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Colleen Turpen works out with the Vacaville Swim Team this summer. She was one of the winners in the Solano County Reading Association competition in 2007.

By Colleen Turpen
 Notre Dame School

No mere Stroke of Luck

Swimmers practice,
 practice, practice
 to claim success

When most of us think of swimming, we picture splashing around in a friend's pool or visiting the beach. However, swimming can be much more than that.

To be a fast swimmer, you have to have a good work ethic, good technique, speed, and endurance. Each of these components will help you in different races and events, but you need all of them to really be a great swimmer. Most important though, is having a positive mind and attitude.

Swimming competitively takes a lot of thought. Imagine if one swimmer is focusing on her race and thinking how to accomplish her goal while her competitor is thinking how much she hates her race, or worrying about her goggles falling off. Who will win, and out-touch her competitor? It's pretty easy to tell!

The focused swimmer will not only swim faster, but she will also feel better about what she accomplishes. This is the winning attitude swimmers strive to have.

Both our teammates and our coaches can help us with this. Most of the swimmers you meet will be very supportive and pumped up about racing. They want their teammates to swim fast, and accomplish their goals.

Swimming with the Vacaville Swim Club has taught me all of these things. A common phrase that we hear from our coaches is, "I

can, I will, I did it!" This little saying teaches us that if we have a positive mind, we can do anything we want to accomplish.

Every person on the team strives to do their best, and we all help each other to get faster, and reach our goals that we have been working hard to achieve.

A few important things about swimming fast are: pay attention at practice and listen to your coach. You should be open to advice; if your coach points out that the angle of your left arm is incorrect, or any other even tiny changes that you think don't matter at all, you should try to notice it, and then correct your form. If you do all this, you will accomplish your goals and go faster.

Also, you must practice, practice, practice! Every swimmer can improve their forms and technique. Olympic medalists Michael Phelps, Amanda Beard, Cullen Jones, Aaron Peirsol, Brendan Hansen and many others have goals they want to accomplish and they do whatever they can to reach it.

We can all strive to get closer to perfection. The road to perfection might be challenging, long and tiring, and we may be dragging and shuffling our feet, but we can all help each other to reach the end of that road, the end of our swim.

The author was a sixth-grader when this was submitted to the Solano County Reading Association competition in February 2007.



BY MARILYNN ANDERSON

The sweet sights and sounds of summer swim past us in a rush. Gather them up while you may, for soon fall fashions will appear in the stores and then Christmas decorations will be for sale, AGAIN! I am smiling because the kids in our communities are so much fun to interview, as you will see by today's responses. Would you like to participate in a Link column? You may. rdand@netscape.com Speak your mind.

Students share simple pleasures

Summer is a happy time for hanging out with friends and going places with my family. I'd really like to dig a big hole and make it into a fishpond. I know I could do it and install a filter and make a waterfall, too.

Corey Day, Grade 11, Buckingham High

I like going to church and learning about all the scripture stories. My favorite Bible story is about the ten lepers. One man came back to thank the Lord. I like being at church with my friends on Sunday.

Carissa Mikolajcik, Grade 3, Foxboro

Going swimming with my friends makes me feel good in the summer. I like going out on the porch and talking with my mom, too. All of summer is exciting!

Madison Bouwman, Grade 5, Alamo

I like to go to Costco with my dad. They have play equipment that you can buy for kids. I mostly don't play outside a lot, though because I'm indoors with

my baby brother.

Michael Alvarado, Grade 2, Crescent

The Glenbrook Swimming Pool makes me happy in the summertime. We go there a lot and I have learned to dive. I am a good swimmer and I can swim all the way to the 9-foot line. Sometimes there are only 4 or 5 other people there.

Daniel Valentine, Grade 1, Alamo

Every Sunday at church has something wonderful about it. Special conferences are my favorite church meetings. I like seeing my friends at church, too.

Dustin Edmonds, Grade 3, Foxboro

I like shopping for art supplies. Artists need paints and brushes. So far I have markers, colored pencils, and crayons. I like drawing my own pictures and coloring them better than just coloring in a coloring book. The thing I draw best is dogs.

Spencer Pihl, Grade 2, Browns Valley

We got a new puppy! It's a Labrador

retriever. We haven't named her yet. I'm going to be taking care of her all summer long. She's six weeks old and came from a litter of ten puppies.

Taylor Valentine, Grade 6, Alamo

We get to pay tithing at church when we earn money. We take the Sacramento; listen to speakers, and sing, too. I really like singing in Primary.

Kaila Weinzinger, Grade 3, Foxboro

There was an earthquake recently that made the water in our swimming pool slosh around. We said, "WHAT? Did one of the dogs jump in the pool?" Then we knew it was an earthquake.

Chris Orsi, Grade 3, Browns Valley

We find animals and Curious George at preschool. I have new friends and it is fun. Miss Sally is my teacher. I like the toys at preschool and we have stations.

Lela Grace Calacsan, Age 3, Fairfield Community Center Preschool

If we are especially good at church, we get a treat. Our teacher has a jar and

for every good thing we do, she puts a cotton ball in the jar. We get treats for a lot of cotton balls collecting up.

Brandon Ballard, Grade 2, Foxboro

On a Sunday evening awhile back I went to San Francisco to watch the 49ers play the Seahawks at Monster Park. It was an exciting game in the first half. At halftime, Jerry Rice came out onto the field and announced that he was retiring. The crowd cheered as he walked onto the field. The second half of the game was out of reach for the Seahawks. The 49ers won the game.

Connor Cole, Grade 7, Jepson

This is real news: I liked going to the Jelly Belly Factory with my mom and dad. They gave us hats and maps. You can buy whatever candy you want. There is a robot that waves to you and robots do some of the work, too. If jelly beans fall on the floor, they give them to hog farmers.

Andrew Krieger, Grade 2, Foxboro