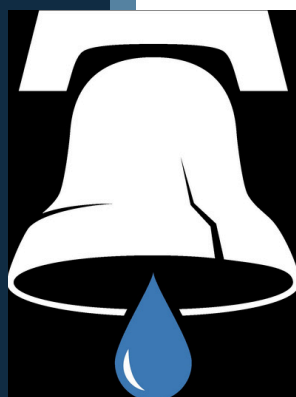


LIFESAVERS PROGRAM FOPA NEWSLETTER



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- Philly Aquatics @ Gretna Glenn (Top Center)
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- Our Impact: Participants & Locations (Bottom Right)



FRIENDS OF
**PHILLY
AQUATICS**



Total Workshop Participants & Locations

302

Gretna Glenn
Jerome Brown
Carson Simpson Camp
Stenton Park
Sturgis Recreation
Pleasant Playground
Gustine Recreation
Steel School
Finley Playground

Where have we been this summer?



Charisma Presley of Philly Aquatics speaks to students about safety during dry-land skills training at the Finley Rec Center. "We're here today to tell you that swimming is for everyone. We want to teach you how to be safe in, around, and near all bodies of water." Jose F. Moreno / Staff

This group is trying to get families more year-round swimming options

By Kristen A. Graham
Staff Writer

Philly's public pools are open for eight weeks, max.

Charisma Presley dreams of a city where families have access to public pools long past Labor Day, where they can swim for free year-round.

So for the past several years, Presley has spearheaded a group that keeps the conversation alive, reminding Philadelphians — and their elected officials — what the city once had, and how youths and families would benefit from having that again.

"We need year-round access and equity, and we need sustainable indoor infrastructure, not seasonal



Swimmers enjoying the pool at the Chew Recreation Center on Washington Avenue in 2024. Jessica Griffin / Staff Photographer

pools that leave our communities behind," Presley said from the bleachers of a Philly rec center on a sweltering summer Wednesday before pools closed.

Presley and the other members of Friends of Philly Aquatics remind anyone who will listen of their two main goals: they want Pickett Pool in Germantown renovated and reopened and Marcus Foster Pool in Nicetown rebuilt and reopened.

Both pools are owned by the Philadelphia School District but for decades ran programs through the city's Parks and Recreation Department. Foster closed in 2008 and Pickett in 2019.

Friends of Philly Aquatics, the successor group to Friends of Pickett Pool, helped notch a win in

→ SEE SWIMMING ON B2



Philly Inquirer & Local Invents (Steel School, SDP Bus Tour @ Marcus Foster, Schuylkill River-Philly Rowing)



Swimming

→ CONTINUED FROM B1

2023, when the school board voted to reopen Sayre Pool, another district-owned pool in West Philadelphia, in a deal that committed the district to spending about \$11 million and the city more than \$3 million.

But for now, just one indoor public pool is open citywide: at Lincoln High in the Northeast. (Two more district schools, Fels and Widener Memorial, have pools, but they're not open to the public.)

For a time, Philadelphia's city-sponsored swimming program was nationally renowned — so attention-grabbing that it eventually became the subject of *Pride*, a 2007 Terrence Howard film that dramatized the plight of coach Jim Ellis, and the challenges and tri-



Cokettia Rawlerson of Friends of Philly Aquatics, who is the sister of **Charisma Presley**, speaks to students about pool safety at the Athletic Rec Center in North Philadelphia. The grassroots group advocates for year-round swimming opportunities for Philadelphians. *Jose F. Moreno / Staff Photographer*

