

Save Our Pool: Speech to NK School Board

By Talitha Aban

Good evening everyone. My name is Talitha Aban and I am a senior at North Kitsap High School. Like the members of the school board, I am also considered to be a leader in this community. I served as the captain of the girls' swim team for two consecutive years, as an officer in ASB, as the president of Leo Club and Future Business Leaders of America, as the founder and editor of the school newspaper, as well as being a participant in a number of other activities in my school community. I understand what it's like to be put under pressure. But that is just what a leader has to face. Making those tough decisions as to whether to succumb to the easy path or to fight through the difficulties. Ladies and gentlemen of the board, I stand before you tonight to persuade you to do what is right, to do what is hard, and to show this community that you are capable of being the leaders that we need you to be. Keep the North Kitsap pool open.

If you can remember, it was only a few years ago when this board decided to implement policy to renovate the North Kitsap pool. Millions of dollars were spent to beautify the community facility. Now I ask you. What was your original vision for this pool? I know you must have seen something if you were willing to invest all those funds. Could you see the way this pool functions as a teacher, as a form of entertainment – as a unifier of the community where the old can find common ground (or in this case, water) with the young, the physically handicapped can move with the athletically gifted, where the sounds of Aquacise music can harmonize with the cheers of high school swimmers. There is no other place in Poulsbo that can compete. So could you please open your eyes and see that?

Although the North Kitsap Pool is not the most flamboyant facility in Poulsbo, it still deserves to have a voice in this community. Just because it cannot draw in screaming fans like a football stadium or basketball court should not diminish its worth in any way. A lack of funding does not (I repeat, does not) give you the right to drown out the needs of those individuals who have only been able to integrate themselves into this community because of the pool.

I understand that the North Kitsap School District is experiencing major budget problems. The economic slump is creating hardships all across our nation. However, that does not mean that this administration should succumb to the temptation of eliminating the local pool. Sacrificing a popular community gathering place will only be more hurtful than helpful. At the same time, I have my doubts that this board is doing everything to improve the financial situation. This pool still has so much potential not only to continue helping the community, but also to make you the money you need. An implementation of new programs and activities has helped to increase revenue at the pool. I believe you have these figures. And this is only the beginning. If you can give it time and patience and even put a little effort into running the pool like a business, I guarantee you will see results.

“Giving up” are two words that are not in my vocabulary. As members of the North Kitsap school board, as the administrative representatives of the students and parents in this district, the phrase “giving up” should be eradicated from your vocabulary as well. Do not give up on the pool. Do not turn your back on the members of this community. Set an example of good leadership that the people in this room can respect and follow. That is all I ask of you. That is all this community expects from you.