[MUSIC PLAYING]

Water is the great equalizer. Once you're in the water, everybody looks the same. You put on a bathing suit and get in the water, you are a swimmer. Some people need support to swim. Some people need a little assistance or a little guidance. But everybody's a swimmer, so we're all the same. I just love it. [CHUCKLES]

Hi, everybody. Welcome! Thank you so much for coming. You have about a minute and a half to get wet, and then we're going to call out the kids' names and divide up. We will be seeing Olivia, and she uses the chairlift.

Welcome to SNAP. It's nice to meet you.

Welcome, hi!

Nice job, Olivia.

[CHATTER]

Yes, yes, let's go!

Olivia is my first kid. At two months, we realized something wasn't quite right. We asked the pediatrician, something looks odd. And the doctor's like, what's wrong/ We're like, she's not moving her arms the way a typical infant should be moving it. So sure enough, her neurologist said that she does have a muscular dystrophy. The subtype was LAMA2.

1, 2, 3.

When you're pregnant for nine months, you have these ideas and dreams that you want for your child, and it ends up being a headache to mourn the loss of that.

Sometimes I have to tell people what I have, I feel like they don't understand how hard it is to not go up the stairs or play or go down the slide. When people see me, they just see somebody in a wheelchair. People don't see me.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

I had the pleasure of meeting Dori a year ago at a summer barbecue. We immediately connected. I just walked up to her and asked her, hey, what do you do? Tell me more about your nonprofit.

He asked me more about what we did, and he had read a little bit about us and took interest in our work and our journey and the types of populations that we support.

Well, when Dori invited me to visit, she said, you have to come in the water. And I said, Dori, I don't swim. [LAUGHS] She said, hey, you're not going to feel the magic of what goes on unless you come in the water.

SNAP stands for the Special Needs Aquatic Program, and that's what we started at. And over time, we became SNAP kids.

Here we go!

We work with kids with physical and/or developmental disabilities in the water. Some of our kids get in the water, and all they want to do is splash, boom, boom, everywhere, and they're finding out what their space is like. Families come to our program and our taught class, and we just see what's right with their kid instead of what's wrong with their kid.

Right before the pandemic, Olivia's therapist said, you should go to SNAP. Dori's amazing. It may be hard to get in, but you need to go. So we did it.

A lot of our kids have trouble with their balance on land or coordination on land. And the water is a little bit more forgiving in how it responds.

So you stand in front of them like a judo move, and you flip them up like this.

Somebody like Olivia, it helps her arms float up a little bit more so that she can move them herself.

The first time I got into the pool with Dori, I was a little bit nervous.

One.

We're like besties. I feel included. When I talk to Emily or Dori, I think they understand me.

It's kind of going down to humanity. Like, who you are, I see you, and you see me. This is a place she can succeed. Learning that everybody can be included and how to do that, I think these experiences are really important.

You look at this program. It's kids having fun in the pool, but there are some real costs. The pool fees, even though these are community pools, it's costly.

It takes a lot of work to look like it doesn't take a lot of work. To keep this program going for another 34 years, how are we going to do that?

She was telling me that she has spent most of her adult life dedicated to SNAP kids. That's when we have this discussion on, how can I help?

He went and he created a peer-to-peer fundraiser for us and said, I really support what you're doing. I can do this for you from our company. I mean, it was a nice conversation, but he actually did something.

I was able to raise $10,000 in 2024. And just a couple of weeks ago, we finished raising another $10,000 for SNAP in 2025.

We're trying to support our kids, and our kids don't have as many opportunities in the community as other kids do.

Yeah.

But I think to see they're not the last in line. They're like everybody else's kid, that somebody else recognizes their child, and their child is welcome. And for you to support something like this means a lot to me, to our program, but to all these children that may not have as many opportunities as others.

Even though all of our kids, the diagnoses are different, the advocacy that we have to do for our kids, the rattling of the cages that we need to do to get the things that we need for our kids, it's all the same.

Disabilities affects family after family after family in different ways. Our kids just help us realize that there's some joy in the world to be if you just step out into it. You step out of your comfort zone and open a door.

It makes me feel really good that there are places in the community that are really giving back in a meaningful way to families and kids who need it. It makes it all worth it.

I'm very impressed with you.

Well, I do have a great partner to tell me what to do. Like, have you tried this? And I'm like, well, no, Dori, I haven't.

[LAUGHTER]

Dori does reassure me it's all very normal. Dori has been fantastic. She's been the rock.

I can see that influence of-- the good influence that she has here definitely changes and shapes the way she is now.

I'm happy for you.

Kids with disabilities, they're just kids. At the end of the day, there's a person there that we should acknowledge.

I want people to know that I'm like you, but just a tiny bit different.

[MUSIC PLAYING]