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, or to join our team as a Campaign Director!

Over $25 Million in scholarship support since 1981
$680,000 Total scholarship dollars awarded in 2020-21
55 Current scholarship recipients in academic year 2020-21
46 Nationwide Universities in academic year 2020-21
256 Total scholarships granted since 1981
60 Sports represented
132 Nationwide universities represented

COMING UP

41st Annual

Swim with Mike

Saturday, April 9, 2022
USC Uytengsu Aquatics Center

SWM Wheelchair Basketball presented by UBS
April 8 & 9, 2022
USC Lyon Recreation Courts

Swim With Mike Hawaii
in conjunction with the
Waikiki Roughwater Swim
September 6, 2021

Swim With Mike San Diego
Mission Bay Yacht Club
Dates TBD

SWIM WITH MIKE FOUNDATION
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Thousands attend 2021 SWM virtual event

Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship Fund
A new nonprofit has been created to take over the management of the “Swim With Mike Foundation” to continue the work of providing scholarships to physically challenged individuals that began at USC over 40 years ago.

In 1981, All-American swimmer Mike Nyeholt was injured in a motorcycle accident that left him paralyzed. The local swimming community rallied to his aid and created a swimming fundraiser called “Swim For Mike.” At that event, Nyeholt pledged to find a way to get out of his wheelchair and swim to help others in a similar situation.

By the time Nyeholt entered the water in 1982, “Swim For Mike” had evolved into “Swim With Mike,” a scholarship fund at USC that created opportunities for physically challenged student athletes to continue their higher education, thereby helping them overcome their tragedies and realize their full potential.

“We Mike Nyeholt and the Swim With Mike Foundation are institutions of our community and represent the Fight On spirit that defines the Trojan Family,” USC Director of Athletics Mike Bohn said. “We are thrilled to support Swim With Mike as it grows and evolves into its own foundation. We look forward to continuing our participation in the annual swimming fundraiser, which we are proud to host at USC and the Uytengsu Aquatics Center.”

“While this new beginning with a national focus is a change, it does nothing to create distance between the foundation and the university,” said the newly elected President of the Swim With Mike Foundation, John Naber. The winner of five Olympic medals, U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee Board member and USC Hall of Famer added, “We appreciate the blessing and promise of continued assistance from the university, as we grow our ability to provide scholarship assistance to more physically challenged student athletes.”

At USC, Swim With Mike has raised over $25 million and provided financial assistance for 250 physically challenged student-athletes to continue their education at 130 institutions of higher learning. Through the generosity of the loyal Swim With Mike supporters, over $1 million additional was raised during Covid event restrictions, and more than 50 scholarship recipients benefitted from the ongoing support. The new Swim With Mike Foundation is a 501 (c) (3).

The new Swim With Mike Foundation board includes, among others, Nyeholt, Naber, four other Scholarship recipients and also Fred Uytengsu, a Nyeholt friend whose family donated the funds to create the Uytengsu Aquatic Center on the University of Southern California campus.

Ron Orr continues his role as the program’s Executive Director. “We love our origin story and our relationship with the University and the Uytengsu Aquatics Center,” said Nyeholt, “and we plan to expand the national reach of our Mission while continuing to hold the annual celebration at USC for years to come.” Dillon Connolly, a former USC swimmer who was paralyzed in a beach accident years ago, is now attending graduate classes at USC’s Marshall School of Business with the help of a SWM scholarship. “This organization is far more than just financial help for injured athletes,” he said. “It has created hope and focus for me to move forward while I gain momentum to make something positive come out of my injury. The creation of a national foundation for Swim With Mike had always been a dream,” said Orr.

“We are forever grateful to the Trojan Family for their confidence and generosity in making that dream a reality. The 40th Anniversary will forever be known as our National Foundation Campaign.”

To make a gift to the Swim With Mike Foundation, or for more information about this inspiring program that turns tragedy into triumph and triumph into opportunity, go to swimwithmike.org or info@swimwithmike.org, or contact Ron Orr at (626) 390-7675. And thanks for your continued support!
Our Swim With Mike Virtual 40th Anniversary Celebration was a big success! More than 2,000 viewers joined to mark this significant milestone in achieving our program’s mission in a whole new way.

Foundation President John Naber hosted the event and welcomed our family, friends, volunteers, sponsors and donors. It was an action-packed virtual event and totally delivered on the promise of “… an absolutely amazing show that is not to be missed!”

Here are some of the exciting highlights you will find at swimwithmike.org/events. Join us again; you never know what you may have missed!

Highlights of the virtual event

- USC Trojan Marching Band's Spirit of Troy joined us for the 40th consecutive time, this year under the leadership of new Director Dr. Jacob Vogel. Band members performed from their virtual locations in their SWM T-shirts to kick off our 40th Celebration.

- We saw a trailer of “Swim With Mike – A Documentary” which highlights the evolution of Swim With Mike from Mike's dirt biking accident, Ron's dedication to the conception, perception and growth of the program, the enthusiastic participation of their outstanding USC swimming teammates, and a sample of interviews with scholarship recipients. The film is directed and edited by Paul Joseph, Produced by SWM Board member Loretta Joseph and Executive Produced by Loretta and Richard Joseph.

- Board member Fred Uytengsu’s message of commitment to the Swim With Mike Foundation future and our support of the physically challenged community.

- Inaugural 40x40 Swim Relay with 12 Olympians, 75 participants and Harper Dewey – at three months of age – keeps great-grandmother Patsy Dewey's SWM tradition of support active.

- 40th Anniversary greetings and congratulations to the entire SWM family from USC President Carol Folt.

- What’s Your 40? Recipients and friends help celebrate our 40th with their personal 40 contributions.

- Sam and Rocky Paneno tell their stories of sharing the incredible SWM experience.

- Yell Leaders, on behalf of the USC Song Girls and USC Spirit Leaders, keep their 26-year participation alive. A huge Thank You! to the Pilalas Family for their many years of support.

- USC Women's Water Polo Team sends their SWM congratulations while readying for their seventh National Championship title.

- Impact stories from SWM scholarship recipients Marc Little, Drew Donnallan, Austin Brotman, Ben Hulin, Corben Brooks, Dillon Connolly, Jake Javier, Jimmy Pierce, and Becky McCafferty Melli.

- USC Swimming Teams’ T-shirt Relay.

- John’s reflections on Ron Orr – the “glue” that allowed us to successfully reach our 40th milestone. Without Ron there would be no Swim With Mike.

- Recipient impact stories about the significant difference SWM has made in their lives. Josh Brewer, Jonathan Jimenez, Kale Hyder, Kendra Mueller, Kie Juji, Mark Wilbourne, Tom Haig, Zack Pickett and more!

- Surprise message from Peter Cancro, CEO of Jersey Mike’s Subs.

- Grand Finale – We conclude with SWM alum recipient and Board member, Daryl Holmlund performing his composition of “No More Wheelchairs.”
**“I Swam with Mike!”**

**First-ever 40x40 Swim Relay Event**

The Rose Bowl Aquatics Center was the site of this year’s swim event on April 3, chaired by new Foundation President John Naber. The event was named to celebrate our Swim With Mike 40th Anniversary, and to champion our fundraising and friend-raising efforts in support of furthering our mission.

Patrick Stanton was the official starter in the 40x40 relay keeping his perfect record for participation in every annual Swim. Swimmers occupied two parallel pool lanes from 6am to 7:20pm as they kept the water moving for 40 blocks of time, with each block lasting 40 minutes.

Every block was sponsored for a minimum of $1,000. When swimmers finished their block, each one signed their name on the official “I Swam with Mike!” scoreboard.

Mike Nyeholt was the first to swim, followed by more than 75 swimmers including SWM scholarship alum Daryl Holmlund and current SWM recipient Alex Ruiz, along with appearances by 12 Olympians – Ryan Bailey, JR deSouza, Bruce Furniss, Lenny Krayzelburg, Gideon Massie, Lea Maurer, Cliff Meidl, Betsy Mitchell, John Moffett, Jeff Powers, Markus Rogan, and Katherine Starr. When not swimming his laps, Brazilian Olympian JR deSouza was operating an underwater camera and an overhead drone capturing aerial footage of the event.

The USC Yell Leaders also kept their annual tradition alive with their 27th Swim, and Brooke Patel swam in the Age Group swimmers. At three months of age, Harper Dewey, our friend Patsy Dewey’s great-grandchild, became our youngest participant ever!

All participants and donors received SWM SWAG bags, a Jersey Mike’s box lunch and Trader Joe’s bottled water.

Thank you to the Rose Bowl Aquatics Center, our generous donors, the lane sponsors, Olympians and swimmers, and everyone who helped put this event together!
Graduate Profiles

“Swim With Mike’s support changed my life”

Nick Balenger
George Mason University
Global Affairs 2018; William & Mary Law School 2021

Before Nick Balenger’s 2012 diving accident resulted in a C4-C5 spinal cord injury, he was a starting senior varsity high school baseball pitcher and had just won the Virginia State Championship. While he is not able to play baseball any longer, he has coached little league baseball, mentored afterschool programs, presented motivational speeches and remained active in the sports world.

Nick also continued to work on his artistic pursuits and has had many gallery showings of his work. He has graciously donated a number of these pieces to our Annual SWM event silent auction over the years. All have received overwhelming plaudits and currently grace the home and office walls of our many SWM friends.

As a Swim With Mike scholarship recipient, Nick graduated from George Mason University in 2018 with a degree in Global Affairs. He went on to pursue his life-long dream career in the legal field by attending William & Mary Law School and graduated this year.

In his first year of law school Nick achieved many of his goals, including being selected for Law Review, finishing in the top 20% of his class and being chosen as a summer clerk for a federal judge in Richmond, VA.

Nick’s continued academic success and his community activity paved the way to his selection as a summer associate for the prestigious California-based international law firm of Cooley LLP. He has recently accepted an offer to join Cooley LLP as a junior associate in the corporate practice group in Reston, VA immediately upon graduation.

Swim With Mike’s six-year investment in a young star baseball player from Virginia has been an exceptional experience for all involved.

“Swim With Mike’s support has changed my life and set an example of support and generosity that I pledge to follow throughout my life. I will do everything I can to make you proud of having donated to this great organization.”

Gabriela Martinez was born and raised in East Los Angeles and grew up playing a variety of sports, but her favorite was always competitive swimming.

When she was 13 years old she incurred a diving accident at a family gathering which resulted in a C-5 spinal cord injury and she became an inpatient at Rancho Los Amigos Rehabilitation Center. With the help of family, friends and childhood swim team buddies she found her way back to the pool and relearned how to swim. Over the years, the water became a vital asset to her rehabilitation as she enhanced her adaptive swimming skills at the Rose Bowl Aquatic Center. That is where she discovered Swim With Mike, when she saw banners and promotional information displayed. That began the ripple effect that evolved with Gaby’s determination to strive to achieve her dreams of an education that would fulfill her passions and provide her independence.

As Gaby’s strength continued to progress, she pushed herself to attend Cal State Los Angeles and earned a BA in Sociology. During this time, she maintained a relationship with Rancho Los Amigos by attending celebratory events for their inpatients and former inpatients and her occupational therapist, physical therapist and speech pathologist. She had always dreamed of becoming a social worker – her goal was to help others attain necessary professional support that is lacking in the community.

Being a smart girl, she paired a SWM scholarship opportunity with coveted educational pursuits and submitted her applications. She was awarded a SWM scholarship, accepted into the USC Master of Social Work program and is now a 2021 graduate.

During her senior year she zeroed in on taking course work on self-reflection and critical thinking as a future clinician. She interned at Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services as a bilingual therapist intern and is on her way to achieving her goals of positively impacting marginalized communities.

She will be working as a Peer Mentor for the Known Barriers program at Rancho Los Amigos where she will be trained to provide coaching to adolescents and young adults who have experienced spinal cord injuries to help them with their socio-emotional rehabilitation.

“Swim With Mike’s support has tremendously changed my life for the best. You provided me with a community of like-minded students at USC, and you allowed me to pursue one of my biggest life goals – my master’s degree in Social Work. Thank you so much.”
From our recipients

**Jimmy Pierce**

Current Swim With Mike scholarship recipient Jimmy Pierce (Oregon Institute of Technology 2022) tells his friends and family:

“Swim With Mike Foundation is a selfless and very important foundation that helps people that need it most. Without assistance from this foundation, my goal of being a college student to become an engineer would not happen.

To show gratitude, we are trying to raise funds to help the foundation be able to continue their kind act of allowing physically challenged athletes to attain higher education. This year I will swim 100 meters for every $50 I am able to raise.”

**The Sukraw Endowment Fund**

SWM recipient alum Nate Higgins (Capella University MS Human Resources/Labor Relations 2013, USC MBA Marshall School of Business 2015) represents us in the Pacific Northwest. He is currently a real estate investor and works for the SBA.

Nate helped a friend of his, Lee Sukraw, sell his farm in the Klamath Falls area of Southern Oregon. Upon the closing of the sale, Lee chose to endow a SWM scholarship. Thus, the Sukraw Endowment Fund was created and will annually support a SWM scholarship recipient in perpetuity.

**Nick’s 40 Headbangs**


For those of you wondering what, exactly, headbanging is, here’s what Google tells us: Headbanging is the action of violently shaking one’s head in rhythm to music. It is common in contemporary rock, punk and heavy metal genres, where headbanging is often used by musicians on stage.

Now we know. Thanks, Nick!

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**Yvonne Thomas – 40 Laps**

Yvonne Thomas (Cal State Bakersfield, USC Masters in Teaching 2016) completed 40 laps around her Tehachapi neighborhood school parking lot as she was cheered on by her husband and three children. “Usually I do about ten laps, but I’m feeling strong and going to do 40 today for SWM’s 40th!”

As a former track and cross-country college scholar-ship recipient, Yvonne has a sure-fire technique. Her theory is to sprint on the straight and take it easy on the curves. Yvonne retains the spirit of determination and dedication that she cultivated through athletics, rehab and education and it sure shows!

“It is a blessing and a privilege to be a scholarship recipient and I always look forward to assisting in any capacity that will support Swim With Mike Foundation.”

**Deborah Ede Reddout**

Deborah (Oklahoma State Health Education and Promotion 2019, current University of North Texas 2022 Doctor of Physical Therapy candidate) organized a 26.1 mile marathon to raise awareness and funds in support of Swim With Mike Foundation.

Along with friends, volunteers and family Deborah successfully crossed the finish line as she and her husband were cheered on by the crowd.

“Swim With Mike Foundation supports physically challenged athletes throughout the United States who endure life altering injuries. I am truly thankful for being a part of such an incredible organization, and any support to allow Swim With Mike Foundation help those just like me would be immensely appreciated.”

Just a little back story about Deborah:

As a nationally competitive gymnast, she was preparing for an upcoming USA Gymnastics National Championship. During a vigorous practice session, she experienced an accident that resulted in a C5/C6 spinal cord injury and was told she would never walk again.

She arrived at Craig Hospital for extensive therapy and funds in support of Swim With Mike Foundation. She was readily joined by the rest of the family – Margaret and her late husband Arnold’s four children and their spouses, 12 grandchildren and their spouses and 16 great-grandchildren.

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That is exactly what she did two months later. Through personal discipline she continues to gain strength and this Swim With Mike marathon punctuation her strength of purpose and determination.

No doubt she will successfully realize one of her next goals when she receives her Doctorate in Physical Therapy – to help and inspire individuals who face similar challenges.

**Johnson-Ebner-Holmlund Family Endowed Scholarship**

Swim With Mike scholarship recipient alum Daryl Holmlund’s family has generously established an endowed scholarship to honor Daryl (USC Masters in Teaching, 2012).

This compassionate family affair was initiated with a gift from Daryl’s grandmother, Margaret Johnson. She was readily joined by the rest of the family – Margaret and her late husband Arnold’s four children and their spouses, 12 grandchildren and their spouses and 16 great-grandchildren.

The Johnson-Ebner-Holmlund family has been part of the SWM Family since Daryl became a scholarship recipient in 2010 and attended USC Rossier School of Education. He now teaches at the high school level at Long Beach Poly and actively supports SWM as a member of the Swim With Mike Board of Directors.

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Peter Cancro, Founder and CEO of Jersey Mike’s Subs and the Jersey Mike’s Subs family of more than 2,000 national eateries have long established community giving as central to their brand.

Since 2011, they have distributed more than $32 million through their “Jersey Mike’s Annual Month of Giving” campaign when they donate 100% of sales – not just profits – to local charities nationwide.

Additionally, during the pandemic in 2020, Jersey Mike’s spearheaded a TV ad campaign to raise money for Feeding America and its 200 food banks. The campaign generated over $2 million for Feeding America to help needy families and people who were living hungry.

And, on top of that over 1,742 of their national shops donated millions of submarine sandwiches to healthcare workers, seniors, children and others in need.

“Making a difference in someone’s life is our mission statement” says Peter.

So today, on behalf of Jersey Mike’s I’d like to pledge $100,000 a year for the next ten years, or $1 million, to keep it going. Together, we can do so much.

Thanks to Mike, Ron Orr and the entire committee for your years of giving. God Bless.”

Thank you, Peter and Jersey Mike’s Subs, for your investment in the future success of Swim With Mike! We are certainly grateful to be a part of your generous efforts and look forward to a long and promising partnership for many years to come.

Definitely a Sub Above!

To learn more about our recipients, or to make a donation, visit us at www.swimwithmike.org
Swim With Mike alum scholarship recipient Nick Enriquez (USC Accounting 2003, Southwestern Law 2007) is the inaugural Chair of the Swim With Mike Foundation Scholarship Council. He currently holds the position as the Attorney Advisor to the Social Security Administration Office of Disability in San Bernardino. Nick's related experience makes him highly qualified for the position and he tells us:

“I am honored to join the Board and chair the Scholarship Council. Being an alumnus recipient, I have observed the leadership skills and high bar for excellence SWM has set for years. I hope to continue “the ripple effect” and lend a personal understanding willed with passion to our physically challenged athletes’ scholarship application process. I look forward to establishing relationships with our new scholarship recipients and maintaining a close relationship with our returning National scholars and alums. Swim With Mike Foundation’s future is bright!”

The Scholarship Council includes dedicated volunteers as well as five SWM alumni recipients, and is tasked with the important responsibility of selecting the future of the program. Each recipient selection includes the understanding of passing along the SWM gift of our ripple effect to the next generation of scholars to continue the growth of the program.

All scholarship applicants – new and returning – must submit applications which outline their previous participation in organized sports, community activities, awards, GPA and official transcripts, physician’s letter statement of injury, and three recommendations from recognized individuals. Additionally, returning applicants must have maintained a cumulative 2.5 GPA and be “in good academic standing.”

We received 54 stellar applications for the 2021-22 academic year. This number included 37 returning scholarship recipients and 17 new applicants.

The Scholarship Council members review all applications, then applications are assigned to individual Council members to personally interview applicants and score them on a weighted matrix according to the attributes listed above. If said Council member’s applicant(s) are accepted, they will mentor their scholar throughout their educational process.

A total of 52 scholarships will be offered this academic year for a total potential funding of $773,057. Thirty-five returning scholarship recipients and 17 new applicants were approved.

We look forward to introducing you to our new outstanding scholars.

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Karin Larson of Pacific Palisades, California passed away peacefully on April 24th, surrounded by her family and friends. Karin was born and raised in Minneapolis and graduated from the University of Minnesota where she received her degree in business and international relations. She later earned an MBA from the University of Southern California.

She went on to join Capital Group Companies, where she met professional colleague Mike Nyeholt. Karin worked her way up to become an analyst, portfolio manager and, eventually, the first female research director. One of her favorite parts of her work with Capital included mentoring new analysts.

Karin enjoyed a great passion for philanthropic support, especially Swim With Mike. In 2011 she established the Karin Larson Swim With Mike Endowed Executive Chair with a gift of $500,000. This gift represents the single largest endowment donation in the history of the Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship Fund and greatly impacted our program.

Our relationship with Karin continued over the years, and she participated each year to help us promote our mission. Most recently, in 2020, Karin donated an additional $15,000 gift to the Swim With Mike Foundation Annual Fund.

Karin was a very good friend of Swim With Mike for many years, and her generous support has been transformational to the growth and future of our program.

“I considered it a privilege and honor to have known Karin as both a business associate and friend. Her strength and courage shown in dealing with the debilitating disease that ultimately took her from us was an inspiration not only to me, but to the many Swim With Mike scholarship recipients that had the good fortune to meet her. She will be in our hearts forever.”

Mike Nyeholt
Executive Chairman
Swim With Mike
Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship Fund
PO BOX 51000 PASADENA, CA 91115  •  NEW PHONE NUMBER: (626) 390 -7675

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Summer 2021 Newsletter