



Rappahannock Area YMCA Swim Team (RAYS)

RAYS Merit Scholarship

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 28, 2026

We are excited to again offer the RAYS Merit Scholarship. The RAYS Merit Scholarship is available to all RAYS athlete members of USA Swimming who are in good standing with the RAYS, and swim in **Bronze, Silver, Gold, Gold 1, and High School Performance** program groups. The intent of this scholarship is to encourage and recognize outstanding educational, athletic commitment, and community involvement by individual RAYS swimmers.

Scholarship Purpose

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

Application Process

The RAYS Merit Scholarship 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. Members of the YMCA Board of Directors will choose the scholarship recipient without knowing the individual identity of any applicant.

Applicant must provide:

- Their most recent grades.
- A list of all extracurricular activities and community involvement.
- A written recommendation by a current teacher.
- A written recommendation by their practice group coach that 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 28th, 2026**. Once the application period is closed the applications will be processed by the RAYS and forwarded to a non-associated RAYS selection committee for selection of the recipient.

The RAYS Board President will notify the recipient. Other announcements may be made as determined by the Board of Directors including, but not limited to, posting on the RAYS website and social media accounts.

Current & Active Status Obligations by Scholarship Recipient

The scholarship recipient is expected to participate in weekly practice sessions and swim in 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 the Board of Directors to revoke the scholarship award.

The swimmer must attend the appropriate number of practices as defined by group:

- Bronze & Silver: participate a minimum of 4 times a week
- Gold, Gold 1, & High School Performance: participate a minimum of 5 times a 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 meets are available. This will include any meets specifically designated by the practice group or head coach, and any championship meets for which the swimmer qualifies.

Volunteer Obligation

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

Misconduct

Misconduct by the swimmer or parents, as defined by the RAYS Codes of Conduct, will be grounds for revoking the scholarship award.

Scoring Criteria

	Scoring Criteria	RAYS Merit Scholarship	Possible Points
A	Weighted Grade Point Average (GPA) if available	2.0 - 2.99	4
		3.0– 3.249	8
		3.25– 3.49	10
		3.5– 3.749	12
		3.75– 3.99	14
		4.0 - 4.249	16
		4.25– 4.49	18
		4.5 or above	20
	Non-Weighted (GPA) or equivalent for elementary students	2.0– 2.749	4
		2.75– 2.99	10
		3.0– 3.249	12
		3.25– 3.49	14
		3.5—3.749	16
		3.75—3.99	18
		4.0	20
B	Extracurricular, Leadership and/or Community	Outside groups or committees, that is, school, athletics, church, or civic. Leadership roles that you may hold in these groups or committees.	15
C	Teacher Recommendation	Current teacher's recommendation	20
D	Coach Recommendation	Practice group coach's recommendation	20
E	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
F	Essay	Essay discussing something the applicant has done, or plans to do, to make a positive difference in relation to swimming.	20
Total Points Possible:			100

RAYS Merit Scholarship

To begin the application process, please email the team's 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 2 letters of recommendation, a copy of the applicant's latest grades, a descriptive list of all extracurricular activities and community involvement, a 1–2-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 - RAYS Merit Scholarship

Applicant Number: _____

Application Due Date: _____

- ☐ Copy of Latest Grades (including overall GPA)
- ☐ 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:

RAYS
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 applicant's character and proven desire to improve their own performance while providing leadership in the classroom. Please ONLY use the applicant's application number listed above. Their name should not appear anywhere on the application. Please type your evaluation on a separate page to attach to this application.

Teacher Name: _____

Subject Taught to Applicant: _____

Teacher Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Practice Group Coach Recommendation

Applicant Number: _____

Yes No

Does the swimmer's attendance meet the required expectation for this scholarship
(4x/week Bronze & Silver, 5x/week - Gold, Gold 1, & HS Performance)

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Is the swimmer receptive to direction and follows instruction?

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Does the swimmer demonstrate good sportsmanship?

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

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Does the swimmer arrive prepared for practices and meets?

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

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

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Does the swimmer attend the one meet per month requirement?

Coach Signature: _____

Date: _____

Athlete Essay

Applicant Number: _____

Please prepare a 1-2-page essay discussing something you have done or plan to do that has made a positive difference in relation to swimming. 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.
