



Meet GTD swimmer Karen Servas (45-49 age group)

Karen is a swimming wine maker amongst many other things! Sounds like she is having fun in life. It is interesting to see how many of us hang up the swimsuit for a long period of time, and later come back to swimming and love every minute of it!

I work as a consultant for not-for-profits and government, primarily in grant writing, program management, and strategic planning.

I enjoy organic gardening, home improvement, wine making (I belong to a winery co-op called "Woof Woof Winery". We are in our 22nd vintage, and our motto is "make wine, have fun, sniff butts" (it's a dog-related theme!))

I have a son who is turning 15 in February. I am divorced. Life is super busy and fun! I am absolutely not doing what I thought I'd be doing in this stage of life, because I never imagined myself as being 47 (and I still don't believe it, or act it!!)

Swimming isn't even a hobby, it's a necessity for me. I feel so much more balanced and centered when I swim. I started swimming competitively when I was 8 years old for the Maplebrook II swim team in Naperville, IL. I moved to Montgomery Twp., NJ when I was 11 and swam through high school. I also swam NCAA for Marist College my freshman year, Saddleback Junior College in Mission Viejo, CA for the next 2 years, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo for my final year. Then I basically quit swimming and didn't get in the pool for 23 years until June 2006, when I had a severe foot injury from running and needed to do something non-weight bearing to stay in shape, so I was basically forced back into the pool!

I started swimming because I was an energetic little girl who wanted to learn how to do butterfly like Mark Spitz!

Swimming is a major part of my life. Not only do I swim for Modesto Area Aquatic Club, I also got involved as a member of the board of directors 2 years ago. I was elected as the President of the Board last month at our MAAC annual meeting. Our masters club has grown from 70 USMS registered swimmers when I started to over 200 masters swimmers at the end of 2008!

I try to swim 4 days a week an average 3100 yards per workout during the week and 4500-5000 yards in our Saturday workout. I compete. I swim in the local PMS meets, and swam at the 2007 Short Course Nationals up in Federal Way, WA. I swim for Modesto Area Aquatic Club, the best masters program in Northern California!

My favorite stroke is butterfly. I hate breaststroke. I prefer 100 and 200 fly.

I definitely prefer pool swimming. I really have a phobia about open water swimming...hyperventilate, the whole nine yards!



I write EVERYTHING down....all my workouts. I ran for years and years and did road races and have a record of every workout and run back to 1985. So I do the same thing for swimming and that is why GTD was an easy program for me to get involved in!

My advice to other GTD swimmers: write everything down, but most of all, have fun!

I set a personal goal of 660,000 yards, or 375 miles!

I got my motorcycle license last year and ride around on a red Vespa when the weather is nice.

My swimming "story" is not a very amusing one: it was the time 2 years ago when I tried to make the NQT for 100 fly, just missed the time, and ended up crying in the locker room at UC Berkeley afterwards just like I did when I was 12 years old....not flattering!

My friends would say that I am spirited, competitive, straightforward, and sometimes a bit too open (you know, TMI: too much information!).



Meet GTD swimmer Tina Alkezweeny (30-34 age group)

Wait until you read Tina's ultimate goal! I love that kind of spirit. Good news for Tina and all of us: the virtual swim series is making a comeback, integrated into the G.T.D. program.

Tina on the beach in Santa Cruz, where she visits often.

I work as an engineer in the Seattle area. I live with my fiancée who is also an engineer. We don't have any kids but we do have two parakeets. I wouldn't say my life is busy. I work 40 hours a week swim 4-5 hours a week (swim lessons at my pool dictate my workout time) and the rest of the time do whatever pleases me. Going to swim practice and work are my only two commitments.

Swimming is much more than a hobby for me. I plan my life around my workouts so if work interferes with swimming it is a big deal to me. I took swim lessons growing up but didn't do more than finish in advanced beginners. When I got to high school I swam with the school team

during swim season and the USS team the rest of the year. In college I swam only two years because my engineering courses were too much to handle with 16 or more hours of practice and meets a week. I started up with masters in 2005 after getting inspired to get back in the pool after watching the 2004 Olympics on TV.

During my 10 years off from swimming I learned to snowboard and was part of a rowing club for a couple of years. I love competing at masters' meets. I went to the world championships at Stanford and had a great time. It was the biggest swim meet I had ever been to. I got my best times of the season. This year I'm planning to attend long course nationals. My ultimate swimming goal is to go to the world championships when I'm 100.

I swim 5 days a week for 1 hour in the evenings on my own using workouts emailed to me. I would like to swim longer but the pool squeezes swimming lessons before and after the lap swim so I've got to take what I can get. I usually can get in 2800-3000 yards in a workout. I'm working out at the public lap swim, but the pool I use doesn't have a ton of traffic so I typically am splitting a lane for the whole hour. The pool has no lane ropes just regular rope with buoys. When several people get going with dolphin kick that pool feels like open water.



Tina's favorite stroke!

When I first started with masters I used the workouts given on the USMS website. I had a lot of luck with the workouts from Indy Swim Fit. I still use those workouts through a subscription service they offer. My favorite stroke is backstroke and when the water is flat and my timing is perfect I think butterfly can't be beat. I like swimming in a pool better than open water. It takes about 30 min of open water swimming before I've convinced myself that something isn't going to reach up out of the murky water and grab me. Also, the lakes in Seattle are pretty chilly even in summertime and I'm not a big wetsuit fan. I would like to do the Alcatraz swim in San Francisco one day.....

I started with GTD because the year before it started I was tracking my yards with the virtual swim series. The next year that program was gone and GTD kind of took its place. I loved learning about new places while I was swimming to them but I'm finding GTD to be just as fun. I like having a record of my yards to use for adjusting the taper from my emailed workouts to fit the actual yardage I can finish in an hour. My 2009 goal is 250 miles. My past best was 179 miles. I have a good start toward my goal this year. In January I swam my most miles ever in 1 month, about 30.

Two years ago I quit my job and lived in Berlin Germany for 3 months and attended a German language school. I went from knowing no German to being able to carry on a pretty good conversation. I had classes 4 days a week and spent the rest of the time sightseeing in and around Berlin. While I was there I swam a few times a week in the pool used in the 1936 Olympics. My hobbies are swimming, reading, arts & crafts, and cooking.



Meet GTD swimmer Martin Barnes (30-34 age group)

Martin has just signed on with Go the Distance – it is great to hear how the program is helping people to stay motivated and get back into shape!

I am a 33-year-old male who is trying to get back into shape.

I am a career Department of Defense Firefighter. I have been a firefighter for six years and have been in the Las Vegas, Nevada area for two years. When I was a kid, I wanted to be either a Firefighter or Emergency Room Surgeon. I ended up doing the one that requires much less math.

I don't really do projects. I just do what I do. I do enjoy our fire station's annual "Pine Car Derby." I have no wife or kids and life is still very busy!

At first, my parents forced me to swim. I was scared of the water and failed throughout my levels of American Red Cross swimming lessons. Eventually, I caught on and quit bowling, baseball, karate, and soccer in order to swim year round. I loved the water.

I swam as an age-grouper - started swimming when I was 9 - and throughout High School. I was an age-group state champion and state record holder in Alaska. I went to college for swimming, but quit after a shoulder injury.

Although I have been swimming all my life, it has been "on and off" for the last 10 years or so. Go the distance helped provide a little more motivation to stay on task. It is a great program to get in shape and stay motivated. I also dabble in cycling and triathlons. I don't compete very often, but hope that will change. Fortunately, I have plenty of time to train. Although I intend to compete for Viva Las Vegas Masters, I swim alone at a local gym near my Fire Station. I have a pool, treadmills, cycling trainers, and a weight room at my disposal.

Whether I'm in the pool or not, swimming is one of my lifelong passions. I feel at home in the pool. I try to swim daily. My typical workout distance is between 3000-4000 yards.

I enjoy anything except breaststroke. I do tend to lean towards freestyle in any distance.

I like both open water and pool swimming however, there are fewer sharks in pool.



This is my first year in the GTD program, so I should be looking for advice instead of giving it but: I guess..."Keep on truckin"? I hope to do around 500 miles in 2009. My other goals? I hope to compete in the pool and participate in some triathlons, aqua bikes, and cycling.

Things about me ... I'm real fun. Nah. I don't know. I have a good sense of humor?

My hobbies are like my projects. I just do what I do. I have met a lot of good people in swimming and have some great

memories. I think funny, honest, and loyal describe me. I'm hoping my friends would say the same.



Meet GTD Swimmer Ilse Wolfe (45-49 age group)

When you get to the last paragraph of Ilse's story, you'll discover that we really live in a "small world". What a nice, happy (swimming) thing to have happen! Of course this does not mean: "do not read the entire story", you would miss too much!

I work in educational publishing (textbooks, Software, online content). I'm self-employed as a partner in a small consulting group—helping clients, from big textbook publishers to small on-line start-ups, try to make the most of their offering by helping navigate the world of K12 and higher education. I also have two young girls—ages 5 and 2—so life is much busier than I ever thought possible!

Swimming is an integral part of my life. I started swimming as a kid, competitively in high school and then college. It was always about the competition for me, at least before kids. Now it is really just for my sanity☺. I have swum in a couple of small, local fun meets here in Northern NJ in the past year—but it is just for fun now, if I ever got to the point where I was disappointed after a race, it would be time to stop the “fun” meets!

I try to swim twice a week at our local Y. we don't have a formal workout team, but we are now a strong group of five dedicated swimmers (we hit the water at 5:15!). We typically swim right around 3000 yards in an hour—I usually pull workouts from the USMS site. I'm still a sprinter at heart (if not so much on the clock anymore), but we have two triathletes and a distance guy so we try to mix up the variety to keep everyone happy. We are all swimming faster/harder with the company.

Our local “masters swimming advocate” Bob Hopkins, guilted us all in to joining GTD this year.

I've moved quite a lot since I started masters swimming—Florida, Texas, Colorado, New York, and now New Jersey. It has always been a great way to meet new friends in my new “hometowns.”

My swimming-as-small-world story begins the first night I showed up at the Y at 53rd and Lex (mid-town Manhattan) and ran in to a friend I swam with in Tallahassee years earlier. Flash forward a few years and I show up at my first “mommy-and-me” swim time out here in New Jersey with my 8 month old. As I'm changing her on the table, getting ready for class, the mommy changing her baby next to me says “what a cute baby” and only then did we both look up to see another familiar face from that NYC Y masters group! Erika and I are still swimming together, and shared a lane just this morning.