

## Swim-a-thon fundraises for Cystic Fibrosis

### MANASSAS SETON SCHOOL

Special to the Catholic Herald

Nearly a third of the student body at Seton School in Manassas is on the swim team — 113 students. The team's motto is GEMS: gratitude, excellence, meekness and sacrifice.

An annual Seton swim team event that reflects these values is the Cystic Fibrosis Swim-a-Thon. Several current and past Seton swimmers suffer from Cystic Fibrosis, an inherited disease that affects the lungs and digestive system. As recently as the 1990s, the average life expectancy for a CF victim was 30. Now, thanks to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and fundraisers like the Seton swim team, the age is 53 and climbing.

This season's swim-a-thon in December saw 54 swimmers complete 200

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lengths of the pool, equivalent to 5,000 yards or two-thirds of the length of the annual open-water swim challenge across the Chesapeake Bay. As of Jan. 11, the event raised \$14,269.

One of the top fundraisers was sixth grader Daniel Kohlhaas, who has CF. A first-year swimmer, he swam farther than he had ever swum before, 166 lengths or 2.4 miles. He reached his goal of 200 lengths when senior Tim Blanchette, also a first-year swimmer, asked if he could add his lengths to Kohlhaas'. Blanchette swam 236 lengths (3.4 miles), and the duo finished with a total of 402 lengths. Swim coach Jim Koehr posted on his blog: "If we just did what we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves. Wasn't it great to see how astounding extreme kindness can be too?"

Seton is a member of the Virginia Christian Athletic Conference. At the conference championship Jan. 7, the Seton boys team defeated Trinity Christian in Fairfax by 56 points to win their 25th conference championship in 29 years. Seton girls, who had won their regular season conference championship 28 years in a row (27 years in the Delaney Athletic Conference and last year in the newly formed VCAC), lost to Trinity Christian

School girls by five points.

Seton looks forward to hosting the 13th annual Northern Virginia Catholic Meet later this month and to competing in the State Championship Meet Feb. 4.



Tim Blanchette (left) and Daniel Kohlhaas celebrate at the swimathon fundraiser for Cystic Fibrosis at Seton School in Manassas last month.

COURTESY

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