Dear RMSC families,

Let us apologize for the sticker shock experienced by many when you received notice of RMSC fee increases for the 2019-2020 season. In an effort to ensure a sustainable high-quality competitive program at the same level of service, Department staff are working diligently to make critical adjustments to the fee structure. While focus was on ensuring the sustainability of our nationally recognized competitive swim program, we did not deliver the level of care, compassion and communication we would expect for our Department and for a program of this caliber. We heard from our families and we understand the impact some increases will have on our swim families; therefore, we have regrouped and plan to stretch increases over a two to three-year period. In addition, there will be no additional charges for families choosing the payment plan option. We hope the question and answer section attached will help to make clear why changes are taking place within the RMSC program.

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|  | **Current Price** | **2019-2020** | **2020-2021** | **2021-2022** |
| National Training Group | 3050 | 3485 | 3920 | 4350 |
| Advanced Senior Group | 2250 | 2825 | 3100 |  |
| Senior Group | 2070 | 2260 | 2450 |  |
| Senior (Sept-May) Group | 1675 | 1840 | 2000 |  |
| Senior Training Group | 2375 | 2590 | 2800 |  |
| National Development Group | 2525 | 2750 | 2975 |  |
| Advanced Junior Group | 2045 | 2300 | 2550 |  |
| Junior Group | 1225 | 1250 |  |  |
| Junior 1 Group | 1200 | 1200 |  |  |
| Junior 2 Group | 1275 | 1350 |  |  |
| Minis | 1160 | 1200 |  |  |

\*\* These programs are self sustaining so as fees change for coaches salaries, USAS fees change, travel, equipment costs change these fees may need to be adjusted. We will communicate this information more effectively in the future.

**Why are we raising the prices and how are we using the additional funds?** The Department has not done a good job of strategically increasing fees to keep the program sustainable. RMSC is currently not able to cover its direct costs associated with operating the program. The fee increases are going to be used to close the gap associated with those costs.

**What is included in the fee and what are the costs associated?** RMSC fees include coaching costs, USAS Registration fees, all meet entries, travel related expenses, coaches travel, meet equipment, training equipment and apparel. The Department will spend nearly $1M in coach’s salaries alone this year and average nearly 80hrs per week of pool time per site for the RMSC program.

**How were the new fees determined and how come some groups have a much higher fee increase than others?** Fees and increases were adjusted to be more equitable based on cost per coaching time/ practice time associated with each group. Groups who have more practice time saw greater fee increases. Additionally, some groups were already closer to covering direct costs resulting in more minimal fee adjustments.

**How does the budget work?** The RMSC is an invitation/ tryout based competitive swim program which is available only to select individuals. The program operates out of a special fund which collects fees and uses the funds generated to cover its expenses. This is a non-tax supported fund which by financial regulation must cover its direct costs.

**Are there portions of the program that are tax supported?** Yes, all indirect costs of the program are tax supported. Indirect costs include expenses associated with operating the pool. Expenses include items such as pool staff, registration systems costs/fees, building and maintenance, pool chemical and operation, utilities and any debt service. These fees are not passed on to our customers, however, in some communities recreation departments are required to recover both direct and indirect costs.

**Why did we go to a yearly registration?** RMSC moved to a year-round registration for a more streamlined and direct process. Each year we faced a mid-season registration which was largely re-registering the existing cohort of swimmers. The mid-season registration and tryout was very misleading for those trying to enter the program. Often, hundreds of kids were competing for sometimes only one or two vacancies. Additionally, staff were having to re-register 1200 swimmers into multiple registration systems.

**Are there any new features to the fee structure?** Yes, we are now offering a payment plan option at no additional charge to better suit family budgets by spreading costs over several months.

**Is fee assistance available?** Yes, Montgomery County Recreation offers a fee assistance program called Rec Assist for qualifying families. For more information and for qualification, please visit our website at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/howto/recassist.html>

**Are there additional costs for summer?** No, the fees presented are for the year-round program. The program will follow the same seasonal swim schedule as before without the mid-year registration. However, those participating in the Seniors group can choose when registering to swim September-May.

**Why is MLK closing and how will it affect the practice schedule?**  Martin Luther King Jr., Indoor swim center is closing for critical pool systems repair. Our current system has served us well, but unfortunately it has reached its operational life span. You may not notice the improvement as all of the work will primarily be taking place in the mechanical pump room. These were critical replacements that had to be completed. The enclosed schedule will provide preliminary information and your coaches will and can provide further detail.

We acknowledge we have not done a quality level of service in communicating to our customers, we are committed to making improvements going forward. We do apologize and hope this information has been helpful.

Robin Riley, Director

Montgomery County Department of Recreation