

I started swimming when I was around 6 years old and took lessons at my local YMCA. I quickly developed a love for the water and achieved the highest level there is by the time I was 11. When I was in the water I just felt free; I could lie down and just float for hours. After talking to some of the lifeguards at the YMCA, I decided I wanted to get my Bronze Medallion and Bronze Cross certifications, sadly, I was too young and was forced to wait a couple of years until I was 13. However, I kept swimming to make sure I was in shape when the time came. Once I turned 13, I passed my Bronze Medallion and Cross classes. During the exam, there were a few kids who were struggling to complete the timed swim. They redid their exam, and I encouraged them the entire swim, making sure they knew how much time they had left and how fast they needed to go to finish on time without tiring themselves out too early. Everyone ended up passing the exam because we had unique strengths and made sure to share our knowledge and skills with the team.

I completed my Standard First Aid course when I was 15, and during my winter break after turning 16 I spent 40 hours getting my National Lifeguard Certification with two of my close friends. It was an exhausting four days, but after all the buildup I was extremely happy with the end result.

I found a full-time lifeguarding job for the summer, and I was finally able to put all my certifications to use. Throughout the summer, I did my best to ensure that all swimmers were safe, especially children. This job involved working with other lifeguards to maintain the pool, report incidents, and offer good customer service.

Around halfway through the summer, there was a crack in the bottom of the pool which kept getting larger. The management of the building did not want to fix the pool, however, I repeatedly asked because it was a safety concern to patrons. After talking to the management over and over for two weeks, the residents were extremely happy when they finally gave in and fixed the pool. In addition to getting the pool fixed, I helped teach children to swim when I saw that they were struggling to learn proper strokes. I found these two impacts to be the most rewarding parts of the experience.

I received many compliments on my friendly manner, including that I was a huge improvement on lifeguards in the past years and that sometimes patrons came down to the pool just to speak with me. Especially for the elderly swimmers, it was nice to know that I was making a positive impact on their lives and allowing them to get their exercise and stay healthy.