

May 2011

S.T.A.R.S. International Newsletter

Mid-Point Reached

May 21st a milestone in the 2011 **S.T.A.R.S.** program; halfway through the academic training; halfway through the pool training; and 3/8 of the way through the entire programming. Participants still remaining after the initial attrition look to be the viable candidates to finish the program. The **S.T.A.R.S.** have bonded as a team and hardened both mentally and physically in their quest to become SDI certified scuba divers. Little do our young men realize that the most exciting part of the program is still on the horizon. We congratulate all of the boys for their effort and perseverance to reach this point outlasting those without the personal commitment to see the journey to the end.



Underwater Acceleration

The new **S.T.A.R.S.** International equipment made a real splash as it took to the water on May 7th at Mary Bradford High School. 2011 participants have now migrated from Omega back inflate BCDs to fully air integrated Oceanic computers accompanied by new Cruz model jacket BCDs. After adapting to the long pool immersion, students rapidly moved through each skill station learning the required scuba skills. Mike and Lisa Bain were accompanied by Mark Niewoehner and Kevin Vaughn in teaching skills for the first full pool session since Skin Diving. All of the instructors were very pleased as the participants breezed through the session. **S.T.A.R.S.** programming typically provides 36 hours of confined water training but was forced to cancel one session. However by May 21st, participants were fully caught up to the planned confined water training schedule and will finish skills on June 11.

Reaching Out and Down: US Virgin Islands



The 2011 **S.T.A.R.S.** International program has tentatively targeted the summer dive trip to visit St. Croix, USVI. Kevin and Norris are working behind the scenes to assemble agreements and collab-

oration to take the **S.T.A.R.S.** participants to USVI in July for an action packed week of diving, education, community service, and, of course, ADVENTURE! More to come...stay tuned.

2nd Annual Underwater Competition



By June 25th, our Kenosha **S.T.A.R.S.** International participants will have mastered all of the required confined water skills and knowledge training to prepare them for the upcoming open water checkout dives. So on the final day of confined water access, **S.T.A.R.S.** will host a spectator event similar to one held annually by the Annual Illinois Scuba Council known as the "Underwater Competition". This 4 hour event will involve teams of participants and former graduates

from the 2010 program competing in a unique series of challenges including; Tri-cycle Relay, Obstacle Course, Ping Pong Ball Push, and "Men of Honor" Pipe Puzzle. This year the 2009-2010 graduates will have an opportunity to compete against the 2011 group which should prove interesting at best.

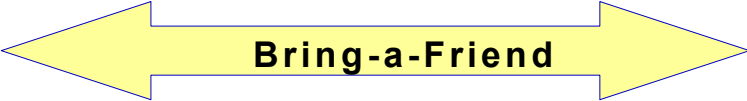
Be sure to put this event on your calendar and plan to join us in Kenosha at Mary Bradford High School.

Up Coming Events

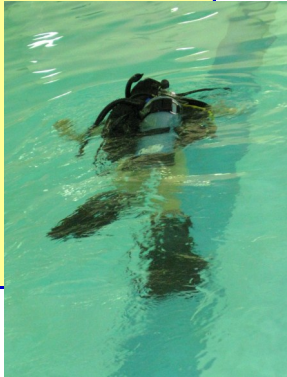
May 23...Begins week 7

June 11...Final confined water session & Parent Checkpoint

June 25...2nd S.T.A.R.S. Annual Underwater Competition



2011 will bring about another new opportunity for the Kenosha **S.T.A.R.S.** We hope that participants will gain support for their involvement by allowing them to Bring-a-Friend to the pool on June 11th. This new event will follow the pool session at 11:30 AM. Each **S.T.A.R.S.** member may invite someone to share their exciting adventure and "Experience what lies beneath the surface." A 15-20 minute Discover Scuba encounter will help these youngsters appreciate what our unique participants endured to maintain their involvement in **S.T.A.R.S.** over the past 2 months. Following the session if anyone has an interest in scuba, Lisa and Mike Bain from Manta Divers will gladly discuss with them the exciting path to becoming a certified diver like the **S.T.A.R.S.**



STARmasters Born and Bred



As a collateral benefit, **S.T.A.R.S.** International produces some of the best Divemasters through their volunteer work during the intensive program schedule. Currently, three staff members are enrolled in Divemaster training with some having the ambition to proceed right into an instructor program. We admire every volunteer for making the personal sacrifice to take their training to the next step.

2010 Graduate Update



2010 Illinois **S.T.A.R.S.** International graduate, Sebastian Rivera, with the support of his Mom is beginning his preliminary training to enter the U.S. Marines with his scuba certification. My bet is that he will be the next member of Seal Team Six with our backing and encouragement.

Meanwhile, 2010 Illinois **S.T.A.R.S.** International graduate, Jorge Galvan, has chosen to advance his dive training to

become a commercial diver which is a high paying but high stress occupation. It would not be too unlike Jorge to find him back teaching at **S.T.A.R.S.** International at some point in the future which would redefine "Commercial Diving" to be volunteer work.

Good luck to both of these young men. **S.T.A.R.S.** hope to see you out diving with the Kenosha gang this summer.



Featured Volunteer of the Month: Nicole Boyer

My name is Nicole Boyer and I have lived in Kenosha, WI my entire life. I work for the Kenosha Unified School District as a Truancy Reduction Specialist for grades K-5. In September 2010, I was married to my wonderful husband, Jason. When I'm not busy, I love to spend time with my family especially my two god-daughters who are 2 1/2 and 8 months old. They are the joy of my life and I learn so much from them each day.

I have always had a strong connection with youth, and I strive to be a positive role model for them. Not every person is cut out to work with young people. I believe that all the volunteers in the **S.T.A.R.S.** Program genuinely care about the wellbeing and success of all the students enrolled. I hope that time my with **S.T.A.R.S.** will impact at least one student in the program, but in my heart I am confident that all students have already improved in one aspect of their life or another.

