

# GUARDING LIFE AND COMMUNITY

*Alum donates time and expertise at Westminster's aquatic center*

*By Vanessa Eveleth ('23)*

Sticking with an exercise routine—for example, swimming every day—is difficult even with the best intentions. That's why one Westminster College alum prefers swimming in the early mornings.

At Westminster, the Aquatic Center within the Dolores Doré Eccles Health, Wellness, and Athletic Center has had staffing issues in the 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. time slot, according to **Patrick Curtin ('91, MPC '94)**.

Patrick and his partner, Aaron Flood, have been swimming at the Aquatic Center three mornings a week since 2008, specifically at the 6 a.m. pool time. The Aquatic Center remaining closed due to lack of staffing became a personal problem for Patrick and Aaron, but instead of complaining, they brainstormed possible solutions.

Patrick and Aaron decided to earn lifeguard certifications to help keep the Aquatic Center open in the morning, Monday through Friday. They immediately contacted Traci Siriprathane, assistant dean of students in the Student Wellbeing and Support department, to

sign up for the course. Patrick says they emailed Traci and asked, “Hey, how about we take the class and we will volunteer to man the pool in the morning hours when students are unavailable, strictly non-



compensational on our part.”

The partially selfish solution was only a small part of why Patrick and Aaron hope to volunteer their time, Patrick says. Being a part of the Westminster community is important to them—Patrick even makes monthly donations to the college.

“The college is a really nice place to come because it’s a loving space,” Patrick says. “You don’t feel like somebody that people will judge because of what you are, because the campus pushes so much that everybody is welcome. Everybody has a part, everybody.”

Patrick and Aaron live two blocks away and frequently walk around campus with their two dogs, Lena and Teddi.

“Everybody here is really polite,” says Aaron, who joined the Westminster Community Choir last spring. “I just like coming here and being away from the city traffic. And I enjoy that campus is just a quiet space.”

Westminster’s small and intimate community is a connection Patrick recalls from when he was a non-traditional student—and something that still is a part of his life today.

“Westminster means a lot to me,” Patrick says. “I want to see it here for decades to come.”

*Patrick and Aaron became certified lifeguards on February 8, 2022.*

