

From: Lucy Suter <sheridan.lucy@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2020 11:06 AM
To: George Bertram <Selectman.Bertram@southbury-ct.gov>
Cc: pac swimming <pac_swimming@yahoo.com>
Subject: Comments from PAC Coach

Selectman Bertram,

My name is Lucy Suter, I am the Head Coach for Panther Aquatic club, I wanted to share my story with you...

For the last 12 years I have poured my heart into creating a successful swim program in the Region 15 community. I moved to Southbury in middle school and as a successful competitive swimmer, the team here was not enough for me. I commuted to the Wilton YMCA to be challenged enough for my ability. Fast forward I swam for Pomperaug High School and was a senior captain, I went on to swim at Denison University, a top 3 Nationally ranked Division 3 swim team in Ohio. When I came back to Southbury after graduation, I thought it would be fun to build the swimming program at home, while starting my family.

Panther Aquatic Club, a local affiliate of CT Swimming, is a USA Swim Team that operates out of Pomperaug High School through the Southbury Parks and Recreation department. Our purpose is to provide a positive training atmosphere that will prepare our athletes both physically and mentally to compete to the best of their potential. We run 6 squads in a three-hour time slot in the evenings after the High School teams have completed their training for the day. We teach 5,6,7, and 8-year old's the fundamentals of all four strokes in an exciting environment and focus on the importance of learning how to swim while teaching them that competitive swimming is an amazing sport. We fine tune stroke technique with our upper grade elementary school athletes and start to really work hard when our athletes hit middle school. Our middle schoolers learn to train aerobically in the fall and we add more speed work as the season goes on. This past short course season (October through March) we had 167 participants! This is the max number of kids we could possibly take with our limited pool time; you can only put so many kids in a pool at one time safely. We respond to mass amounts of emails weekly during the season, turning people away because we are full to capacity. Imagine if we had a facility where we could take everyone?

Are we successful? Absolutely! For the limited pool time we have, we took 98 swimmers to CT Regional Championships at Cheshire Community pool just 7 short weeks ago. We had almost 100% best times and were top contenders in many events. We aren't just a little team in the State, we have built a reputation of success and are proud of how far we have come.

In November 2018, I traveled to Greensboro, North Carolina to USA SWIMMING SENIOR NATIONALS with Colin Mackellar. Colin started his swimming days as a Southbury Shark, who wasn't all that an impressive of a swimmer. With focus, talent, and the right direction, Colin took off and become our biggest success story yet. The meet Colin and I attended was no joke, we walked the deck with Olympians and were completely star struck! Nathan Adrian, Katie Ledecky, Simone Manuel, all the big swimming names were there. Colin just finished his freshman swim season at Brown University. He's not our only swimmer who has gone Division 1....

I am also the Co-Pool Director at our current Town Pool at Ballantine. As the Director it has been a pleasure to help run such a wonderful facility the past 9 years. We have built the swim lesson program, where we had 241 participants in summer 2019. We had 76 participants at the Town Pools Summer League Swim Team, where Maria Papiro and I run the State Line Championship Swim League. Yes – Southbury's Pool Directors are responsible for running the entire league. The Town Pool patrons are there to enjoy the amazing staff and programming during the summer and accept the age of the pool because it is surrounded by love. My 4 children learned to swim at Ballantine and came up the ranks through our very own swim lesson program. My daughter is now one of the top ranked swimmers for her age in the state of CT, she is home grown from our very own Ballantine pool!

Walk the pool deck at Pomperaug High School, the walls are covered in State Champion Banners, State Open Champion Banners, and All State Banners. My swimmers are proud to see my name among those on the banners. Our feeder program has created an atmosphere of excellence. Imagine what we could do with another training facility...There is a demand in this town for pool time, a desire to be a part of the successful High School Teams legacies.

It's impossible for me to write 12 years of aquatics experience into a simple email. During these challenging times, why don't we give the youth of our community something to look forward too. I would love to see a brand-new pool built at Ballantine, but understand that Edgewood is a more affordable option. Either way, we NEED a pool.

I would be happy to discuss anything further over the phone. I can do my best to be available, but am balancing homeschooling my four children while my husband serves the front lines during this crisis.

Sincerely,

Lucy Suter

Head Swim Coach Panther Aquatic Club

Southbury Town Pool Director