

## Swimming is Growing Up at the Aquatic Center

By Dan Christian, Aquatic Center Director



The Charlotte Aquatic Center had its dedication ceremony on June 13, 2004. While always looking to grow and improve, we would like to take a look back and see how far we've come. Thanks to the support of the community, the Aquatic Center has begun a culture that is starting to thrive. Here is a look at a few of those things that have happened recently.

One of the missions of the Aquatic Center is to provide a safe environment for learning and fun. Every school day roughly 100 students from Charlotte Upper Elementary and Middle School learn skills during gym classes which help them to be safe and comfortable around water. These classes commonly transform non-swimmers to students who are capable and confident. The Aquatic Center also receives several visits to the therapy pool from Meadowview School of the Eaton RESA. That amounts to about 20,000 visits from students per school year, but there are more than classroom opportunities when it comes to water learning. The Aquatic Center waterproofs the community as American Red Cross Learn to Swim lessons are offered. Annually, 800 enrollees to these lessons are averaged, and participants range from infants to adults. For the past four years, the Aquatic Center has also been a host location to the World's Largest Swim Lesson. This is an event where hundreds of facilities across the planet conduct a swim lesson simultaneously to raise awareness for water safety. This year's event is on June 21<sup>st</sup> and is free to the public.

The Aquatic Center continues to be a place of therapy and recreation for its guests. Warm water exercise classes draw hundreds of visits per month, and provide an outlet for mobility during the snowy winter, and spring months here in Michigan. Along with Meadowview School, the therapy pool continues to see use from Hayes Green Beach hospital in the form of Aquatic physical therapy.

Ten years after the facility dedication, Charlotte High School had its first high school swim team in 2014. In the years since, The Orioles have been first place finishers at the League Championship Meet in four

individual events, have had two 2<sup>nd</sup> team all-area swimmers and one Lansing Area Dream Team swimmer. Before reaching the high school swim team, many swimmers already have swim meet experience under their belt by participating in several of the other teams that call the Aquatic Center home. These include the Tiger Sharks, Dolphins and Middle School Swim Team. For more information on the Aquatic Center, please visit <http://registration.swimcharlotte.org> , or call 517-541-5740.