

2025 EVENT SUMMARY

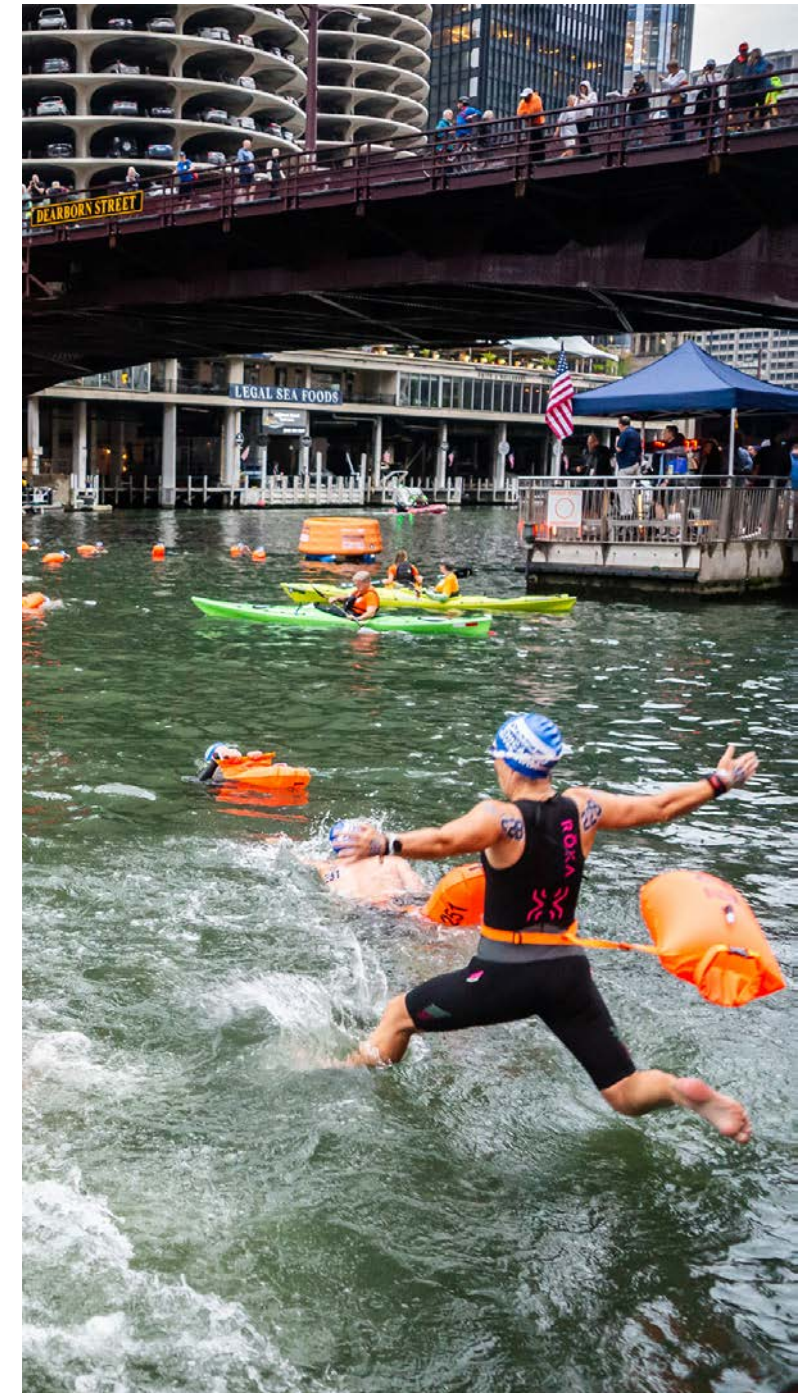


CHICAGO RIVER SWIM

BACKGROUND ★★★★★

The Chicago River Swim celebrates the once-unthinkable rebirth of the river by safely hosting hundreds of athletes in an open-water swim along the Chicago Riverwalk. The charitable event generates proceeds for ALS research and swim lessons for at-risk youth. The event was founded by Triple Crown Open Water Swimmer and ALS advocate Doug McConnell, and is produced by his non-profit organization, *A Long Swim*.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS



CHICAGO RIVER SWIM

VISION ★★★★★

Much like Daniel Burnham's call to "*make no little plans,*" the Chicago River Swim's development embodies bold vision and direction.

MISSION

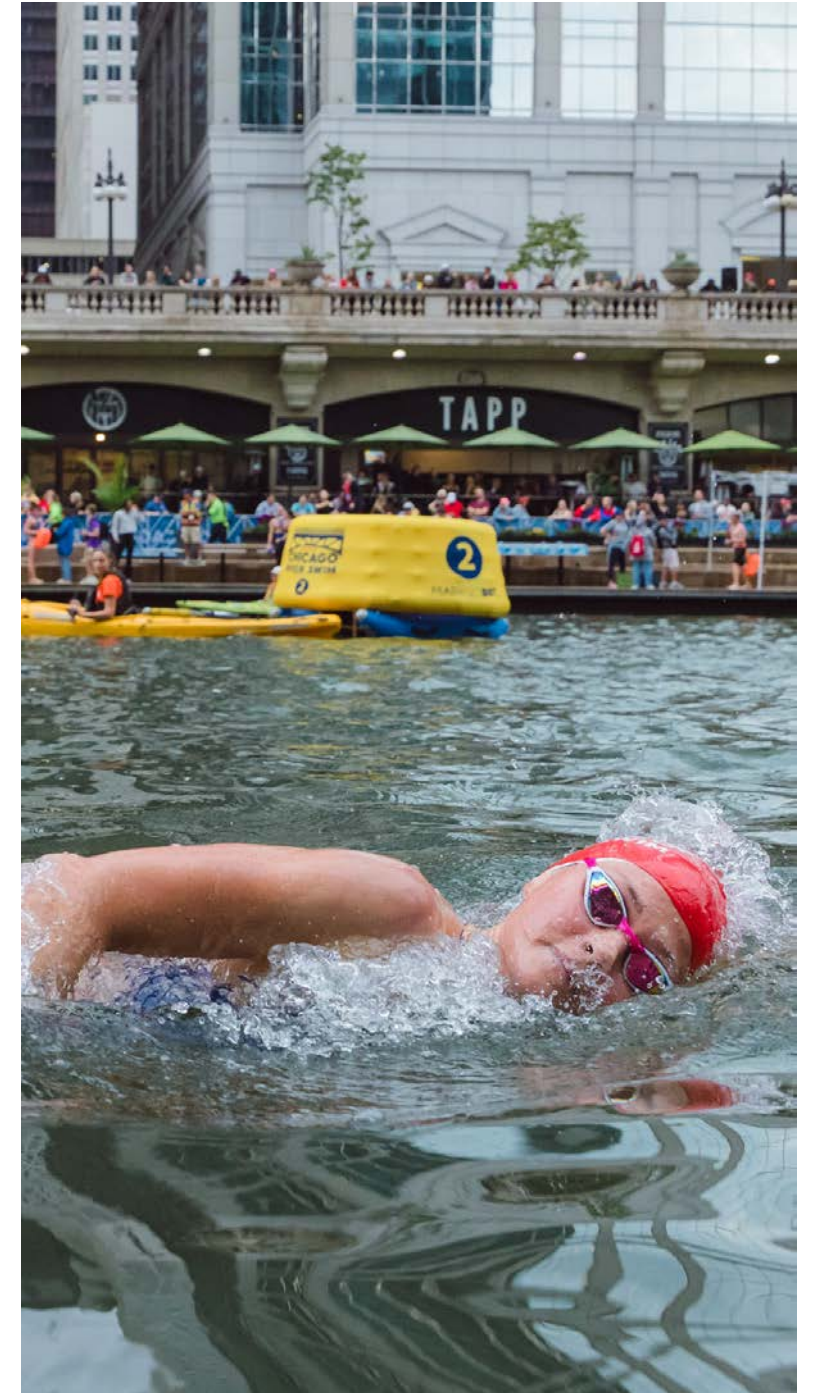
Reintroduce open water swimming to the heart of Chicago while supporting lifesaving causes.

PURPOSE

To showcase Chicago's environmental progress, civic pride and community spirit.

LEGACY

The Chicago River's first organized, permitted swim in nearly a century will become a beloved annual tradition in the City of Chicago while generating enormous goodwill.



CHICAGO RIVER SWIM

WHY IT MATTERS ★★★★★

The implications from the Chicago River Swim are obvious and abundant.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

A symbol of Chicago's transformation from industrial to sustainable.

HEALTH & FITNESS

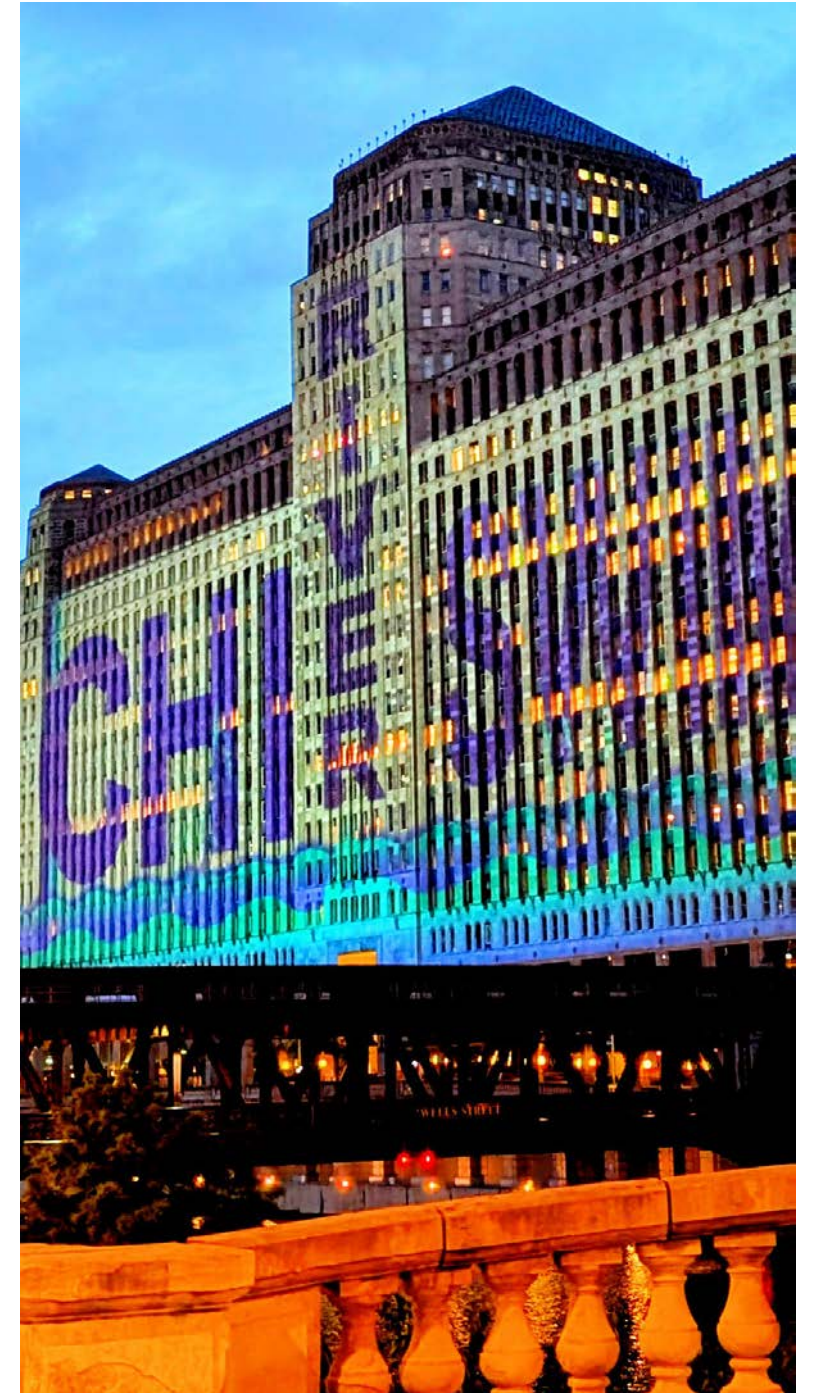
Promotes open-water swimming, safety, and recreation.

CIVIC PRIDE

Reinforces Chicago's image as a forward-thinking, progressive and world-class city.

PHILANTHROPY

Benefits Northwestern's ALS research and the Kroc Center's swim education programs.



CHICAGO RIVER SWIM

A RICH HISTORY ★★★★★

The Chicago River's flow was reversed 125 years ago to draw fresh water from Lake Michigan and clean a polluted river. To celebrate the waterway's drastic turnaround, the Illinois Athletic Association hosted a series of open water swims in 1908. The swims attracted the highest-profile swimmers and more than 100,000 spectators.

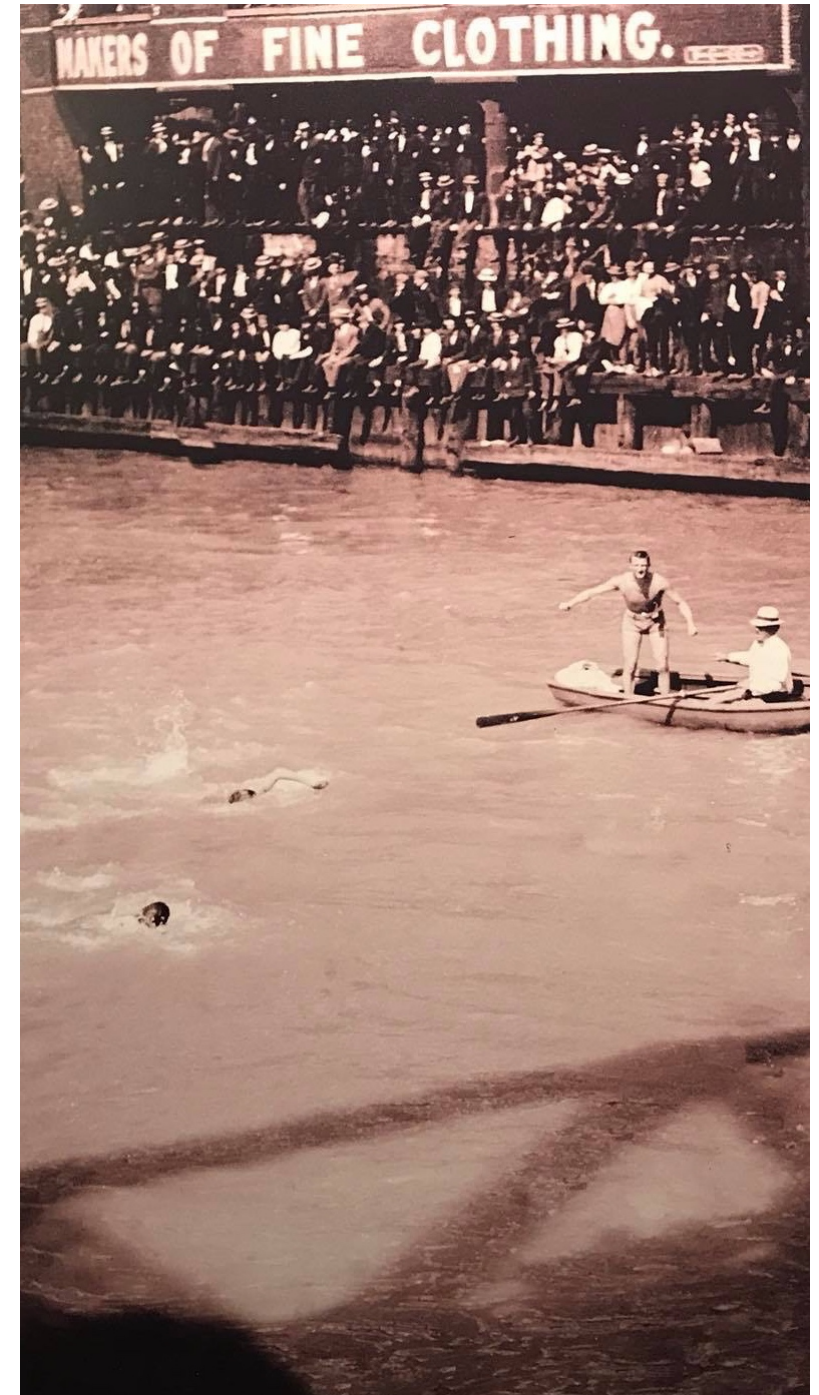
The events were abandoned in the late 1920s as industrial discharge and street runoff again poisoned the river. Through activism and legislation born in the 1960s and 1970s, the Chicago River is now at its cleanest levels on record.

1908 First River Swim Held

2024 Lake Michigan Pilot Event

1927 River Swim Suspended

2025 Chicago River Swim Reborn



2025 EVENT RECAP

YES, IT REALLY HAPPENED ★★★★★

For the first time since 1927, and after 13 years of lobbying city officials, athletes were allowed to swim in the Chicago River. It was a magical day, and the start of something very big.

SEP 21 Date

07:00 Start Time

10K Estimated Spectators

300 Total Swimmers

83 Net Promoter Score

KEY MOMENTS

Opening ceremonies, Mayoral remarks, charity check presentations, celebrity swimmers, thousands of spectators, and strong civic participation.

PUBLIC ENDORSEMENTS

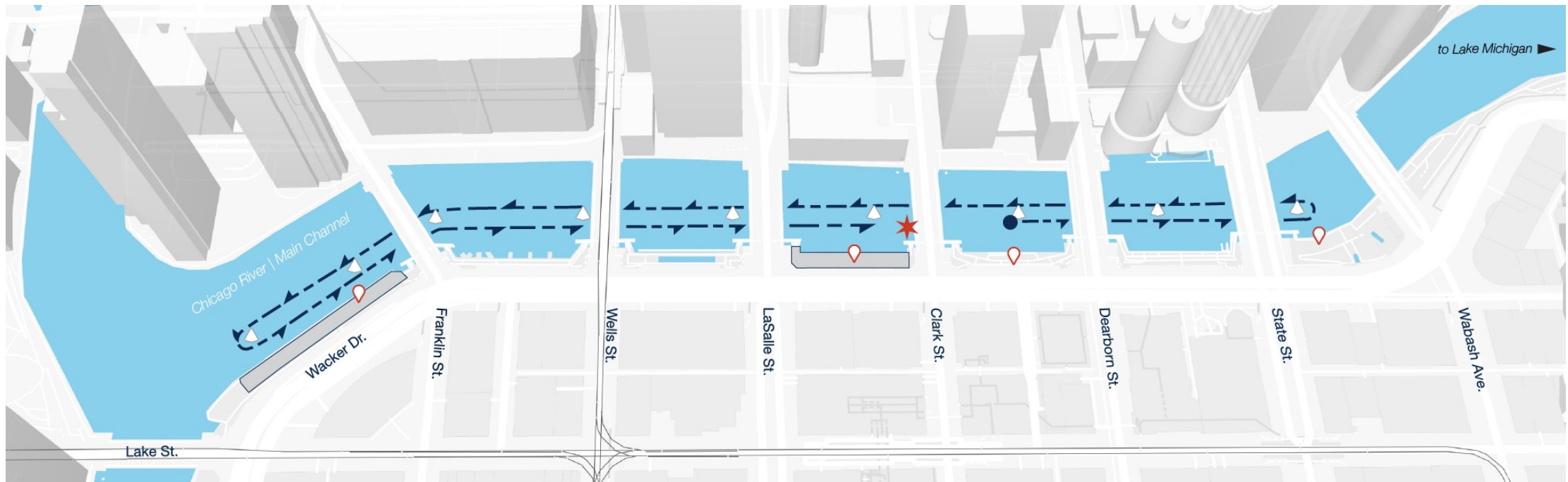
- Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson
- Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle
- Congressman Mike Quigley
- Alderman Brendan Reilly



2025 COURSE

SWIM COURSE ★★★★★

Participants had the once-in-a-lifetime experience to swim along a half-mile stretch on Chicago's beautiful Riverwalk. The looped course offers one-mile and two-mile distances.



2025 EVENT RECAP



2-YEAR APPLICANT DEMOGRAPHICS (2024-2025) ★★★★★

1,735
Total Number
of Applicants



750
Initially
Selected



433
Actual
Swimmers



Number of Countries Represented



Number of States Represented



Chicago Neighborhoods Represented (77 Total)

100% Experienced Swimmers



Gender



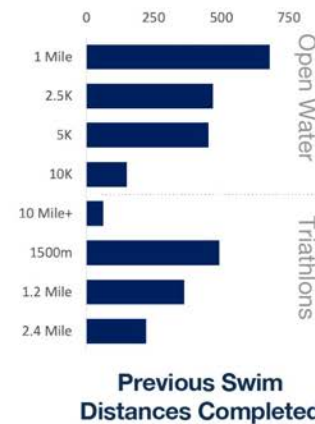
Distance Selected



Race



Primary Goal



Previous Swim Distances Completed

Countries

- Australia
- Canada
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Croatia
- Great Britain
- Honduras
- Mexico
- New Zealand
- Peru
- Spain
- United States
- Uruguay

Top States

- California
- Colorado
- Florida
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- New York
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- Texas
- Wisconsin

MEDIA COVERAGE

THE TALK OF THE TOWN ★★★★★

The Chicago River Swim captured global attention, generating more than **3 billion media impressions** and over 2,000 placements across local, national and international outlets.

Newspaper coverage stretched from The New York Times (front page) and The Guardian to extensive features in the Chicago Tribune and every major local publication.

Television and radio coverage were equally expansive, from live national segments on The Weather Channel to every major Chicago network, with additional features on public stations across the U.S., U.K., Canada and other countries around the world.

3B Total Media Reach

2K News Outlet Pick-Ups

99% Positive or Neutral Sentiments

The story's reach went far beyond the headlines, it inspired civic pride, sparked global conversation and earned official recognition from State and City leaders, positioning Chicago as a model for urban environmental renewal and a blueprint for other cities to follow.



MEDIA COVERAGE



The New York Times

[Chicagoans Avoided Their 'Filthy' River for Years. On Sunday, They Swam in It.](#)

Sept 21, 2025

The Guardian

[Hundred Plunge in the Chicago River for the first official swim in nearly 100 years](#)

Sept 21, 2025

npr

[Chicago residents join the first open-water event on the Chicago River in a century](#)

Sept 22, 2025

USA TODAY

[Hundreds swim in Chicago River for first time in nearly a century for ALS research](#)

Sept 22, 2025

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

[Hundreds plunge into the Chicago River in city's first open water swim in nearly a century](#)

Sept 21, 2025

BBC

[Hundreds swim in Chicago river for first time in nearly 100 years](#)

Sept 23, 2025

Inside Climate News

['A Really Monumental Day' for Chicago River: Clean Enough for Hundreds to Swim In](#)

Sept 21, 2025

The Weather Channel

[From Pollution to Plunge: Chicago River is Clean Enough to Welcome Swimmers Again](#)

Sept 24, 2025

TELEMUNDO

[Chicago esperó casi un siglo, pero esta vez por fin hubo natación en el río que la atraviesa](#)

Sept 22, 2025

CBC Radio-Canada

[The Chicago River used to be a cesspool. But on Sunday, hundreds took the plunge.](#)

Sept 22, 2025

Chicago Tribune

[Swimmers compete in first official Chicago River race in nearly a century](#)

Sept 21, 2025

THE PLAIN DEALER cleveland.com

[Could the Cuyahoga River ever host an open swim like Chicago just did?](#)

Sept 26, 2025

CHARITABLE IMPACT

2024-2025 FUNDRAISING EFFORTS ★★★★★

The inaugural events provided a massive impact to the Chicago community, thanks especially to the perseverance, positivity, and patience of the entire swim field as the event awaited formal municipal approval.

- \$350K** Total Donations
- 8,000+** Unique Donors
- 671** Individual Fundraisers
- 126%** Collective Amount Raised vs. Minimum



\$250,000

Donated to the Ozdinler Lab at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in support of critical ALS research.



\$100,000

Donated to The Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center to provide swim lessons for 4,000 inner-city youth.

MARKETING

COMMUNICATIONS ★★★★★

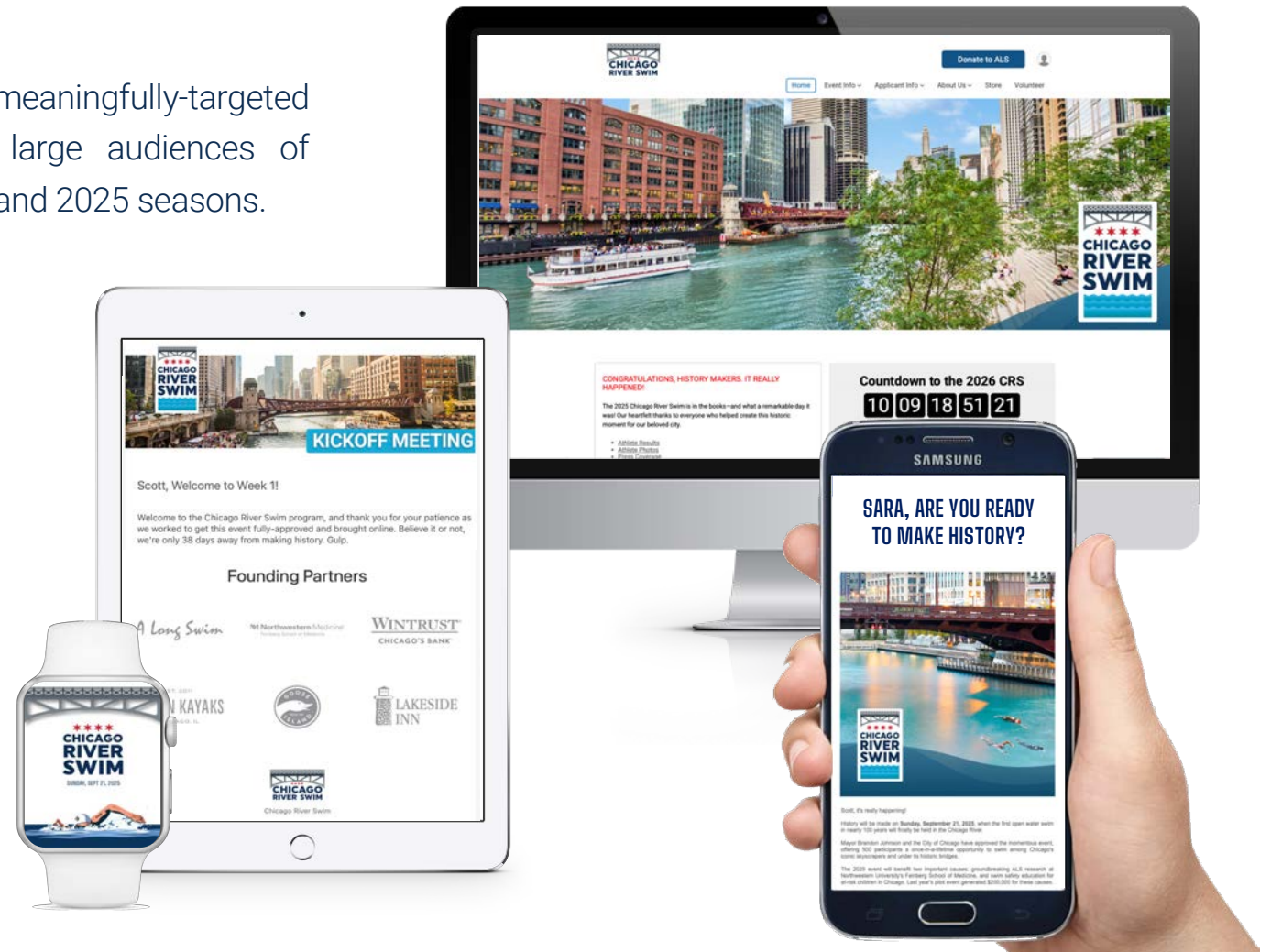
A professional, multi-channel brand presence combined with meaningfully-targeted promotional campaigns were instrumental in attracting large audiences of participants, partners, supporters, and spectators in the 2024 and 2025 seasons.

68K Launch Week
Page Views

42K Avg Monthly
Page Views

180K E-Mails
Distributed

12.1K E-Mail
Database



MARKETING

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT ★★★★★

Much like CRS' media interest, its presence and awareness across social media started strong and continues to grow significantly after two seasons.

592K Total Organic Impressions

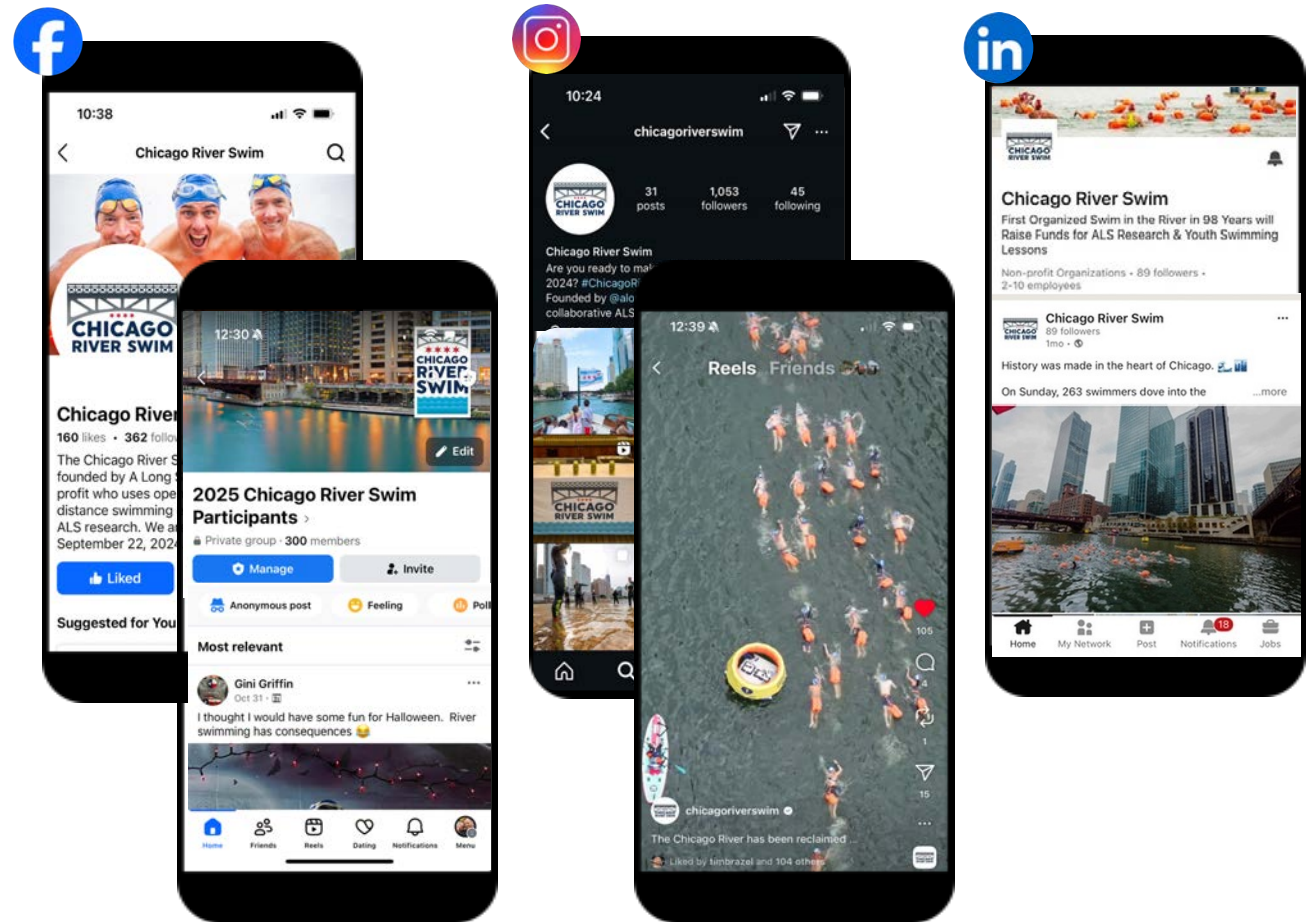
99.8K 2025 Paid Impressions

99K 2025 Engagements

2,890 Instagram Followers

877 Facebook Followers

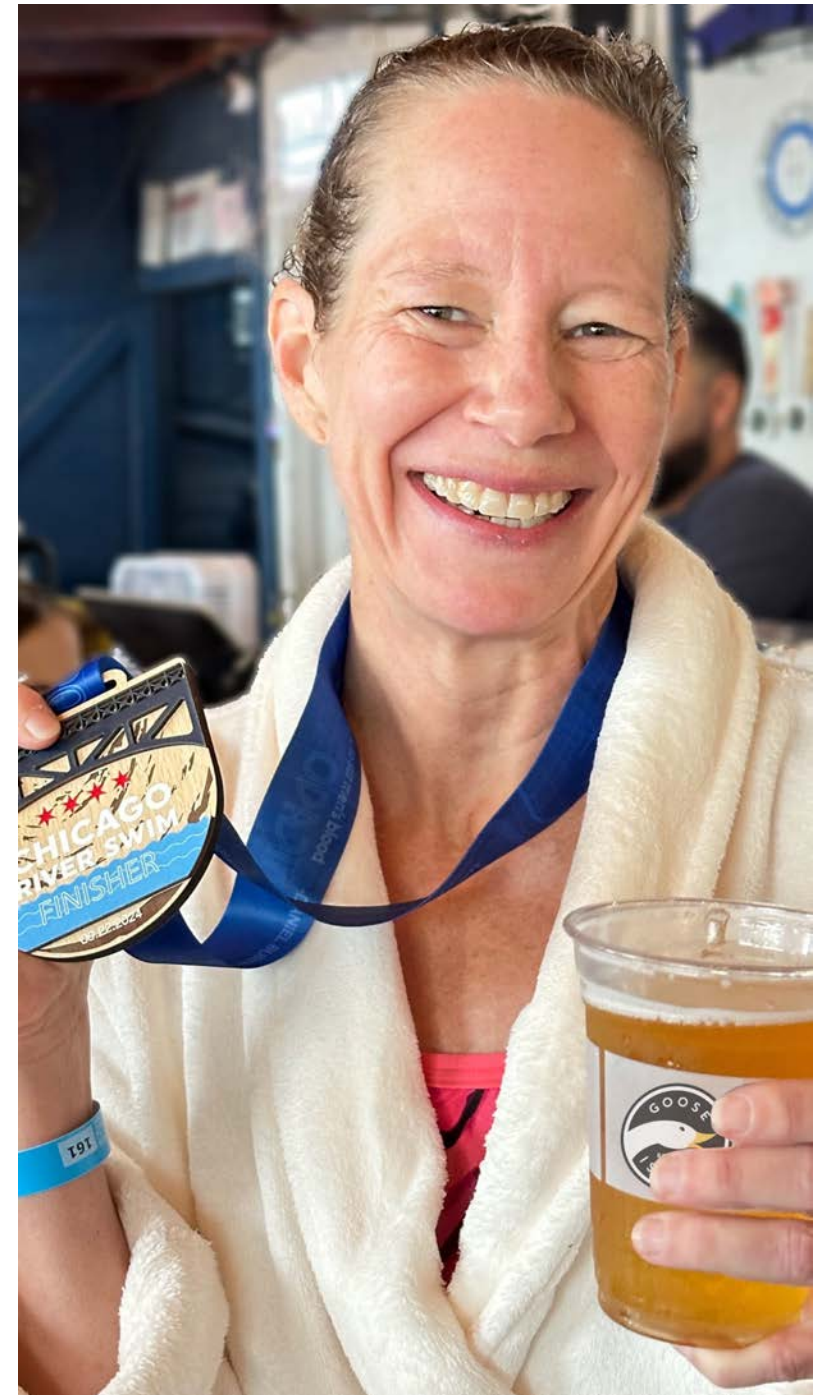
769% Audience Growth ('24→'25)



SPONSORSHIP

FOUNDING PARTNERS ★★★★★

Sponsorship of the Chicago River Swim allows brands a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be a part of history, and to make a profound impact on the Chicagoland community. We acknowledge the following organizations for their bold support of the 2024 and 2025 events.



SPONSORSHIP

BRANDING OPPORTUNITIES ★★★★★

Our sponsorship opportunities deliver powerful exposure across traditional media, digital, and social platforms — plus dynamic event activations that connect your brand directly with participants and spectators.

EXPOSURE OPPORTUNITIES

- Athlete Updates
- Newsletter Emails
- Auxiliary Social Events
- Training Programs
- Packet Pick-Up Retailing
- Event Day Activation & Sampling
- Hospitality Tickets
- Post Race Party



CONTACT US

LET'S MAKE HISTORY ★★★★★

As a proud part of Chicago's community, we are dedicated to developing this world-class event with tailored sponsorship programs that drive measurable results.

Doug McConnell, Founder



doug.mcconnell@chicagoriverswim.org

Tim Brazel, Advisory Board

tim.brazel@chicagoriverswim.org

Chicago River Swim



chicagoriverswim.org

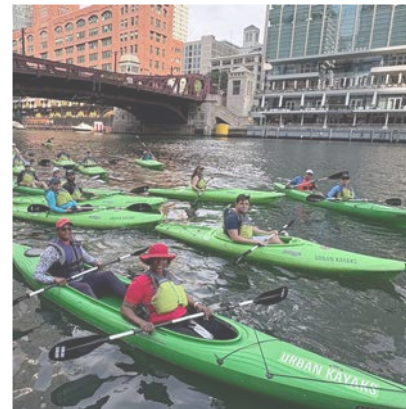


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