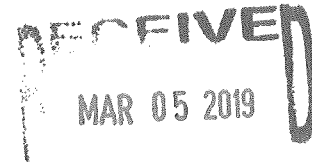


Westtown Township
PO Box 79
Westtown, PA 19395
Attn: Will Enthridge



Dear Mr. Enthridge,

I am writing to you concerning Carolyn Bingham, and BAMM Aquatics, located at 931 Sage Road, in West Chester, PA. It has come to my attention that another resident on Sage Road has expressed concern over the existence of the swimming instruction taking place in the neighborhood, specifically for reasons regarding car traffic on the street.

As I am sure you know by now, Carolyn Bingham and her small team of instructors, not only teach neurotypical children and adults to swim, but that the major part of her clientele are children with pre-existing medical conditions. Mainly autism, but I have witnessed Carolyn giving lessons to children with cerebral palsy, down syndrome, as well as neurotypical children with high anxiety and fear caused by previous swimming instruction.

Before I give my personal testimony regarding BAMM Aquatics, I would like to provide you with some facts regarding unintentional fatal drownings in children with autism. We all clearly know the importance of children needing to know how to swim, or safely get themselves out of a body of water, however, children with autism have a much higher risk of drowning than a neurotypical child:

- Roughly half, or 48%, of children with an ASD attempt to elope from a safe environment, a rate nearly four times higher than their unaffected siblings
- In 2009, 2010, and 2011, accidental drowning accounted for 91% total U.S. deaths reported in children with an ASD ages 14 and younger subsequent to wandering/elopement.
- More than one third of ASD children who wander/elope are never or rarely able to communicate their name, address, or phone number
- 32% of parents reported a "close call" with a possible drowning
- Wandering was ranked among the most stressful ASD behaviors by 58% of parents of elopers
- 62% of families of children who elope were prevented from attending/enjoying activities outside the home due to fear of wandering

Source: National Autism Association website: www.nationalautismassociation.org

Children with autism, and other pre-existing medical conditions, in most cases do not have the luxury of using a regular swim program. Often times the facilities are too overwhelming, too large, too loud, for the children to tolerate. The instructors are not trained to handle these children safely, or with the training and understanding to motivate and instruct the child properly. The lessons are not designed with the flexibility needed for special needs children to learn. Many places just provide a group class, which is not always an appropriate setting for the child. To find a talented, trained professional that teaches in a calm, quiet setting is next to impossible.

I first met Carolyn Bingham when my autistic daughter was 4 ½ years old. At this time my daughter was non-verbal, self-injurious, and had almost zero water safety. We had been doing lessons at the local YMCA for 2 years without much success. She would not go into the YMCA facility without major resistance. She would not go in the pool without my husband, who is the sole income earner for our household. This meant he had to leave work twice a week to stand in the pool while the instructor tried to teach skills to our daughter, and this was becoming a hardship for us. The senior aquatics class that took place at the time and complained vigorously about her yelling in the water and being too loud for them to partake in their class. She would get so upset in the pool that she would throw up. The age group lessons were not something we could do as my daughter could not sit on the side of the pool safely and wait for her turn with the instructor. I was starting to have difficulty juggling both my one-year old daughter and doing what needed to be done to get my 4 ½ year old daughter safely to the poolside for her lesson. But we needed her to learn how to safely get out of the water. She was drawn to pools and the ocean and would walk into the water as if it wasn't even there. And, we knew all the statistics that I listed above. Our job as parents were to make sure our daughter was water safe, but there was nowhere to go. The swim lessons at West Chester University are totally not appropriate for a child with special needs, nor were the lessons at Cabrini College. Malvern swim's program mirrored the Y's program, so that was not an option either. We had nowhere to go, until I saw another Mom talk about Carolyn Bingham on a local online group for Moms of children with autism.

Carolyn Bingham is an absolute blessing for families with children with special needs, and to everyone that is fortunate enough to participate in her program. I arrived with my daughter, and in three lessons she had my daughter calm and relaxed in the water and not yelling. She had her getting her head wet. She had her putting her face in the water and safely blowing bubbles. My daughter made more progress in a month with Carolyn than she had in 2 years at the YMCA. I was so happy to see her relaxed and receptive to instruction. She learned how to spin onto her back so her face was out of the water and kick to the side of the pool and climb out. This was amazing. I could sit at a distance, my husband did not have to leave work, and my one year old could sit in the shade and color or play with the toys that Carolyn thoughtfully would leave out for siblings.

I met other Moms who told me their stories of why they were there. Children who refused to put so much as a foot into a pool after being traumatized at another swim instructional facility, and Carolyn was the only one that could soothe them enough, and relax them enough, to re-teach them how to swim safely. Moms of other autistic children, Moms of children with down syndrome, Moms of kids who were non-verbal and couldn't communicate about learning to swim and what was hard or how it felt. I saw a child who had such difficulty walking from her cerebral palsy, but was so excited and happy to get to the pool, and relaxed in the water, able to move without a lot of the pain that she experienced on dry land – it was quite a transformation to witness. I have heard stories of kids that elope into her personal home to hide, and Carolyn doesn't even blink an eye at this. Where else are you going to get the compassion, understanding, love, and professionalism to teach your special needs child to swim?

Aside from her clear talent and compassion, Carolyn is more than qualified to teach these children. Which makes her a diamond in the rough. You cannot find anyone else with her

dozens of teachers and therapists over the years, and the gifted ones always stand above the rest, and Carolyn is in that category. I know that the immensely grateful families that make up Carolyn's client base would be happy to heed instructions to park in a specific spot. I know that these families would heed "Children at Play" signs in the street if neighborhood children want to play. I know Carolyn would probably be happy to provide the lesson schedule if this Mom wanted to know the hours in which a car, or a few cars, may be coming to park in the street. There are so many simple solutions to this problem. For an entire community that already has enough challenges to deal with, to lose BAMB Aquatics – it would be devastating to so many families and children.

My daughter swam with Carolyn for years. As did my younger daughter. My older daughter who is autistic, who would not get into the water, who would holler and flail about, who was self-injurious, who would not get her head or face wet, is now 11 years old and swims on two swim teams. She can do a 25-meter freestyle in 18 seconds. She can swim the breast stroke, the butterfly, and the back stroke, as well as dive, flip turn, and streamline. She boogie boards for hours on end in the ocean, and can outswim all of her neurotypical friends – both in the pool and in the ocean. Carolyn not only taught my daughter how to be safe in the pool, she gave us the gift of loving swim, the gift of a day at the pool with friends, the gift of a family day at the beach.

Please consider a mediation between the two parties involved. Our special needs community can't, and shouldn't, lose such a gift to our children over a squabble over parking on a street. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Beth and John Yocum
5 Veterans Way
Malvern, PA 19355
bethyocum@gmail.com
610-742-0143

Will Ethridge

From: Ivan Turnipseed <ITurnipseed@cheyney.edu>
Sent: Thursday, March 14, 2019 12:33 AM
To: wethridge@westtown.org
Cc: Carolyn Bingham; cbaqua5@gmail.com
Subject: Letter of Support - Carolyn Bingham
Attachments: Letter of Support for Carolyn Bingham - 3.14.19.pdf

Dear Will,

Attached, please find a formal letter of support on behalf of Carolyn Bingham.

Feel free to reach out with any related questions.

Regards,

Ivan

Ivan B. Turnipseed, PhD

Professor and Coordinator - Hotel, Restaurant & Tourism Management
Cheyney University of Pennsylvania
1837 University Circle
Cheyney, PA 19319-0200

Office: 610-399-2559

Cell: 702-767-0620

E-mail: iturnipseed@cheyney.edu

<http://www.cheyney.edu/hrm/index.cfm>

President, HBCU Hospitality Management Consortium

RECEIVED
MAR 08 2019

To: Will Enthridge Westtown Township
Fr: Nic Sardo

3/5/19

Ref: BAMB Swimming

Carolyn Bingham has been a part of my life for over ten years. She has been a teacher, mentor, and friend for as long as I have known her. While learning from Carolyn I gained insight into the art of aquatic instruction. She went out of her way to teach me a craft that has benefited me and my students for over a decade. While working for her I taught infants how to survive in the water, prepared youth swimmers for their first team tryouts, trained athletes in clinics to develop technique, and provided opportunities for developmentally challenged youth to acquire in water skills. Surely today, there are hundreds of people with the skills to survive in the water thanks to Carolyn Bingham. Who can say how many lives are saved because of these taught skills? What would become of her students if they are no longer able to receive her instruction?

Today I am the head coach for Fitness & Wellness Aquatic Club. I work with youth ages 4- 18 and cherish the job. Year round I am a role-model and coach to 70 youth whom I train to compete in USA Swimming. Many of my swimmers benefit from the lessons I learned from Carolyn. Beyond just swim instruction skills, I learned many other things from Mrs. Bingham. Through her mentorship I developed values and habits that made me a better coach. Values such as kindness & understanding, professionalism & respect, and especially patience. I take a lot of pride in the training I received in my early years. Many instructors today rarely receive the level of experience I was provided.

Beyond the pool I have watched Carolyn be a committed mother to her family; a leader in her community, and a friend who is always ready to help out someone in need. Her joys in life seem to be spending time with her family, chasing after her ridiculous dogs, and practicing her craft as an aquatic's instructor. This community is fortunate to have someone like Carolyn Bingham and I strive to one day contribute as much as she has.

Myron N. Sardo



Fitness & Wellness Head Coach
Aquatics Instructor

Will Ethridge

From: Robert Moore <rmoore88@verizon.net>
Sent: Friday, March 01, 2019 8:12 AM
To: wethridge@westtown.org
Subject: Mrs. Carolyn Bingham, 931 Sage road.

Dear Will Ethridge:

I understand that there is an issue with Carolyn and her giving swim lessons at her home. I am writing this because I have known her since she was 15. While Director of Peachwood Swim Club, I hired her and within a year she was my head lifeguard, teaching swim lessons and water safety, and was a very good guard. She taught my two children to swim. She had a great passion then to help children and still does today. Today, she works with special needs children. I bring my grandchildren from New Jersey to have her teach them to swim.

I hope something can be resolved about this issue. Please let me know if you have any questions. I have been in the educational field for 44 years on the high school and college level. I was also a high school and college softball coach.

Thanks for the consideration.
Robert Moore
856 848 4221
609 440 1946

Robert Moore
rmoore88@verizon.net