

## **Who Are the Cortland YMCA Stingers?**

The Cortland YMCA Stingers are a YMCA *and* United States Swimming, Inc. age-group swim team for girls and boys ages 5-18.

### **Who can Join?**

Any boy or girl ages 5-18 interested in age-group competitive swimming can join. Many of our swimmers started as beginners, barely able to swim a length of the pool.

### **What is “Age-Group Swimming?”**

Age-group swimming is a national program for competitive swimming for girls and boys. In age-group swimming, boys and girls compete against other swimmers of the same age and gender. Age groups start at 8-and-under and progress to 9-10, 11-12, 13-14 and 15-18. Age-group swimming is sponsored by the YMCA, the organization that teaches most people to swim, and USA Swimming, the organization that governs competitive swimming in the United States and organizes our Olympic and international championship swim teams.

Age-group swimming allows young swimmers to set attainable goals, and with the help of practice and good coaching, reach them. The Y’s competitive swimming program operates in accordance with the YMCA’s philosophy of growth through participation.

### **How Does Age-Group Swimming Compare with Other Sports?**

Health and fitness experts universally agree that swimming is one of the finest sports for children. Swimming is one of the best exercises for conditioning the heart, lungs and the whole body. Swimming has the lowest rate of serious injury of any sport, a fact especially important for growing bodies. Swimming is a life sport which can be easily and routinely practiced and enjoyed even into old age, long after other sports are just a memory.

Competitive swimmers gain skill and confidence in the water which pays big dividends in water safety and in sports like fishing, sailing, boating, water skiing and diving.

There is no “second string” or “bench” in YMCA/USASwimming age-group swimming. Every swimmer swims in every meet. With the Cortland Y Stingers winning tradition, every swimmer gets the satisfaction of contributing to team victories.

### **What’s This About a “Winning Tradition?”**

For more than 37 years, Coach Dick Williams and The Cortland YMCA have built up a regional, state and national reputation for excellence in swimming. Despite Cortland’s small size, the Cortland Y Stingers have convincingly proven that they can compete against larger upstate cities, New York City and Long Island teams. Our swimmers have set records and won state, regional and national titles. Many Cortland swimmers have gone on to compete at the collegiate level on scholarships at Ivy League, Eastern, Western and Mid-Western Universities. Members of the Cortland Y Stingers proudly enter any meet as one of the “teams to beat.” As importantly, *all* our swimmers have proven to be winners by acquiring, through the program, qualities that will help them throughout life: self discipline and self-confidence.