

Coach Adina O'Neill Promotes Inclusion Through Epic Races' Swim to the Moon Festival Benefiting North Star Reach

*Team B*REAL program prepares swimmers of all abilities for the annual open-water festival to benefit children with serious medical conditions*

HELL, MI, UNITED STATES, February 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Triathlon and swim coach [Adina O'Neill](#) is expanding inclusive coaching opportunities for athletes preparing for the [2026 Swim to the Moon Open Water Swim Festival](#), aligning her Team B*REAL training community with the event's longstanding fundraising support of [North Star Reach](#), a nonprofit medical specialty camp serving children with serious and chronic health conditions.



The annual Swim to the Moon festival, scheduled for Aug. 16 in Michigan's Hiland Chain of Lakes, offers open-water distances ranging from a half mile to 15 kilometers. The event is produced by Ann Arbor-based race management company Epic Races and serves as a primary fundraiser for North Star Reach, which provides barrier-free summer camp experiences at no cost to families.

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Inclusion drives everything we do. Adina O'Neill's coaching helps athletes of all abilities show up confident and ready to belong at Swim to the Moon.”

Eva Solomon, CEO and founder of Epic Races

O'Neill, who has previously competed in Swim to the Moon events, is offering structured training pods and private coaching designed to help participants safely prepare for longer-distance open-water swimming. Training begins months before race day and focuses on endurance,

technique, safety and race strategy.

Her approach emphasizes inclusion alongside performance.

"Not everyone sees themselves as an athlete, but everyone deserves the opportunity to participate," O'Neill said. "Creating environments where people feel supported and capable allows them to reach goals they may not have thought were possible."

Team B*REAL, founded by O'Neill in 2021, was created to serve athletes who may feel overlooked in traditional endurance sports spaces. The program welcomes participants of varying ages, body types, identities and experience levels. Training pods include individualized goal setting, educational webinars, open-water skills instruction and optional technique review.

The connection to North Star Reach reflects what organizers describe as a shared mission of access and belonging. Swim to the Moon participants are encouraged to fundraise for the camp, which is part of the SeriousFun Children's Network and includes on-site medical support to safely serve children with complex health needs.

Eva Solomon, CEO, owner and founder of Epic Races, said O'Neill's work aligns closely with the organization's philosophy.

"At Epic Races, we like to say E is for Everyone. We create spaces where people feel supported, capable, and welcome," Solomon said. "Adina's coaching reflects that same commitment to inclusion. She helps athletes of all abilities arrive prepared and confident, which strengthens both the race experience and our shared mission of making endurance sports welcoming to everyone while supporting North Star Reach."

The image contains two separate promotional banners. The top banner is for the "Swim to the Moon Open Water Swim Festival". It features a blue and white graphic with the text "SWIM TO THE MOON" and "10K • 10K • 5K • 2.4 Mile • 1.2 Mile • .5 Mile". To the right is the "North Star Reach" logo, which includes a moose head and the text "10 Years of Mooseness". Below the logo, it says "North Star Reach serves as the event's charitable partner". The bottom banner is for "Epic Races". It features a graphic with three icons representing different sports: swimming, cycling, and running. To the right is a photo of a smiling woman wearing a red, white, and blue athletic tank top with "DETROIT WOMEN'S" and "keep moving and life" printed on it. Next to her is the text: "Epic Races is a multisport race management company in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The mission of Epic Races is to professionally manage safe, fun, and rewarding multi-sport and endurance events that appeal to beginner through elite athletes, raise money and awareness for important causes, and make each participant feel like a champion." Below this is a quote from Eva Solomon: "Eva Solomon, CEO / Owner / Founder".

O'Neill said her experience swimming the course shaped her coaching approach.

"Swim to the Moon is more than a race. It's a community," she said. "Swimmers support each other from start to finish, and that sense of belonging is what keeps people coming back."

Athletes credit the program with helping them complete distances they once considered out of reach.

"Adina's approach is motivating, knowledgeable and practical," said Tina Poginy of Connecticut, who completed her first 10K swim in 2024. "The training helped me overcome both mental and physical obstacles."

Amy Gambler, a first-time 5K finisher in 2024, said the gradual progression of training built confidence. "The preparation helped me stay focused and handle the tough moments in the water," Gambler said.

O'Neill's coaching philosophy is informed by her own endurance background. Once unable to run a mile, she has completed more than 100 endurance events, including marathons, long-distance swims and IRONMAN races. She is also the bestselling author of *Forward Is a Pace: REAL Athletes Don't Fit In, They Stand Out*, a book centered on confidence and inclusion in sport.

Organizers note that early preparation is especially important for open-water events, where swimmers must manage currents, fueling and extended time in the water. Coaching groups are forming now ahead of the August race.

About Adina O'Neill

Adina O'Neill is a certified triathlon and swim coach, founder of Team B*REAL and an author focused on inclusion in endurance sports. She coaches athletes nationwide using accessible, sustainable training approaches. Learn more at adinaoneill.com.

About Swim to the Moon

Swim to the Moon Open Water Swim Festival
Sunday, August 16, 2026
15K • 10K • 5K • 2.4 Mile • 1.2 Mile • .5 Mile

An extraordinary open-water swimming adventure through the picturesque Hiland Chain of Lakes near Hell, Michigan. Participants have the time of their lives swimming through Southeast Michigan's most sublime waterways while showing support for a very worthy cause: North Star Reach, a camp for children with serious health challenges. For more information or to register for the event, visit: WwimtotheMoon.net

About North Star Reach

North Star Reach is a nonprofit, barrier-free medical specialty camp in Michigan that provides free camp experiences for children with serious and chronic health conditions. As a member of the SeriousFun Children's Network, founded by Paul Newman, the organization serves children who often cannot attend traditional summer camps due to complex medical needs.

Children across the Great Lakes region face frequent hospitalizations, treatment schedules and physical limitations that restrict access to typical childhood activities. Fewer than 10% have the opportunity to attend a medically supported camp. North Star Reach offers programs in a fully accessible setting with on-site medical supervision, allowing campers to safely participate in activities such as swimming, boating, arts and outdoor recreation while connecting with peers who share similar experiences.

The organization operates entirely on private funding, and all camp sessions are provided at no cost to participating families. For more information or to donate, visit: NorthStarReach.org

About Epic Races

Epic Races is a multisport race management company based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Founded in 2008, the organization produces safe, professionally managed endurance events that serve beginner through elite athletes while raising funds and awareness for charitable causes. For more information, visit: EpicRaces.com

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