



Joined to Save Lives



The Jefferson Swim League (JSL) and the Ben Hair Just Swim for Life Foundation (BH-JSL)

The concept of a learn-to-swim program for those disadvantaged children who do not have access to JSL was started by JSL (<http://www.jsl.org/>) and was called "Just Swim for Life" (also "JSL"). The concept was originally presented to the Jefferson Swim League Board by Bob Garland in 2007.

The JSL Board made a commitment to the original "Just Swim for Life" learn-to-swim program, but the idea failed to gain traction until Gordon Hair became involved after the tragic death of his son, Ben (an ex JSL swimmer) in 2009. Gordon wanted to start a program in his son's memory and, because the concept already existed within the Jefferson Swim League, it was agreed that the name would be changed to "Ben Hair - Just Swim for Life" (BH-JSL) and Gordon would become the primary administrator. (The name was changed slightly, adding "Foundation" at a later date). Gordon and Larry Gimple provided some of the initial funding and under Gordon's leadership, the idea took off.

Although it is a separate 501(c)(3) tax exempt charity with its own Board of Directors, BH-JSL is still "connected at the hip" with JSL. By far the majority of volunteers come from JSL, various JSL teams run BH-JSL learn to swim programs, and JSL supports BH-JSL financially and administratively. Along with Bob Garland, the JSL Vice-President and Past-President serve on the Board of BH-JSL and Gordon serves as a Consultant to the JSL Board. Additionally, the BH-JSL website (<http://bhjsl.org/>), grant applications, etc. also confirm the relationship between JSL and BH-JSL.

JSL continues to support BH-JSL financially by giving \$1.00 of each swimmer registration to BH-JSL and through additional grants and support. Through the end of 2019, JSL has directly contributed more than \$36,000 to BH-JSL. JSL volunteers have contributed hundreds (if not thousands) of hours teaching thousands of children how to swim with the goal of waterproofing the Central Virginia area.

BH-JSL is a valuable charitable partner of the JSL and needs the ongoing financial, volunteer, and administrative support of JSL. Its mission is entirely consistent with JSL Bylaw #1: *"The purpose of this Board is to insure a summer age group swimming program in the Central Virginia area and to provide a maximum opportunity for the greatest number to participate."*

To [volunteer](#) or [donate](#) to BH-JSL:
Please go to <http://bhjsl.org/> and select "Help Us".