YMCA was a weak swimmer (non-breather). He is now able to do multiple laps of freestyle.”

For some pool facilities this offered an opportunity to increase membership and visibility. “We are using this program,” said Ms. Keator, “as an opportunity to increase our

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membership by offering those who have participated a waiver of our joiner fee and a discounted yearly membership to encourage those learning to swim to continue to do so.”

The benefits of the program extend beyond the learning swimmer, and beyond the pool facility, to the Masters instructors themselves. Each volunteer instructor attended a 90-minute SSL training course and each taught 1 - 10 lessons over the course of five days spread out over the month.

“One of the most rewarding things I’ve done in a long time is work with adults who want to learn how to swim,” said Joanne Barker of Cambridge Masters. She added, “The level of courage and trust that these folks bring to the pool is simply wonderful.” Said Cara Hancy of Johnson State College Masters team, “The best part of this program has been meeting these amazing adults and watching them on their journey. It’s a rare thing, as adults, to try something ‘new’.”

Numerous instructors commented that *they* were getting as much out of the program as their students. “Teaching swimming... has made our instructors better swimmers,” said Stowe Masters’ Charlotte Brynn. “Our volunteer instructors,” said Georgette Keator, “feel that sharing their time and interests is worthwhile, empowering, and inspiring. This is also the perfect avenue for our Masters swim club to give back to the community.”

The U.S. Center for Disease Control estimates that 37% of American adults can’t swim the length of a 25-yard pool and that 10 people, most of them adults, drown every day in the U.S. “Water does not discriminate,” said Rob Butcher, Executive Director of U.S. Masters Swimming. “Everyone who does not know how to swim is at risk. Our Swimming Saves Lives Foundation endeavors to change these statistics.” “When adults can’t swim, “ continued Mr. Butcher, “they often pass their fears and water avoidance behaviors on to their children, thus perpetuating the risk of drowning in another generation.”

Leslie Craven, coordinator of the Martha’s Vineyard SSL program seemed to speak for all eight of the participating Masters teams: “We will *definitely* do this program next year.” Indeed, plans are already underway in New England and across the U.S. for a bigger *Swimming Saves Lives* program next April. For U.S. Masters swimmers, then, the rebirth of spring isn’t cruel – it’s gratifying.

Sue Jensen
Cambridge Masters Swim Club
Swimming Saves Lives Volunteer Program Coordinator