

## **Berkshire South Regional Community Center Announces Thirteenth Annual Swim-A-Thon Fundraiser Ambassadors**

Berkshire South Regional Community Center (BSRCC) is honored to announce that Tyler Baronas, Matt Pendergast, and Eric Schumann, *Team Oak Lodge*, are this year's Swim-A-Thon Ambassadors. A critical fundraiser for Adaptive Needs programs at Berkshire South, the Swim-A-Thon will be held on Sunday, April 2 – World Autism Awareness Day – in the Norris Aquatics Center. Swimming begins at 8 a.m.

Berkshire South's adaptive needs initiatives include free swim lessons, class modifications, aquatic exercise classes and specialized equipment for individuals of all abilities. Aquatic exercise improves range of motion and balance, while simultaneously increasing strength. All instruction is geared towards the unique strengths and challenges of each participant in our individualized classes which are taught by highly trained staff.

Additionally, over 16,500 patrons use the Center's therapy pool annually, more than 50 each day. It is the only warm-water therapy pool of its type in South County and meets the needs of individuals who are recovering from illness or injury and well as those with disabilities.

Tyler, Matt and Eric, all friends through Oak Lodge, a life-sharing home that serves adults with disabilities, have participated in the Swim-a-thon for the last several years and enjoy swimming together multiple times a week at Berkshire South. All three are proud to be this year's ambassadors. "I've been taking a swim class to help me prepare," noted Eric in a recent interview. Matt added, "I swam 30 lengths of the pool last year, and I'm going to do more this year." Tyler emphatically agreed.

"Sign up to swim as an individual or as a relay team. You can also take an Aqua Aerobics class at 10am as an alternative to lap swimming!" Executive Director Jenise Lucey says. "Just come and participate. If you can't swim, you can make a donation honoring our three ambassadors or in support of the event generally. Help us continue to offer critical programming to those who need it throughout our region. Your involvement makes such a huge impact."

Minimum participant donation this year is \$20. All funds go toward BSRCC's Adaptive Needs Programs. Swimmers have up to 2 hours to swim up to 200 pool lengths, but they are able to choose to swim any shorter length or timeframe they wish. Swim-A-Thon is open to swimmers of all ages and abilities. Register at the Berkshire South Front Desk, located at 15 Crissey Road, Great Barrington, or register or sponsor a swimmer at [www.berkshiresouth.org/swimathon2023](http://www.berkshiresouth.org/swimathon2023). For additional information, call 413.528.2810 ext. 17 or [aquatics@berkshiresouth.org](mailto:aquatics@berkshiresouth.org).

BSRCC strives to address the needs of all its members. At the Center you will find a specially trained team that offers classes and individualized trainings for all abilities. The adaptive member base is a priority, and we continue to educate ourselves in order to address the needs of these members while staying focused on keeping programs accessible and adaptable to everyone.

Berkshire South Regional Community Center is a non-sectarian, nonprofit organization open to all, regardless of ability to pay. Our mission is to build a sense of community and common purpose throughout the region, and to enhance the recreational, educational, cultural, health and social well-being of the residents of the Southern Berkshires.