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Bethesda Swim Team Unites Around Incurable Brain Condition in Memory of Past Fellow Team Member

Kids ages 5-18 will SWIM to raise \$5,000 for the Hydrocephalus Association

Bethesda, Maryland July 10, 2014 – Nearly 80 Penguins on the Little Falls Swim and Dive Team will swim for the Hydrocephalus Association’s (HA) Kate Finlayson Memorial Research Grant to raise awareness for an incurable brain condition. The event will take place July 10, 2014, at Little Falls Swimming Club in Bethesda. Money raised will support HA’s national goal to raise more than \$1.1 million for critical hydrocephalus research and program services. The family established the grant after Kate passed away at the age of 26 due to complications from hydrocephalus.

“Kate Finlayson not only loved being a Penguin, but she excelled at swimming, a sport she started as physical therapy because one side of her body wouldn’t move correctly. Her 8-and-under breast stroke record remains unbeaten to this day! Photos of Kate’s smiling face poolside give no indication of the pain and many hospitalizations she endured. They show a girl of amazing determination and fortitude,” stated Joey Lampl, Swim Team parent volunteer.

Hydrocephalus is a condition in which cerebrospinal fluid accumulates in the brain. The only treatment requires brain surgery. The prevalent treatment is the implantation of a shunt, a medical device developed over 50 years ago that has a high failure rate, relegating patients to a lifetime of brain surgery. Kate underwent more than 130 surgeries in an ongoing struggle to manage her hydrocephalus, and then coped with the many complications that resulted from these surgeries. Kate’s courage inspired her brothers, Peter and Sam Finlayson, to found Team Hydro to raise awareness and funds for hydrocephalus research through HA. The association began funding research in 2009. Since then HA has committed well over \$3 million to research, making it the largest non-profit, non-governmental funder of hydrocephalus research in the world. To date, Team Hydro, which participates in the annual open water “Sharkfest” swim events across the U.S., has contributed over \$355,000 to the effort.

When the Little Falls Swim and Dive Team learned about Kate’s passing in 2010, team members wanted to become part of the effort to find better treatment options for the condition. On July 10th, the third annual Little Falls Swimathon to benefit Team Hydro and the Hydrocephalus Association will take place at the club. The morning and

afternoon swim practices will be devoted to swimming for the cause, as team members as young as four and old as eighteen take to the pool to swim as many lengths as they can. In past years, dedicated individual swimmers have swum 300 or more laps, sponsored by their families, friends, and neighbors, to meet the team's \$5,000 fundraising goal.

“The Little Falls Penguins are honored to help Team Hydro realize Kate's goal to improve the treatment and outcome of those living with hydrocephalus,” stated Lampl.

People can come watch the Swimathon at the Little Falls Swimming Club at 5001 Little Falls Drive in Bethesda, on July 10th between 8:00 and 11:00 am in the morning and between 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm in the afternoon. After 9:00 am, cheering is welcome, especially for the littlest kickboard swimmers. Donating to the cause is easy, even if one doesn't sponsor an individual swimmer. To donate to the Little Falls Swimathon for Team Hydro, visit <http://tinyurl.com/LF4hydro2014> and click the “Give Now” button. Print the confirmation page from the Hydrocephalus Association, which notes that you have contributed to the Little Falls event. No amount is too small and all donations as well as poolside cheerers are welcome.

Ledo's Pizza at 5245 River Road will also be donating a portion of its proceeds to the swimathon. Dine in or carry out on Saturday, July 19, between 11 am and 4 pm and let the cashier know you are supporting the Little Falls Swimathon.

About the Hydrocephalus Association:

Founded in 1983 by parents of children with hydrocephalus, the Hydrocephalus Association has grown to be the nation's largest and most widely respected organization dedicated to hydrocephalus. All Hydrocephalus Association WALKs are volunteer initiated and volunteer coordinated. Last year's Hydrocephalus Association WALKs raised more than \$1 million from over 10,000 walkers participating at 30 sites across the country. For more information, visit the Hydrocephalus Association web site at www.hydroassoc.org or call (888) 598-3789.

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