

Taking the PLUNGE— Goldfish Celebrates 5 years!

When Goldfish Swim School (www.goldfishswimschool.com) opened on Pinecrest Road, Reston in Fall 2014, it was their first location on the East Coast. Five years have passed and franchise owners, Ryan and Gina Bewersdorf have been busy! They have since opened two additional Northern Virginia locations, Falls Church in 2017 and Alexandria in 2019 to accommodate the area's growing demand for quality swim lessons.

It all started when the Bewersdorf children learned to swim at Goldfish Swim School in Michigan, where they lived. Before attending Goldfish lessons, their son did not want to learn how to swim and refused to participate in any of the community swim classes that Gina took him to. However, when they went to the recently opened Goldfish Swim School in their area, he took the plunge and made quick progress. Their daughter began swimming at Goldfish at six months old and now at age 11 swims competitively.

Bringing Goldfish to Northern Virginia was an easy decision. Both Bewersdorfs had spent time in the D.C. area and had many friends here. "The area is such a vibrant, family oriented and active community, when we had the opportunity to expand the Goldfish brand, we chose Reston as the ideal location with expansion plans for Northern Virginia," says Gina.

The Goldfish program works because of the small class sizes, heated water, proprietary curriculum, and the overall vibrant, colorful environment. Aside from swimming being a fun and healthy activity, it is also an essential safety skill. Goldfish Swim School, in connection with its partnership with the USA Swimming Foundation, is helping spread the word to parents and caregivers to enroll children in dedicated swim lessons starting at the age of one so they learn proper water safety skills. The American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) newest water safety guidelines suggest that children start appropriate swim lessons at the age of one-year-old to help decrease risks of drowning, which according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is the leading cause of injury death in U.S. children ages 1-4 years.

"The foundation of our swim lessons focuses on water safety and life-saving skills," says Gina Bewersdorf. "We are proud that the skills taught at Goldfish Swim School play a large role in the prevention of drowning." Goldfish Swim School advocates for perpetual year-round swim lessons, allowing students to advance at their own rate. All students start with a beginner class and are evaluated each week before proceeding to the next level. The swim school offers classes beginning at age four months, with options for parent participation in classes for ages four months to two years old. All swim school supervisors and instructors are CPR certified and Ellis certified—the industry leader in lifeguard credentials—yearly. Also, Goldfish Swim School requires instructors to pass an additional Goldfish training program.

"The American Academy of Pediatrics emphasis on starting swim lessons at a very young age supports Goldfish Swim School's mission to teach life-saving water safety skills to all children," says Tommy Hamilton, Regional Manager.



Gina and Ryan