Alumni

Newsletter

2nd annual Alumni Meet December 24, 2026

Second Annual Senior Groups V. Alumni Holiday Swim Meet

All NOVA Alumni are invited to pick an event or two, suit up, and RACE! We will warm-up, race, cheer, and enjoy breakfast together - no cost just fun.



WHAT - Morning Groups (National,SG,SS) V. Alumni Swimmers swim meet and breakfast

WHEN - Thursday Dec 24th 8:00 am warm up 8:45 am start

WHERE - Regency Aquatic Center

HOW - Alumni swimmers deck enter on 12/24 during warm ups.

NOVA SWIMMING

WHAT WE'VE BUILT TOGETHER



None of this happened overnight, and we certainly didn't do it alone. It took the vision and commitment of our Board of Directors, the support of Henrico County, the generosity of donors and sponsors, and the hard work of an extraordinary staff. It also took families, volunteers, and community partners who believed in what NOVA could become.What we have built over the past five years is much more than additional pool space. We have built opportunities, partnerships, and a community resource that will serve Henrico County for generations.

The addition of NOVA Regency in 2021, and the completion of its expansion in 2025, gave us the opportunity to put that mission into action on a much larger scale. Together, our Gayton and Regency Aquatic Centers have allowed us to reach more children, serve more families, build new partnerships, and become a greater resource for our community.

Today, we teach water safety to more than 1,800 Henrico County second graders each year, many of whom might otherwise never have access to swimming lessons. We provide space and programming for adaptive athletes, community organizations, and children who face financial or physical barriers to participation. We welcome swimmers of every age and ability, from young children learning to put their faces in the water to adults who depend on swimming for their health and well-being.



At the same time, NOVA Regency has become a destination for swimming competitions and other aquatic events, bringing thousands of athletes and families to Henrico County. We are proud to play a role in the redevelopment of Regency and to contribute to the economic vitality of the community we call home.

We have accomplished a great deal together, and I believe there is still so much more we can do.

Thank you for being part of NOVA's story and for helping us build something that will serve this community for generations to come.

Leigh Peterson

Chief Executive Officer

NOVA of Virginia Aquatics

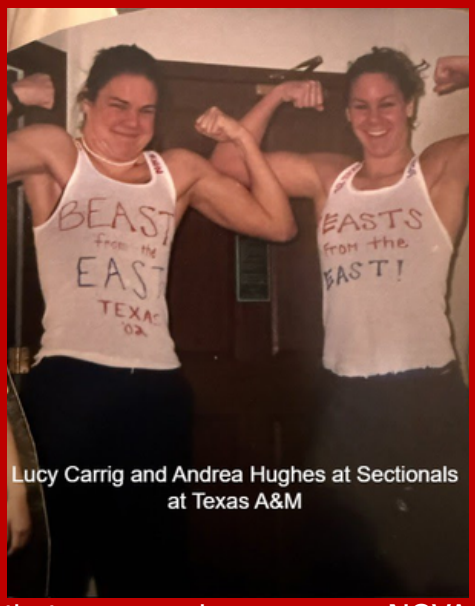
40 Years of Friendship

As NOVA celebrates 40 years, we're honoring the lifelong friendships that began in the pool and the memories that connect generations of NOVA swimmers. Read on for a special story from Lucy Carrig Jewell!

Have a NOVA story or photo to share? We'd love to hear from you! Send your memories to leighpeterson@novaswim.org and help us celebrate 40 years of friendship!



BEYOND THE LANE LINES: LUCY CARRIG JEWELL



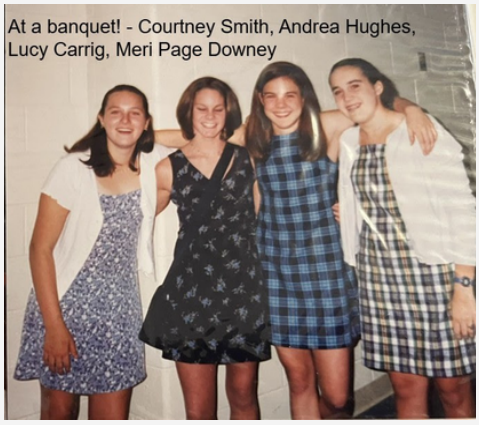
Lucy Carrig and Andrea Hughes at Sectionals at Texas A&M

Throughout my years with NOVA, I made countless memories and lifelong friendships. I started swimming for NOVA at just 8 years old back in 1992, following in the footsteps of my older sister and brother, Emily and Jack. At the time, my mom, Nancy Carrig, was also NOVA's board president.

Courtney Smith, Andrea Hughes, Anna Zimmerman, and I quickly became best friends and were practically inseparable. I'm sure we NEVER annoyed the coaches!

One memory that stands out is the time Leigh Robinson (now Peterson, that everyone knows as our NOVA CEO!) and I had a goldfish cracker fight on deck before warm-ups at PVC Champs, crushing as many crackers as possible into each other's hair. Geoff was not pleased, to say the least! Another favorite memory was traveling to Texas A&M for Sectionals, where we made T-shirts that proudly declared us the "Beasts from the East.

In those early days, NOVA didn't have a pool of its own, so I remember traveling to various locations for practice, including the Northside YMCA, Raintree, Burkwood, and the University of Richmond. My favorite was the old Crenshaw pool at University of Richmond, which is now a field hockey pitch. Behind the pool was a huge field where we participated in field day-style relays on Friday afternoons in Novice Group. I always made sure to partner with Carter Hamil because she was the fastest 8-year-old runner, and together, we won every time!


At a banquet! - Courtney Smith, Andrea Hughes, Lucy Carrig, Meri Page Downey


alloween at the Northside Y!

Fast-forward to 1997, when NOVA finally had a home pool of its own. I'll never forget the morning it opened. The entire team was invited to gather at the pool at 6 a.m., where we stood together, did the famous "We Are NOVA" cheer, and then all jumped into the pool. Having our friends, teammates, coaches, and parents all there to share that moment made it incredibly special.

Today, I'm married to another former NOVA swimmer, Lee Jewell, and we have four children, ages 8, 6, 4, and 2. Our two oldest are already swimming with NOVA in Novice Bronze and Novice Gold, and we would love for all four children to eventually join them in the pool, making it a family affair just as it was for the Carrig family years ago.

When I look back on what swimming and NOVA have meant to me, I'm filled with gratitude for the friendships, memories, and experiences that shaped the course of my years before adulthood. I hope my children grow to love NOVA as much as I did and create wonderful memories of their own that they'll carry with them for years to come. Lucy Jewell

Want to work or volunteer at NOVA?



HCPS 2nd Grade

From September to May each year NOVA is home to the 2nd grade Learn to Swim program. The program runs Monday - Thursday 9 am -12 pm. Volunteers will be fully trained by NOVA staff.



SwimNOVA

Volunteers and paid teachers are always needed in the Lessons program.
coachmc@novaswim.org



LIFE GUARDS

Contact Leigh Peterson if you are interested in full or part time roles that are available.
Leighpeterson@novaswim.org

View from the Pool deck
Head Coach David Schreck



At the heart of everything we do are NOVA's core values: accountability, sportsmanship, success, growth, and unity.

Being part of NOVA means being part of something bigger than yourself. Whether you are a returning family, new to the program, or an alum you are part of the NOVA family, a community built on shared commitment, mutual support, and the belief that we are stronger together. Every swimmer, parent, coach, and volunteer plays an important role in what makes NOVA special.

The Regency facility has been transformative for our swimmers and has opened new possibilities for their futures. NOVA has a proud tradition of paying it forward, made possible by the generosity and commitment of those who came before us. That tradition continues with each new generation of swimmers and families who choose to invest in one another and in the future of our program.





Our shared commitment and our "we before me" mindset have helped NOVA reach heights few programs in the country can match. But what makes NOVA truly special isn't simply what we accomplish in the pool, it's that we accomplish it together.

I'm so looking forward to making this year even better than the last. Let's challenge ourselves, support one another, and continue building something special.
Onward and upward, together!

NOVASTRONG!
#OneNOVA
"We Rise By Lifting Others"
~ Coach David