

# Wood River Refinery Brings USA Swimming To Roxana

by Katie Bennett  
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ROXANA - The USA Swimming “Make a Splash Tour,” presented by Phillips 66, traveled to Roxana, IL on Monday, May 15. Wood River Refinery facilitated a visit to Central Intermediate Elementary School as part of the agenda.

“Safety is our top priority at Phillips 66,” says Melissa Erker, Director of Government and Community Relations. “We welcomed the opportunity to help bring lifesaving information to our fenceline community.”

Olympic swimmers Rowdy Gaines and Elizabeth Beisel hosted a morning assembly for Central students to teach the importance of learning how to swim. The athletes presented the four rules for water safety: learn to swim, get an adult if you go near the water, always swim with a buddy, and if someone is in trouble in the water, call for help, don't go in.

After talking about water safety, Gaines and Beisel pulled out their Olympic medals they earned during their Olympic swimming careers. Gaines showed his gold medal from the 1984 Olympics. Beisel displayed her silver and bronze medals from the 2012 Olympic games. They let several students wear the medals and allowed each student to touch the medals before leaving the assembly.

The assembly program featured Makenna John, a local Roxana senior who is lifeguard at the Roxana Pool. John was one of the students who participated in swim lessons with Olympian Anthony Ervin during the Make a Splash visit in 2014. She spoke with students about following the rules when they visit the pool this summer.

During the assembly, three Roxana families were gifted family passes to the Roxana Pool courtesy of Wood River Refinery.

“Fun in the water is such a big part of most of our summer memories,” says Erker. “We were happy to give a donation to the Roxana Parks Department to cover the cost of the summer passes and hope the families have a safe time enjoying the pool.”

Students and teachers were given beach towels from Wood River Refinery following the assembly.

Each year, the USA Swimming Foundation visits cities across America to raise national awareness and spread the life-saving message of learning to swim among children, families, and communities on the Make a Splash Tour sponsored by Phillips 66. Drowning claims the lives of approximately 3,500 people per year, with nearly 25 percent being children under the age of 14. The problem is particularly amplified in ethnically diverse communities, where the drowning rate is almost three times the national average, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Formal swimming lessons can reduce that risk for children by 88 percent.