



# EVERYONE IN THE POOL PROGRAM SUMMER 2023 REPORT

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# SUPPORTING OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

The *Everyone in the Pool* program delivered swim lessons through the summer of 2023 supported the Metroparks Strategic Plan in the following ways.

## Listen & Connect

Under the Strategic Plan goal of Listen & Connect, the *Everyone in the Pool* program utilized data and input from our communities to create innovative programs that meet the needs of our five counties. This work supports ALL of the Strategic Plan Objectives under that goal:

- Create listening opportunities that help the Metroparks understand resident needs
- Increase access to Metroparks services for Wayne County and City of Detroit with customized programming
- Increase transparency and accountability for progress against goals and objectives through master and departmental plans that benchmark and measure progress
- Increase engagement with Metroparks services
- Increase access to Metroparks services for underserved communities with customized programming



# INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the Huron-Clinton Metroparks collaborated with the consulting firm Counsilman-Hunsaker to conduct a regional survey aimed at identifying the barriers to swim instruction and gaps in water safety. The findings revealed a multitude of barriers, with the most significant obstacle being the prohibitively high fees associated with swim lessons. This financial burden posed a challenge, especially for families of color and residents of Detroit, where studies indicated that a substantial 70 percent of children had limited to no swim experience.

To begin addressing this cost barrier, the Metroparks initiated support for free water safety and swim lesson programs at partnered locations. The pilot program, conducted in partnership with the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy and City of Detroit Parks & Recreation's "Swim in the D" program, offered lessons at Adams Butzel Complex and Macomb Family YMCA offered free swim lessons at the Lake St. Clair Metropark pool in 2021.

In 2022, the Metroparks expanded their collaboration with regional organizations. The aim was, and continues to be, ensuring that all children in our five-county area could safely enjoy the pools, lakes, rivers, and ponds that make Michigan summers so delightful. Through these partnerships, more than 1,000 youth were taught to swim during the summer of 2022.

In 2023, the Metroparks sought to expand free swim lessons extending into the school year. Partnerships were further expanded for summer swim lesson programming, successfully providing free water safety and swim lessons to 1,344 participants across Livingston, Oakland, Macomb, Wayne, and Washtenaw counties at eight partnered locations.

Working under the framework of the **Strategic Plan's goal of listen and connect**, the Metroparks collected the community feedback from surveys and created customized partnership programs that deliver services in underserved communities and beyond. All while giving participants a life-long, lifesaving skill.

## Summer 2023 Everyone in the Pool Partnerships

Location	County	Partner(s)
Birkett Lake	Livingston	Ann Arbor YMCA
Howell Highlander Aquatic & Fitness Center	Livingston	Howell Highlander Aquatic & Fitness Center
Macomb Family YMCA	Macomb	YMCA Metropolitan Detroit
Waterford Oaks	Oakland	Oakland County Parks, Oakland County Sherriff PAL
Rutherford Pool	Washtenaw	Friends of Rutherford Pool & Washtenaw County Parks
Belle Isle Beach	Wayne	Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Brennan Pool	Wayne	City of Detroit Parks & Recreation, Detroit Riverfront Conservancy
Wayne County Family Aquatic Center at Chandler Park	Wayne	Wayne County Parks

The 2023 summer *Everyone in the Pool* program included new partnerships in 2023 with the Ann Arbor YMCA, the Department of Natural Resources- Youth Engagement & Employment program, the City of Pontiac - Parks & Recreation division, as well as expanding the number of free swim lessons at Belle Isle, the City of Detroit's 'Swim in the D' program, and Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission- Waterford Oaks.

The 2023 summer program also received grant funding of \$25,000 from the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan's Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Legacy Fund provided additional financial support for the lessons in Livingston, Oakland, and Washtenaw counties.

The demand and interest for free swim lessons remain high, as evidenced by registration for each of the sites filling up quickly, typically within 24 hours of opening to the public. The Metroparks continues to improve the process for registration and implemented a text message reminder and waitlist process to help reduce absences and no-shows and maximize attendance at full capacity of the water safety and free swim lesson program. As a result, we were able to achieve high class participation in 2023 at locations where we experienced high rates of no-shows in 2022.

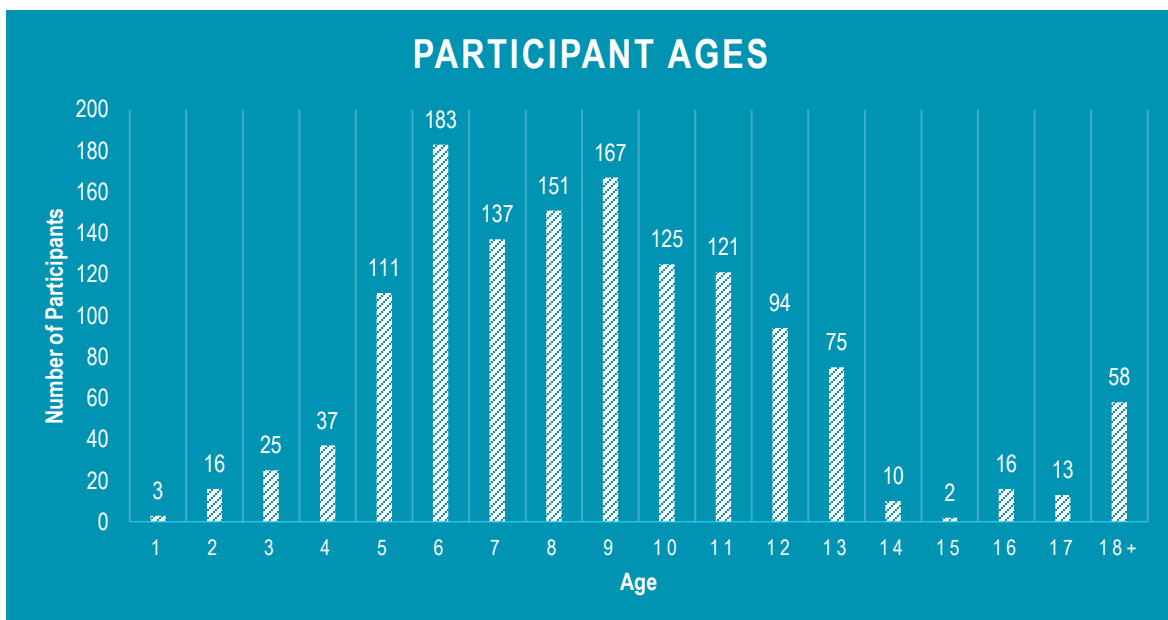
To determine the impact and skill progression of the participants, swim instructors utilized a standard form to collect pre-lesson and post-lesson assessments for each swimmer beginning in the summer of 2023. This was the first time we have been able to consistently gather this data since the start of swim lesson partnerships in 2021. This data is helpful to show the effectiveness of the swim lessons, as well as identify areas for improvement in future programs.

# 2023 SUMMER DATA

**Total number of students: 1,344 registered participants. 34.4% increase compared to 2022.**

The 2023 summer swim lessons began June and continued through August at multiple partnered locations. Both Waterford Oaks and Rutherford pool locations had increased capacity and participation as compared to 2022. Due to changes in instructors and scheduling conflicts, the following locations had reduced capacity as compared to 2022: Belle Isle, Macomb Family YMCA and Howell Highlander (-52 at Belle Isle, -25 at Macomb Family YMCA, -33 at Howell Highlander).

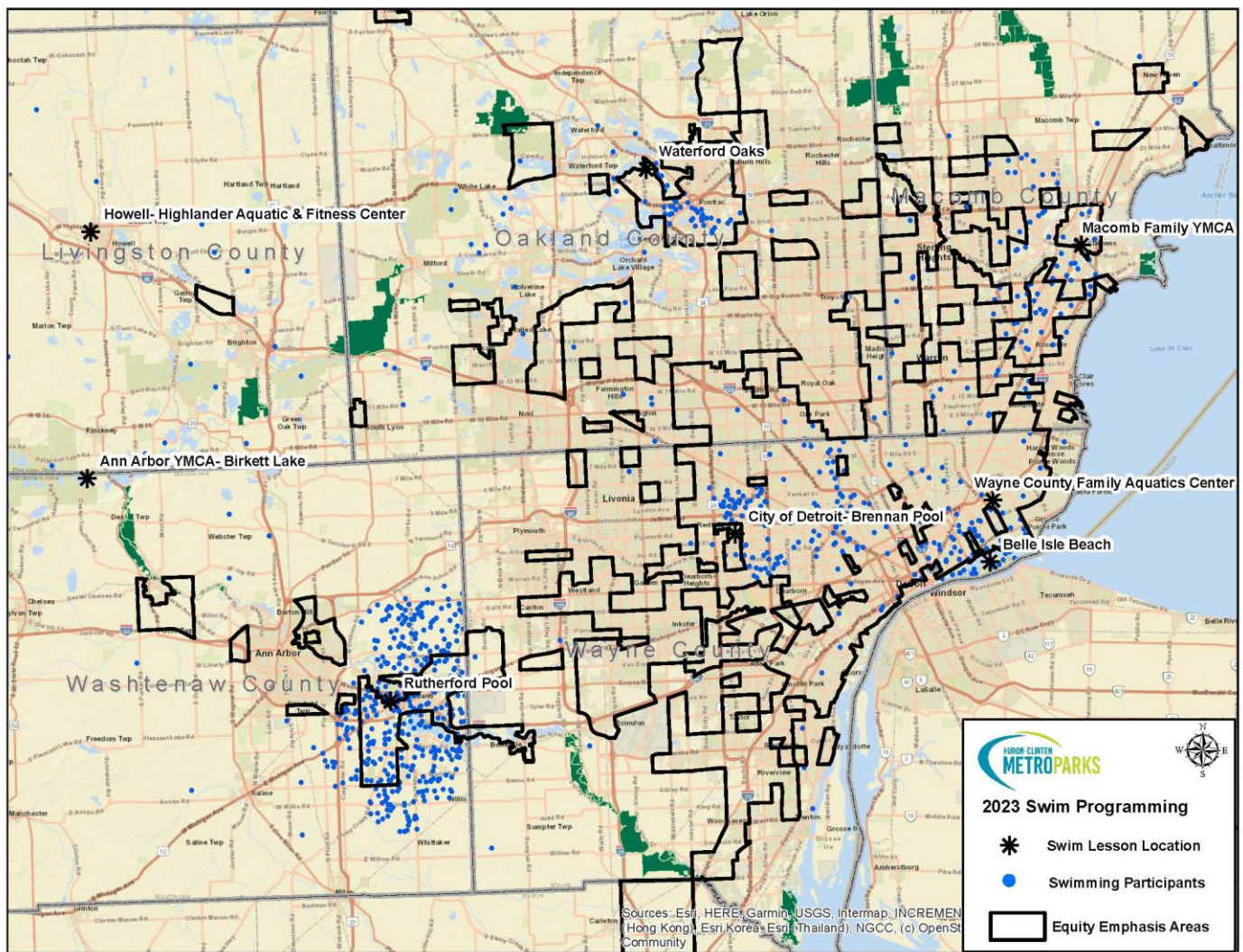
Summer 2023 Partnered Locations	Number of registered participants
Birkett Lake (Ann Arbor YMCA)	12
Belle Isle Beach (DNR)	98
Wayne County Family Aquatic Center at Chandler Park	83
Brennan pool (City of Detroit- Swim in the D)	350
Rutherford Pool in Ypsilanti	471
Howell-Highlander Aquatic Center	15
Macomb Family YMCA	150
Waterford Oaks (Oakland County Parks)	165
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,344</b>



Note on ages: Rutherford location held classes for toddler aged students, all other locations focused on ages 5–13-year-olds with the understanding older students were welcome to participate.

# Zip Code Analysis

We collected zip codes from every registered participant in all partnered locations. Below is a map that visually represents where participants came from. You will notice they are primarily concentrated around lesson locations, which supports the swim study finding that travel distance is a barrier to participation. Additionally, you will notice that participation is concentrated in multiple equity emphasis zip code areas. This supports the Strategic Plan objectives of delivering customized programming to underserved communities through its Listen and Connect goal by meeting the following objectives: creating listening opportunities that help the Metroparks understand resident needs; increase access to Metroparks services for Wayne County and the City of Detroit with a physical presence and customized programming; increase engagement with Metroparks services; and, increase access to Metroparks services for underserved communities with customized programming.



# ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

In order to demonstrate the skill development of our participants and provide insight into the overall impact of the Everyone in the Pool program, we gathered both pre-lesson and post-lesson skill assessments for every swimmer. The pre-lesson assessments were filled out by the parent or guardian of each participant, while the post-lesson assessments were completed by the swim instructor. Our skill analysis is grounded in the American Red Cross (ARC) Swim Skills at level 1, forming the foundation of our evaluation process.

The first dataset below includes 435 complete assessments across multiple partnered locations analyzed for swim skill progression. A complete assessment includes **both** a pre-lesson and post-lesson assessment for each participant.

This dataset does not include the 471 students at Rutherford Pool who used a different assessment tool, 207 students who only had *either* a pre assessment or post assessment, and any students who did not end up attending or had multiple registrations. The 471 students from Rutherford Pool are reported in a separate assessment chart. Future water safety and swim lessons will continue to improve completion rate and accuracy of these assessments.

SWIM SKILL	% of students starting with Average or High Skill Level	% of students leaving with Average or High Skill Level
Enter Independently	83%	95%
Exit Independently	82%	93%
Blow bubbles	51%	87%
Bob 5x	46%	83%
Retrieve Submerged Object	23%	69%
Front Glide	12%	77%
Back Float	32%	76%

## Key Analysis from Assessments

- The data shows significant improvements in students' mastery of critical water safety and swimming skills. **The ability to back float**, a critical component of water safety, has **increased by 46%**. This skill is a vital component of water safety as it allows children to keep their heads above the water and float to safety.
- **The percentage of students who can bob five times increased by 37%**. This swim skill teaches them to breathe under unexpected or accidental submersion by exhaling underwater and inhaling after they emerge.
- **Breath control, taught through the practice of blowing bubbles, saw an increase in mastery by 36%**. This swim skill helps alleviate the fear of face submersion and is critical to water safety to properly learn to inhale through your mouth when your face is above water and exhale through your mouth or nose with your face is underwater as opposed to holding your breath or aspirate.
- **Retrieving submerged objects had a 46% increase in successful students**, a skill that practices longer breath-holding and overcoming the fear of putting their face underwater.
- Finally, **students' ability to perform a front glide increased by 65%**. This swim skill plays a significant role as it a foundational skill in learning the front crawl stroke.

## Ypsilanti - Rutherford Pool Assessment Analysis

Total registered participants at this location: 471

Starting level	# of students in that level	Ending Level	# of students in that level
Toddler	37	Toddler	23
Beginner	145	Beginner	106
Beginner 2	127	Beginner 2	100
Intermediate	84	Intermediate	94
Advanced	68	Advanced	77
Swim Team	0	Swim Team	34

Rutherford Pool has a long-standing swim lesson program and utilized their own assessment tool to track swim skill progression of their participants in 2023. In their assessment tool, swimmers are required to demonstrate mastery of the skills from the preceding level in order to advance to the next class level. This summer, **197 students mastered their starting class skill level** and can advance to the next class level.



Beginner swimmers need to be comfortable in the water and able to follow instructions. Beginner II/Advanced Beginner swimmers must also be able to float on their front and back. Intermediate swimmers must be able to swim the front crawl, float on their front and back, and be comfortable in water over their head. Advanced swimmers should be comfortable in the deep end, swim front and back crawl, and improve their diving and stroke techniques.



# TESTIMONIALS

I want to extend a HUGE thank you to all those involved in making these swim lessons possible. Learning to swim is such a critical skill to safely activate the joy of water in this region. Your staff is always tremendously welcoming and wonderful with the children.

Super grateful for all of you and look forward to building these partnerships throughout the year. Please keep Sheriff PAL in mind for future programs and events

- Lauren Fuller, Director, Oakland County Sheriff PAL

I just wanted to email and let you know what a great time we had with the swim lessons at Waterford Oaks.

Everything was run really nicely, and the instructors (Avery & Savannah) were fabulous. We definitely had a positive experience and look forward to more programs like this in the future. Thanks again and have a great Summer.

- Elizabeth Felix

Thank you so much for everything today, Candice! Celia was SUPER excited to tell her dad all about it and she feels very proud of herself for what she has accomplished 🎉 See you Thursday!

- Celia attended swim lessons at Belle Isle State Park Beach

I know I have said this before, but I am so grateful for the experience that we had at Waterford Oaks for our swim lessons. The manager, Brad, was so kind to us and his staff was amazing! The swim instructors were all so compassionate and patient with the kids. My kids left lessons with smiles and positive attitudes. They learned a lot, but most importantly, confidence from the encouragement of their instructors. I have been a teacher for 16 years, and the instructors, even though they are young, show so much potential as a teacher. Even after they were done instructing, they made those personal connections. They would come up and high five the kids and compliment their efforts during that lesson. They would also let me know how they did and quietly tell me things the kids could work on at home, even in the tub. They never let the kids hear their criticisms, which was so kind of them. We loved having the same instructors each class, as well. I could go on and on about all the positives of this experience and this program. Thank you so much for giving us this opportunity and experience. I hope it continues on for next year and is at the same location. Being in a pool to learn to swim was more relaxing to the kids.

- Nichole Johns