



2011 U.S. Masters Swimming Annual Convention
Doug Church | Swimming Saves Lives Foundation Chair
Convention Address | September 15, 2011

Good morning. I am Doug Church, chair of the Swimming Saves Lives Foundation, the charitable arm of United States Masters Swimming and it's truly great to see all the SSL Tee shirts out there! For the next few minutes I would like to "preach to the choir" and re-introduce you to an old friend and tell you why each of you is critical in reaching our new goals for the newly energized SSL!

Thanks to the vision of past president Nancy Ridout, over a decade ago, we initiated an endowment fund, then known as the USMS Endowment Fund. It's purpose then, and now, has been to operate as a charitable vehicle for programs and projects outside the boundaries of our corporate operational budget... to fund those things that don't fit into our normal operations but which deserve our support. It was the recipient of the dollar check off that many of you contributed to and over the years, the Endowment Fund grew to in excess of a quarter of a million dollars. More importantly, it began making grants to fund or partially fund worthy projects ranging from a study of the effect of swimming on Parkinson's disease to a program to adapt Pilates as a dry land substitute for a swimming workout to providing scholarships so that newly formed USMS clubs could send someone to convention. With the vision of Nancy Ridout as background, our President, Jeff Moxie, brought a new focus to our charitable arm and challenged us to re-invent the endowment fund with a goal of raising \$10M. Jeff recognized that with a significant increase in the amount of funding requested for many, many worthy projects or programs, that our endowment fund was simply insufficient to meet the demand. Our BOD authorized a phase one study that was designed to determine if we (USMS) had the capacity to raise \$10M. Result: We do!!

Phase one also led to the new name (SSL) and the newly invigorated mission that I will discuss shortly. Our second phase study was designed to test the waters for leadership gifts and, I am happy to report, that phase two has also achieved notable success even though it is not yet complete. To date, we have received nearly \$400,000 in cash and commitments to SSL as well as having identified philanthropic leaders who are giving time as well as talent and treasure to our efforts! Combined with our existing endowment funds, that is over \$600,000 toward our goal of \$10M and we haven't really begun the more public phase of this effort. The 3rd phase will be the implementation of a national fund raising effort and that will involve all of you... consider this the first but certainly not the last call for volunteers who want to help at the national, Zone, LMSC and Club levels in this effort.

So, what is Swimming Saves Lives and why do we call it that? SSL is the successor to the Endowment Fund and will be the charitable arm of USMS, Inc. as we go forward. "Swimming Saves Lives" defines our mission... from the profoundly simple concept of teaching adults to swim and prevention of drowning, to the profoundly complicated concepts associated with a regimen of daily living built around swimming for fitness and fun! Let me take this from the abstract to the real.

The Grand Strand Masters developed a "learn to swim program" for their club to offer to the broader non-swimming Myrtle Beach area. <Play the Video>. Through the volunteer efforts of club members a weeklong "learn to swim" program was conducted FOR FREE with modest support from SSL. More than 145 individuals were taught to swim. Individuals who would never have been able to participate in swimming for any number of reasons, were served by this project that was made possible by the volunteer USMS members from Grand Strand Masters. This program will serve as a model for USMS clubs across



the country and it has already been utilized in Illinois and will be in Indiana as a pattern for a pro bono effort to provide adult learn to swim programs with programmatic and financial support from SSL. Lives will be saved.

Through the efforts of Dr. Adrian Legaspi, a Masters swimmer and oncologist, skin cancer screening was provided during the Spring Nationals in Mesa! Masters swimmers are among the highly vulnerable population at risk to the ravages of carcinoma and melanoma as a result of a lifetime of swimming out doors. This effort is also leading to a template for nationwide use and with support from SSL, lives will be saved as Masters swimmers will routinely have access to professional skin cancer detection efforts.

Thanks to a wholesale pricing from Endless Pools, an endless pool has been purchased by SSL and donated to the Counsilman Center for the Study of the Science of Swimming at Indiana University <Show the picture of the EP with the IU and USMS logos!>. This pool will be utilized to conduct controlled experiments in water heated to various levels to determine the safe swimming environment given water various temperatures. With the tragic death of Fran Crippen last year, the swimming world was challenged to find out about hot water swimming environments and thanks to SSL, that research may now be done. Lives will be saved.

Thanks also to studies conducted by the Counsilman Center which have been funded by SSL grants in the past, we now have the beginning of serious scientific research that can serve as the basis for further studies into the benefits of a lifetime commitment to regular swimming. <Start the slides and move through them with comments>.

The benefits are too numerous to count but there are clear indications from existing studies that will support further research to determine the mitigating effects on diabetes, hypertension, dementia, as well as numerous diseases associated with the cardiovascular system, nervous motor functioning, and cognitive function.

These projects merely begin to demonstrate the potential scope of SSL and the continuing development of creative and thoughtful programs that will fit into the SSL mission is ongoing. Talk to Jerry Clark about his initiative that will educate physicians on the direct and positive benefits of a stylized swimming program for their patients in need of rehabilitation and treatment for a variety of conditions. We are!

So, Swimming Saves Lives in countless ways. We need all of you to join in this effort with your time, your talent and your treasure. If we have sparked an interest, let us know now or later and we will find a place to put your energy, your passion and your contributions to work.

It's time that we let the whole country know that Swimming Saves Lives!!

Thank you.