



Buffalo City Swim Racers

Developing character with a commitment to excellence, families and neighborhoods while creating lifelong swimmers

The Idea

- Original idea started in 1998 with our Executive Dir and 2 others
- One school involved w/ 500 applications
- 4 years later we have 10 schools & 270 swimmers
- July 2001- Executive Dir left for college coaching
- Program folds within 6 months



Fast Forward to Winter 2011

- University at Buffalo Center for Urban Studies was working on a grant for HUD
- UB reached out to a Buffalo Public School Principal for enrichment ideas to compliment educational component of grant
- Executive Director was presented as a resource to start an enrichment program
- Executive Director contacted in February 2012 about re-establishing the program



February 2012-May 2012

- Executive Dir does not commit to anything, but agrees to do research to see if the idea would work
- He started researching the following throughout the City of Buffalo:
 - Obesity rates
 - Household transportation
 - Average household income
 - Graduation rates
 - School attendance
 - Crime rates
 - Swimmer participation with suburban programs
 - Segregation
 - Who could be on the Board of Directors and committees



Here is what he found:

- Buffalo, NY is the 5th most segregated city in US
- 29.6% of people in Buffalo live in poverty
- In the metro area, 81.4% of African-Americans and 58.9% of Hispanics live in high poverty neighborhoods, compared with 10.7% of whites
- The City of Buffalo four year graduation rate has ranged from 45% - 53.1% over the past five years, while the New York State average has ranged from 69.3% - 73.4%



Additional points

- Of households in the City of Buffalo, 30.1% have no vehicle available and 42.6% have one vehicle available. Of households in Buffalo-Niagara, 12.9% have no vehicle available, and only 37.9% have one vehicle available
- Communities with higher poverty rates have higher crime rates. The City of Buffalo has a crime index of 711, compared to a national average of 319.1
- Violent juvenile crime triples during the hours from 3-8PM, and it is during these same hours that children face the most serious danger of becoming victims of crime
- No similar club in City or within USA Swimming



Why the Decision to be an Afterschool Program?

- Regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits, improvements in school attendance as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students
- High quality afterschool programs are endorsed by law enforcement organizations because they are effective in reducing violence, theft, vandalism, gang activity, and other adolescent crimes



Why the Decision to be an Afterschool Program?

- Consistent participation in quality afterschool programs helps reduce the risk of youth experimenting with alcohol and other dangerous drugs, and teen pregnancy
- Afterschool programs have been identified by the Food Research and Action Council as effective venues for improving nutrition and physical activity
- Every dollar invested in high quality afterschool programs saves taxpayers roughly \$3, according to a study by the Rose Institute at Claremont McKenna College. If benefits from crime reduction are factored in, each dollar invested in an at-risk child saves \$8-\$12.



Why the Decision to be an Afterschool Program?

- Afterschool programs prepare youth for today's workforce through providing academic enrichment and teaching skills not taught during the school day
- Kids who attend high-quality elementary and middle school afterschool programs are less likely to drop out of high school than non-participants.
- Greater potential for funding/ grants
- Greater potential to partner with specific schools



May 2012

- Statistics about the City of Buffalo complete
- List of potential board and committee members prepared
- Model to attract funding through grants and donors created
- 501c3 need identified
- **TIME TO HOST A MEETING TO PRESENT THE IDEA!**



Starting the Organization

- Invitations sent out to 30 people
- Who?
 - Buffalo Fire Commissioner
 - Professors from University at Buffalo and D'Youville College
 - Politicians
 - Attorneys
 - Financial Professionals
 - Respected Officials in the Swimming Community
- The goal: Convince 9 people to become the Board of Directors



Results

- 27 of the 30 volunteer or offer help in some capacity
- Who are they?
 - VP of a Graphic Design Company
 - Head Trades Manager of an investment company
 - Chief Financial Officer @ Albright-Knox
 - 2 Meet Officials
 - Real Estate Broker @ RE/MAX
 - 4 local College Professors
 - Executive Director of Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority
 - Buffalo Fire Commissioner
 - Accountant
 - Auditor
 - Director @ Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo



After the Meeting

- Started creating a draft of the by-laws
- Paperwork begun to become a 501c3
- Background information gathered about the volunteers
- Board member vs. Committee member lists created
- Select volunteers offered their service or made donations



Who Stepped Up

- Buffalo Fire Department- AED for every facility we are at, free recertification for coaching staff in CPR, help with Water Safety Festival and \$5,000 donation
- Regional Bank- \$10,000 donation
- Corporate Development Company- free office space at one of their properties
- Local photographer- free professional photography
- VP @ University at Buffalo- legal advice
- Local artist- free logo creation
- University at Buffalo- grant writing, tracking and research
- Watts Tutoring- academic services



May-November 2012

- Nine chosen for the Board of Directors but do not assign positions for the first BOD meeting until skills & background established
- Contact Sue Anderson, USA Swimming Program and Services Director, about progress to date
- Finish by-laws proposal
- Search begun for partner school
- Pool search underway
- Assistant Coach application circulated
- 501c3 process begun



June 2012

- First Board of Director Meeting
- Program begins to develop organically
- Roles among Board begin to form
- Sue Anderson attends meeting to help BCSR identify volunteers for Board positions



July-August 2012

- Board positions assigned
- 501c3 paperwork filed with State of New York
- Five-lane, 25-yard pool secured at William Emslie YMCA in target area within City of Buffalo
- King Center Charter School identified as first partner school
- Student Transportation of America agrees to bus kids straight from school to pool for reduced rate
- Committees begin to form: Audit, Communications, Student - Athlete Recognition, Grants, Fundraising, Advocacy, Governance, Nominating



September-October 2012

- Fundraising continues & grant-writing begins
- Assistant Coach search continues
- Pilot Program Budget created
- Pilot Program sponsor identified in Thor Trading
- Buffalo City Swim Racers registers with USA Swimming
- Classroom visits begin at King Center Charter School to generate interest



November-December 2012: The Pilot

- 6-week pilot program starts with 15 kids
- Transportation commences from school to pool
- Tutoring for 60 minutes & healthy snacks initiated
- Swim lessons conducted for 60 minutes, 3 times/week
- Free swimsuit, goggles, t-shirt, cap and USAS registration provided
- Students must show progress toward an 80 GPA & 90% attendance in school to keep eligibility in program
- No behavioral problems among pilot population



January-February 2013

- We take a break to evaluate the model, expenses, income and structure
- Findings
 - Tutoring would be too great of an expense
 - Equipment and transportation expenses are acceptable
 - Handle up to 35 children per session
 - Add extra coaching as children develop to create levels within the same practice
 - Pay is \$20/ hour for initial group of coaches with expectation of expansion. They would become site coordinators. New site coaches would receive \$15/hr



March 2013-December 2013

- March 17, 2013- first official practice of BCSR
 - 15 African-American swimmers from pilot
 - 7 boys/8 girls
 - Additional swimmers from King Center Charter added
- September 15, 2013- second practice time with families from YMCA and Maritime Charter School added
- November 16, 2013- enter first swimmer in competition
- December 2013- finish year with over 80 swimmers registered with USA Swimming (98% low-income, 98% minority)
- \$70,000 in grants and donations received



January-December 2014

- More than \$100,000 in grants and donations raised
- 7 coaches hired
- June 20, 2014- Hosted first annual Water Safety Festival
- September 2014- 8 kids in competition
- 2 girls qualify for LSC Championship
- 132 kids registered in 2014
- City of Buffalo offers free pool time and use of their vans for BCSR to expand into their facilities



What do we look for in our Board, Committees and Volunteers?

- A passion for the BCSR Mission
- An expert in Swimming, obesity, demographics, education, health or other relevant topics
- An interest in giving of their time
- An interest in sharing our mission with their community
- Skills and services that add to the BCSR Goals



In the end, the program speaks
for itself:



Thank you for your time

- Please let us know if we can answer any additional questions.
- For further information, contact Mike Switalski @ 716-359-4729 or email coachmike@buffaloracers.org





