

## PRESS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

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## Eastern Michigan University hosts First Swim/Dive/Paddle Clinics for Michigan

April 21, 2015 – Charlotte, North Carolina - Not one, not two, but three First Clinics were recently held at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti for those with physical or mobility challenges. OPAF's First Swim, First Paddle and First Dive Clinics were all held concurrently to offer a choice in adaptive water sports. This multi-clinic, sponsored by the University of Michigan O & P Center and coordinated by the O & P master's program students of Eastern Michigan has been growing since 2010 and now includes adaptive swim instruction. EMU classmates Meghan Baley, Jamie Howard, David Trevisan, Katie Blaharski and Blake Brennan coordinated the job of setting up the First Clinics from start to finish with guidance from EMU staff, Wendy Beattie, CPO, FAAOP. Along with the sponsorship of University of Michigan and Becker Orthopedic, the students also recruited volunteers for the day, along with refreshment sponsors, including Anew Life Prosthetics & Orthotics, Ropp Orthopedic Clinic, along with the invaluable assistance of equipment from like minded groups such as Athletes with Disabilities, Capital City Scuba and the Eastern Michigan University Paddlers.

Over 19 participants took advantage of top notch instruction in adaptive swimming, scuba and kayaking throughout the day at the Olympic sized swimming pool facility at EMU. Lunch was provided to all in attendance and media coverage from local NBC and the Ann Arbor News were present.

"I thought it was an incredible event to be a part of. I was unable to attend the event last year due to a prior engagement at home, but was so glad I was able to attend this year. It was wonderful to see patients, students, practitioners and volunteers all interacting so seamlessly and happily in a fun and interactive way. I felt that everyone involved thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We (EMU MSOP program) are so happy to have had the opportunity to host this event with the help of the community sponsors and participation of the amputee community in the area. I hope I am able to attend next year, and to see even more participants and volunteers enjoying the day together." -Meghan Baley, MSOP Candidate, Eastern Michigan University



**About OPAF:** Serving as the philanthropic arm of the US orthotic and prosthetic community, the Orthotic & Prosthetic Activities Foundation (OPAF), develops, implements, partners and hosts adaptive recreational clinics for those with physical challenges. The First Clinics are recognized as leaders in adaptive recreation. Whether this is the first time a participant is trying an activity after illness, injury or episode or the first time they are ever trying, First Clinics offer top notch adaptive instruction specifically for them. Founded in 1995 to support the Paralympic Games in Atlanta, OPAF & The First Clinics have moved forward to offer introductory level adaptive recreation opportunities to everyone, not just the elite athlete. For more information on OPAF and The First Clinics, visit [www.opafonline.org](http://www.opafonline.org).