



Friends of Swimming

by Barb Kelly

Local group organizes effort to build new aquatic center in Flagler County.

Dynoswim, an Internet-based swimming resource that operates swimming workout and training in Palm Coast, in partnership with local group Friends of Swimming has spearheaded an ongoing effort to build a new aquatic center here in Flagler County. According to Judi Rich of Dynoswim, the group's mission for the aquatic center is about engendering respect in participating youth – Respect for the environment through increased understanding gained with daily physical contact with the environment and through lecture and discussion of pertinent marine and aquatic topics; increased respect for themselves gained through their personal progress and accomplishments; and respect for others through contact with compassionate instructors and by working in a team building environment.



The county's high school swim teams, Flagler Palm Coast High School's Bulldogs and Matanzas High School's Pirates, have joined Dynoswim in this effort.

Donations have been solicited from local

individuals and groups. The battle to find support is gaining momentum. After the City pool closed, the group got their online petition live. This was an opportunity for FOS to make known the need of such a facility. The first week there were over 130 petitioners. Buttons and car window stickers are available for sale to help promote FOS. T-shirts will also

be available.

Last April, Bill Delbrugge, superintendent of Flagler County Schools, allowed FOS to distribute 9,500 letters, one to every student in Flagler County. The letters were distributed just three weeks prior to their first critical Community Redevelopment Agency Workshop at City Hall. This action resulted in many new supporters. They continue to look into bigger and better ways to gain further community support and help needed to move this desire into reality.

FOS has contacted every City Council Member, County Commissioner and School Board Member introducing them to the group's mission. They want a complex that

would include an Olympic-size swimming pool, 50 meters in length, down to a wading pool for the youngest children.

Since 1990, even though Flagler County grew by leaps and bounds in other areas, this group has struggled to get their own facility, not just for school age young people, but to include all ages.

For the future—Friends of Swimming plans to remain active after an aquatic facility is built, perhaps to offer swim scholarships to local swimmers, and to help those who may need financial help or are required to swim for health reasons.

For more info visit www.friendsofswimming.org. There are several links on their web site. Click on Local Events/Happenings to check out the current info; also you can sign up for the petition to let the government entities and public know your interest for this project.

Top: Ed Gaw Amelia Island (5K) Open Water Challenge. Left to right: Samie Grogan, Scott Bay, Sean Bean, Amy Britton, Dakin Fromhold, Dean Osterloh, Dave Petkovsek, Judi Rich, and Sheryl Watkins; Abby Bange, 5-years-old, swimming at the First Annual Ormond Y Kid's Triathlon held Saturday, August 4, 2007.