

“Megan’s Story”

The Power to Overcome the Assaults of Injustice

On May 13, 2003, 7-year old Megan sat close to her father on the couch in Baltimore, Maryland, waiting for her best friend to knock on the door of the only home Megan ever knew.

Upon hearing the knock, Megan didn’t jump to run and greet Sarah as she normally did. Things had changed and consciously or subconsciously she was aware of it.

Sarah and her father were waived in and Megan quickly told them, “My daddy was fired today.”



And so it was, Megan’s odyssey began.

Her father, less than two years from retirement as a 24-year employee of UPS and a member of the Teamsters Union was fired for allegedly violating policy that three years later was disclosed did not exist, denying him, his wife and family a retirement income that would have come at age 48 instead of 65.

Megan’s father’s discharge came after receiving approval of a workers compensation injury claim for a permanent injury to his back. Unable to find work because of the injury, their home had to be sold or all equity would have been lost.

Megan was forced to leave the only room she ever knew, the cocoon children have that protects them in a heartless world. Her family moved to Charleston, South Carolina and Megan was stripped from the life she knew, from her way of life, her home and her best friends.

For Megan, the move at age eight was very hard. Her family moved to Seabrook Island and it was a very lonely and isolated existence for her in the first year. There were no family neighborhood children to play with, no close school friends to visit as her school was 45 minutes away.

The isolation compounded upon itself as the first year continued, affecting her mentally, emotionally and physically. She lost any self-confidence she had making it extremely difficult to participate in anything publicly, and when called to do so she would break down in tears and become terribly sick with stomach convulsions.

It became such an issue that doctor trips could not heal her. Megan’s parents were advised to seek professional, psychological help for her, but her deterioration was so sudden and swift her parents had to quickly act.

They had to make a move and did so several months before the school year ended and moved from Seabrook (south of Charleston) to Isle of Palms, S.C. just north of Charleston and just across the connecting bridge to the town of Mount Pleasant.

By moving, Megan was able to make friends at her new school before the year ended, regaining that which she had before, neighborhood friends she so much enjoyed.

In the summer of 2006 Megan was encouraged to join the Wild Dunes Dolphins swim team, a member of the Coastal Carolina Aquatic Association (CCAA). Despite the tears, emotional and physical trauma of having to engage in the public activity of swimming in front of her peers, parents and the summer audiences associated with the summer league swim teams, she continued to make small steps of ‘healing’, swimming in almost nothing but the exhibition events.



Her first big step was being invited by the swim team to include her in the Charleston city meet championships, mostly due to some of the better swimmers who would be on vacation. She swam one individual event and one relay event.

There is a picture of Megan at the start of her individual event worth more than a thousand words. The picture has her at the backstroke start, holding onto the grips waiting for the gun. In the background are the other competing swimmers, their caps indicating representation of the number of other local swim teams in the area. Not only is the picture evidence that her self-confidence had grown and healing had begun, but the picture was the glimpse indicating that...



“She’s going to be okay, she’s making it, she’s overcoming and the small seed planted that she can accomplish anything.”



In the fall of 2006 Megan decided to join the Mount Pleasant Swim Club, the Manatees.

Megan, under the Mount Pleasant coaches, began to evolve into a decent swimmer, gaining self-confidence with each meet she attended. Her parents could not help but be emotionally affected when she stood on the block prepared to swim in her first event at her first year-round swim meet in Columbia and see the University of South Carolina banner behind her, and her name brightly lit on the event scoreboard, “O’Shea, M.”



With each practice and with each meet she continued her improvement and then in Savannah, GA she made her first state cut. At Augusta, she started out with a great jump on all the other swimmers in the 100-free and increased her lead with her swimming and very good turns. In the final leg she was already up on the surface heading back when the closest swimmer was just making her turn. When she hit the wall, she had her second state cut.





(Above - The Bolles Speedo Classic Meet in Jacksonville, FL.)

Her parents could not help but think of how far Megan has persevered, she has stood alone in front of her entire school to give a speech. She has danced alone in front of her entire school for a talent show. Before joining year-round swimming, even the mere thought of doing so was impossible. But the swimming block and the water breeds confidence and discipline.

No matter if Megan continues to swim for 2 years, 5 years or 10 years, her life has been altered and changed.

The powers that stripped her of her home and friends did not win. The shame of their actions exist within their courtroom papers, documents and opinions, filed evidence of the rules, procedures and laws they broke and failed to uphold for the American worker.

Megan's tribute is visible on USA Swimming.org's swimmer's timing page ([USA Swimming Timing](#)) and with each swim a testament to her ability to overcome those that assaulted her way of life beginning at age 7.

I know, for I am a direct witness, the subject I witnessed is on the right, my daughter Megan.



What I cannot imagine is how many American working families who have emailed me with stories of these same assaults upon their own spouses and children and whose children did not find that outlet needed to overcome.

Dan O'Shea

