



Rappahannock Area YMCA Swim Team (RAYS) Michael and Jennie M. Clesner Award

*** *APPLICATION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 28, 2026****

The RAYS are excited to offer the Michael & Jennie M. Clesner Award. The Clesner family has always made it a priority to ensure children are always able to participate in swimming, no matter what their financial standing. The Michael & Jennie M. Clesner Award is available to RAYS athletes who have been **accepted into the Outreach program**, who are **in good standing with the RAYS**, and swim in the **Bronze, Silver, Gold, Gold 1, and High School Performance** program groups. The intent of this program is to provide financial assistance to those swimmers who consistently demonstrate a sincere commitment to maximizing their swimming potential.

Award Purpose

The award is for payment of program dues and meet fees. All award funds will be applied as a credit directly to the swimmer's account.

Application Process

The Michael & Jennie M. Clesner Award is applied for and awarded annually depending on the availability of funds set aside by the Board of Directors each year for this scholarship. To remove any possible bias from the process, an application number will be assigned to each applicant.

Non-associated RAYS members will choose the scholarship recipient without knowing the individual identity of any applicant.

Applicant must provide:

- A list of all extracurricular activities and community involvement.
- A written recommendation by a current teacher.
- A written recommendation by their practice group coach, which includes a statement of the swimmer's attendance at practices and meets, for the current season.
- A 1–2-page personal essay.

Completed applications are due to the RAYS by **February 28, 2026**. Once the application period is closed, the applications will be processed by the RAYS and forwarded to the non-associated RAYS selection committee for selection of the recipient.

The RAYS bookkeeper will notify the recipient and inform the Board of Directors that a

recipient has been chosen.

Current & Active Status Obligations by Award Recipient

The grant recipient is expected to participate in weekly practice sessions and swim meets as outlined below. Inactive periods for longer than 1 week must be explained in writing to the Board of Directors. Inactivity for greater than 2 weeks, or unexplained inactive periods, may be grounds for revoking the grant award as determined by the Board of Directors.

Swimmer must attend the following number of practices by group:

- Bronze & Silver: Participate a minimum of four (4) times per week.
- Gold, Gold 1, and High School Performance: Participate a minimum of five (5) times per week.

In the event the swimmer will miss practice, a parent must inform the coach of the absence in writing and give the reason for missing.

Swimmers must attend a minimum of one (1) swim meet per month when such a meet is available. This must include any meets specifically designated by the practice group or head coach, and any championship meets that the swimmer qualifies.

Volunteer Obligation

The family of the award recipient is required to complete volunteer requirements as stated in the team contract. Failure to fulfill volunteer requirements will be grounds for revoking the award as determined by the Board of Directors.

Misconduct

Misconduct by the swimmer or parents, as defined by the RAYS Codes of Conduct, is grounds for loss of the award.

Scoring Criteria for the Award

	Scoring Criteria	Michael & Jennie M. Clesner Award	Possible Points
A	Extracurricular, Leadership, and/or Community Activities	Outside groups or committees, that is, school, athletics, church, or civic. Leadership Roles that you may hold in these groups or committees.	15
B	Teacher Recommendation	Current teacher's recommendation	10
C	Coach Recommendation	Practice group coach's recommendation	10
D	Number of Years on the RAYS	One point for each year the swimmer has been a member of the RAYS for a maximum of 5 points.	5
E	Essay	Why this scholarship is important to you and how it will impact your life.	15
Total			55

Michael & Jennie M. Clesner Award

To begin the application process, please email the RAYS bookkeeper at the below email address to request an Application Number. Your Application Number must be used on all application paperwork and recommendations instead of your name. Print out the following pages and complete the application package, including two (2) letters of recommendation, a descriptive list of all extracurricular activities and community involvement, a 1-to-2-page essay, and the application cover page. Mail or scan and email the completed package to the bookkeeper at the following address by the application deadline.

RAYs
PO BOX 866
Stafford, Virginia 22555-0866
bookkeeper@swimrays.org

Application Package Cover Page -Michael & Jennie M. Clesner Award

Applicant Number: _____

Application Due Date: _____

- Community Activities and Volunteerism List
- Teacher Recommendation
- Coach Recommendation
- Number of Years a RAYS' member: _____
- Essay

I certify that the information contained in this application is factual and from the prescribed sources. All the information provided is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I further certify that the enclosed essay is my own original work and expresses my personal outlook and opinion.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Send or Email Completed Application Package to:

RAY'S
PO BOX 866
Stafford, Virginia 22555-0866
bookkeeper@swimrays.org

Community Activities and Volunteerism List

Applicant Number: _____

Please list all community and volunteer activities with a short synopsis of the activity, your involvement in the activity, any leadership positions held, and awards or recognition received. Please type your list and attach it to this application page.

Teacher Recommendation

Applicant Number: _____

Please comment on the student's character and proven desire to improve their own performance while providing leadership in the classroom. Please ONLY use the applicant number listed above. Their name should not appear anywhere on the application. Please send your recommendation by mail to RAYS, P.O. Box 866, Stafford, VA 22555-0866 or by email to bookkeeper@swimrays.org.

Teacher Name: _____

Subject Taught to Applicant: _____

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Practice Group Coach Recommendation

Applicant Number: _____

Please submit completed recommendation by mail to RAYS, P.O. Box 866, Stafford, VA 22555-0866 or by email to bookkeeper@swimrays.org.

Yes No

• Does the swimmer's attendance meet the required expectation for this scholarship
(4x/week AG1, 5x/week Juniors & Seniors)

• Is the swimmer receptive to direction and follows instruction?

• Does the swimmer demonstrate good sportsmanship?

• Does the swimmer exemplify good team spirit and cheer/encourage teammates?

• Does the swimmer arrive prepared for practices and meets?

• Is the swimmer striving to do their best and interested in improvement?

• Does the swimmer participate in meets and relays, doing what is necessary for the success of self and team?

• Does the swimmer attend the one meet per month requirement?

Coach Signature: _____ Date: _____

Athlete Essay

Applicant Number: _____

Please prepare a 1-2-page essay describing an important athlete, past or present, who has influenced your commitment to personal improvement and the pursuit of athletic excellence or “why is this swim grant important to me and how will it impact my life”. Your name and the names of any identifiable family members should not appear anywhere in your essay. Please type your essay in 12 pt. font, double spaced, on a separate page to attach to this application.
