

Lap by lap, they're swimming for SCAMP

By Carla Joan Schwarz
Special writer

HELEN SMITH, a senior citizen and member of Orchard Valley Swim Club in West Bloomfield, was upset when her vacation coincided with the club swimming laps as a fund-raising benefit for special children. So she swam 200 laps and turned in almost \$120 in pledges early.

Smith is just one of about 50 dedicated swimmers, ages 5 to 65, who swim each summer to raise money for SCAMP — a six-week summer program for exceptional children, who may be physically, mentally, emotionally, hearing impaired or learning disabled.

Since 1980, Orchard Valley Swim Club, with members from Birming-ham, the Bloomfields and Farmington Hills, has raised \$1,000 yearly for SCAMP. This year the club swam

from 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. July 15, leaving one lane open all day for fund-raising swimmers.

SCAMP, operated by the Bloomfield Hills School District, serves 328 campers ranging from pre-schoolers through 26-year-olds, who live in 29 different school districts mostly within Oakland County. This year the program of art, music, physical education, academic and social activities, is at Bloomfield Hills Middle School.

"WE ARE THRILLED to have the support of Orchard Valley," Jean Walker, said. She's coordinator of SCAMP. The program is funded through tuition and donations. Although tuition is \$200, the program costs \$425 per child. In addition, some campers are on scholarships.

JoAnn Caccharelli, one of two coordinators of the private swim club's SCAMP fund-raiser, said the idea originated six years ago by a former club member. "We discovered their needs, and we decided to help."

Caccharelli's 17-year-old son, Guy, works this year as a lifeguard for SCAMP. "It's pleasing to see children who do not have the advantages that others do get satisfaction out of a camping experience. They really enjoy camp," Guy said.

Darin Abbate, swim coach at Orchard Valley, encouraged swimmers ages 9 and older to swim 200 laps and the 7 and 8-year-olds to swim 100 laps.

"The swimmers are very enthusiastic and they understand it's going for a worthy cause," Abbate said. Many of the swimmers are members of the club swim team.

HEATHER KAMINS, 8, was really tired after completing her 100 laps. Her white bathing cap was cockeyed and her eyes looked half closed. But when asked why she swam, she said, "For special kids." Her brother Robert, 12, also swam. After finishing 200 laps, he didn't seem tired at all.

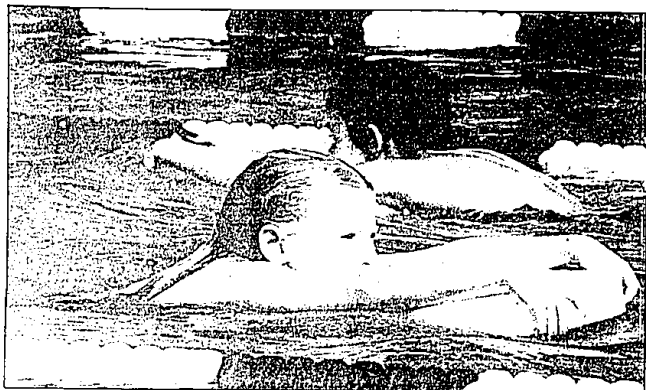
A number of families, like the Kamins', had more than one member involved. This was the case with the Knipper family when Susie, 17, Dan, 14, and Katie, 12, swam 200 laps each.

Chris Duff, 10, collected \$80 in pledges. "I swam 200 laps because I wanted to help retarded children."

At 38, Merrill Saldman said she only swam 50 laps because "I'm just not as young as the kids." But, like the children, she asked family members and friends to pledge money for the worthy cause.

THE YOUNGEST swimmer was probably Mark Tripp, 5. He swam 25 lengths, then dashed out of the pool.

Linda Blank, who worked with Caccharelli on the fund-raiser, said Valley is looking to expand the event. She praised all the dedicated swimmers, but would like to get more members involved. Orchard Valley also offers tennis. "Maybe next year, it will be more than a swimming event," she said.



Erin Schwartz (foreground), a member of Orchard Valley Swim Club, does her 100 laps to benefit SCAMP — with a little help from a kick board. The club has held the fund-raiser

for six years with proceeds going to the summer camp program for handicapped youngsters from all over Oakland County, run by the Bloomfield Hills School District.

RICK SMITH/staff photographer



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While keeping track of laps swum, it doesn't hurt to be trendy — and this year's rage is pastel-colored sun block. Here, Jodi Shapiro (right) borrows a little from the nose of a friend, Stacy Krause.

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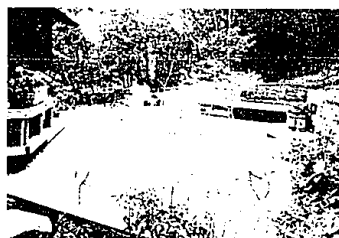
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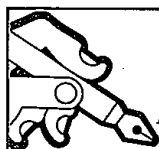
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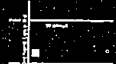
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