



The WSO Mission

WSO was formed in 1967 by then ETHS coach Dobbie Burton. His purpose was to train young swimmers and prepare them for the ETHS swim team. He also needed a swim club to conduct practices in order to keep the high school swimmers in shape year-round. Since that time WSO has grown into a competitive swim team that offers everything swimmers with a wide range of backgrounds and abilities could want. The Wildkit Swimming Organization has a mandate to achieving three goals: swimming fast, creating fun in a safe and friendly environment and giving every young swimmer an opportunity.

Our club has made a firm commitment to excellence. We wish to create a club for all swimmers to be able to compete at the highest levels of competitive swimming. Within the structure of the club we have certain goals and achievements that are not based on winning at a young age or on taking home team trophies but on progression of stroke technique, motor skills, pace work, endurance and general swimming knowledge. We feel that emphasis on these areas will build a solid foundation for our swimmers so that they may plunge forward into the highest ranks of competition. We will produce swimmers that will challenge the world but we will not sacrifice the fun, enjoyment and skill development of our younger swimmers in a vain attempt to do so. Commitment from all swimmers, coaches and parents of the WSO to this ideal will produce the best possible atmosphere of winning and excellence.

Our club has made an equally firm commitment to providing opportunities for swimmers who cannot get lessons or a competitive swimming experience due to their financial situation. We provide financial aid to all swimmers with a need. In any given year this amounts to almost \$10,000. Our club unlike many country club swim clubs has a diverse demographic, especially in our learn to swim program, very representative of the city of Evanston.

During a year we open our doors to over 250 learn to swim kids and 150 swimmers. We have also crowned over 50 state champions since the year 2000. WSO's Blake Wallace who won state championships in 2000 and 2001 is one of a very small group of minority swimmers to win a State title in Illinois. Blake, Terry Silkaitis and Sean McCaffrey lead our high school team to the 2001 National Championship each receiving athletic scholarships to Big Ten Universities. Terry was named Big Ten swimmer of the year in 2003 and Julia Quinn another WSO alumnus was named Big East swimmer of the year in 2006 and 2007. Sarah Thompson (2015) and Honore Collins (2019 & 2020) were name Division III National Swimmers of the Year. These are but a very few of our storied alumnae.

WSO creates a safe, healthy and positive environment of fun, fast swimming and social development for swimmers from a myriad of cultural backgrounds.