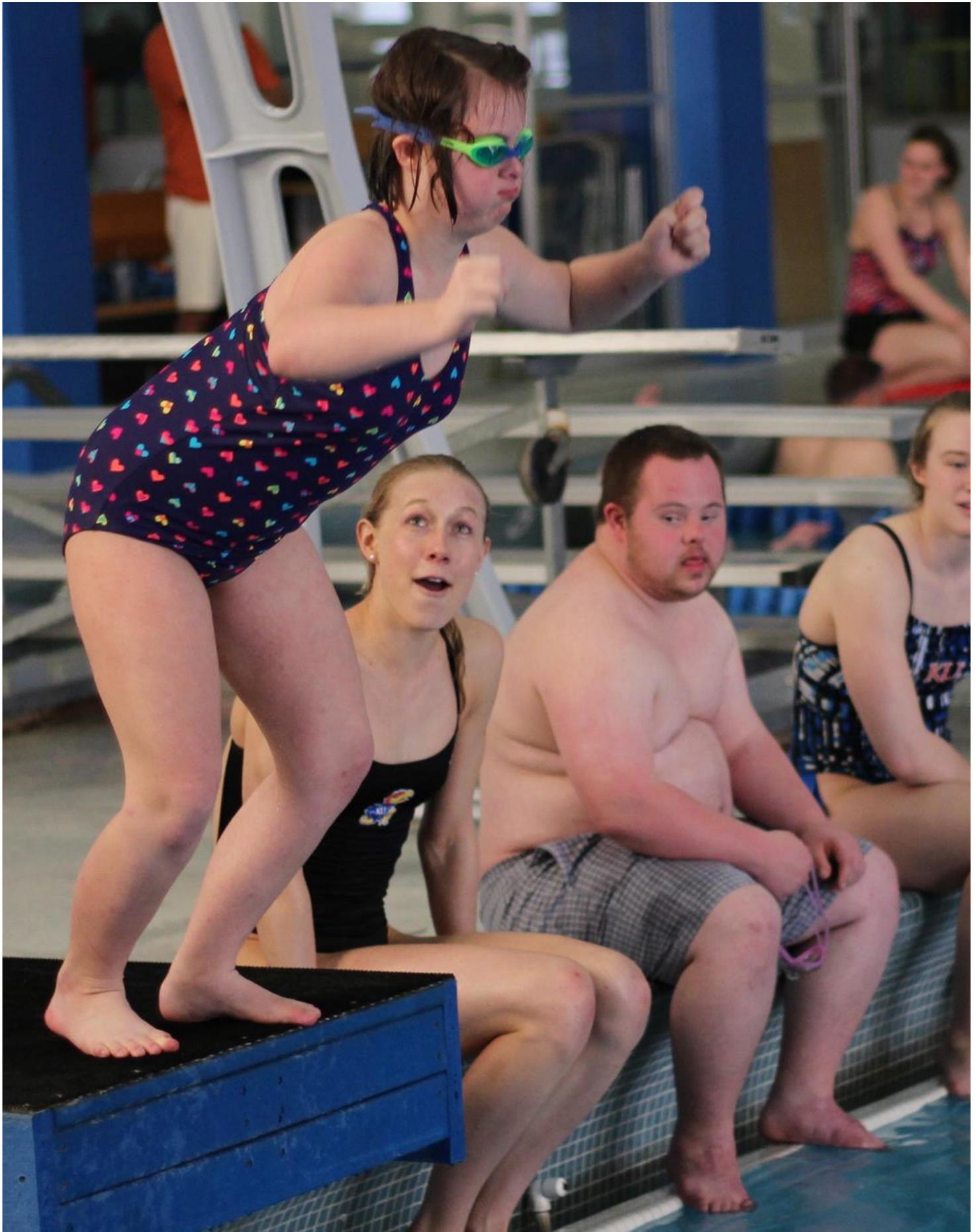


University of Kansas





Roles Reversed: Jayhawks Enriched by Special Olympics Clinic

Swimming & Diving

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LAWRENCE, Kan. - There were adjectives aplenty following Sunday's Special Olympics Clinic hosted by the Kansas swimming and diving team inside Robinson Natatorium. Fun. Inspiring. Awesome. Great. Most of them came from the Jayhawks themselves, both in person and via social media after. Sure, it was a give-back-to-the-community event for the team, but despite numerous thank-yous from clinic participants, the most thankful might've been the Kansas student-athletes.

"I think we get more out of it for sure," Kansas junior [Sammie Schurig](#) said of the more than hour and a half session. "I got more out of today than in a long time, I haven't felt that way in awhile. It was really cool. You definitely get a lot out of seeing their joy, their laughter. You can tell that they look up to us and they're just really special people and it was awesome."

[Pia Pavlic](#), another junior and emerging leader on the squad, agreed.

"The whole experience is just so amazing," Pavlic said. "It's so amazing that they're so happy when they swim - it's great to see. We take it for granted too much, the fact that we can swim as well as we do without any disabilities. Seeing them inspires me, it makes me want to work even harder."

After a brief introduction and a few minutes of uneasy chaos, the clinic settled into an imperfect, but just right mix of having fun in the water and improving swim technique. Pavlic directed one of several stations, teaching freestyle and backstroke, while other sessions focused on diving, pushing off the wall and kick turns, among others.

"It was awesome," [Hannah Angell](#) a junior and third-time participant in the clinic said. "We always welcome the Special Olympians with open arms. We try to break up into a few groups and it doesn't always go exactly according to plan, but we still have a lot of fun doing it. It's fun teaching little things about swimming, just taking it step-by-step with them, and forming friendships as well."

"You recognize familiar faces for sure. I'd say 75 percent of the participants were here last year or the year before - it's pretty fun seeing most of them again, working on some things and seeing improvements that they've made over the years as well."

After rotating through the stations, the participants were numbered off and assigned to relay teams, which competed in two spirited session-ending swims.

Kansas recently completed a season during which the Jayhawks posted their highest point total ever at the Big 12 Championship meet, improving on the team's best finish ever at the Big 12 meet from two seasons ago. Kansas graduating senior [Chelsie Miller](#) advanced to NCAA Championship competition for the third consecutive season and earned All-America First Team recognition in the 400-yard individual medley.

Next year's squad is participating in limited workouts, with several Jayhawks hoping to join Miller, sophomore-to-be [Libby Walker](#) and incoming freshman Haley Downey at the US Olympic Trials June 26-July 3 in Omaha's CenturyLink Center.

Members of Kansas and Douglas County Special Olympics are training for regional and state competitions at the end of April and May respectively.

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