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Meet the Swimmers of the Lagoon

OMAHA, NEB. – The Omaha Convention and Visitors Bureau (OCVB) is taking an unconventional approach to promoting Omaha by creating a unique swimming event in the Gene Leahy Mall lagoon to complement the U.S. Olympic Swim Trials.

Local student athletes will be featured “swimming” in the lagoon during the Trials. A total of 12, ten-by-five-foot floating cutout swimmers have been placed in the lagoon to simulate swimmers doing the backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle and butterfly. The five student athletes agreed to volunteer their time to model for the OCVB’s *Swimmers of the Lagoon* social media campaign. The campaign provides a fun sharable moment for all of the out-of-town visitors and locals attending the U.S Olympic Swim Trials and the NCAA Men’s College World Series.

“With all of the out-of-town visitors and local residents enjoying downtown Omaha right now, this provides a creative interactive way for them to share the city with their friends and family all across the country,” said Keith Backsen, Executive Director of the OCVB. “Thanks to the power of social media, even more eyes will be on Omaha.”

Meet the Swimmers:

- Josh Pales, 14, will be attending Lincoln Southwest High School in Lincoln and swims for the Lincoln Select Swim Team. He is nationally ranked in multiple events. His specialty styles are breaststroke and freestyle. His older sister, Ashley Pales, is competing in the 2016 Olympic Swim Trials.
- Alana Palmer, 15, attends Lincoln Southwest High School and is also a member of the Lincoln Select Swim Team. She won four gold medals in the 2016 Nebraska State Swim Meet. Her great uncle, Jim Weyhrauch, competed against Greg Louganis in the 1980 U.S. Olympic Diving Trials; in fact they competed against each other nationally since age 14.
- Michael Simmons, 17, attends Creighton Prep High School. His specialty is the 100 backstroke and he came in 3rd at the 2016 Nebraska State Swim Meet. He taught himself to swim at age 3 and hasn’t stopped since.
- Sarah Sutej, 17, attends Marian High School and competed in the 2016 Nebraska State Swim Meet and placed in the 200 and 500 freestyle and the 400 freestyle relay. Sarah is a twin, and her brother Jacob is also a swimmer.
- Alexander Bayles, 17, attends Westside High School. He made it to sectionals in 2016 and placed in the 100 breast at the Nebraska State Swim Meet. He plays jazz piano.

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