

## Roseville native makes third U.S. Paralympics swim team

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The phone calls and e-mails keep coming, many from people she's never met.

Her name is splattered throughout a company newsletter, she's featured on a poster, and a going-away party is tentatively planned for her in August.

Then, in September, Cheryl Angelelli will head to Beijing in pursuit of a gold medal.

Angelelli, who was born in Roseville, raised in Fraser and resides in Clinton Township, is a member of the U.S. Paralympics swim team that will compete in the Summer Games in Beijing.

This will be her third Paralympics.

"I'm really excited," said Angelelli, 39. "This will probably be my last one, so I'm savoring every moment of it."

She was named to the U.S. team after a strong showing at the U.S. Paralympics Swimming Trials, April 3-5 in Minneapolis. There, about 100 swimmers competed for 38 spots.

Angelelli finished first in the 100-meter freestyle and second in the 50 freestyle. Her time of 1 minute, 53.3 seconds in the 100 is the fastest in the world for a paraplegic female.

Angelelli will swim in the 100 and 50 freestyles at the Games, which will take place Sept. 6-17.

She became a paraplegic in 1983, after a diving accident. She has never let her paralysis hinder her success as a swimmer, but during big races, she still endures her fair share of challenges.

"At trials, I was extremely nervous," Angelelli said. "I don't know why. And I still get nervous before all my races. ..."

"I was going into the 50 free and felt really good. My time was OK. I hope to drop some more times before Beijing."

She said she was 90% sure she would qualify for her third Paralympics, but she didn't want to take anything for granted. She said she swam "like my life depended on making the team."

"And you never know when a newcomer might come out of the woodwork," Angelelli added.

"One of the girls from Mexico was dropping time like crazy. She's definitely somebody I'm keeping my eye on. There's a lot of other girls who were hot on my heels. It's anybody's race, so I'm not comfortable sitting at No. 1."

That's why she plans to train extra hard in the months leading up to the Games.

She's about to enter a portion of her training that her husband and coach, Shawn Kornoelje, likes to call "general abuse."

In May, she'll be able to train at the newly renovated Oakland University natatorium, which is converting to a long course (she's been training at a short course). In July, Angelelli will be in the pool four or five days a week for 90 minutes per session.

In the meantime, she'll continue to work as the director of public relations and marketing at the DMC's Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan.

Then, in September, she'll be in Beijing aiming for a pair of gold medals. Angelelli says her past experiences at the Paralympics might come in handy in what is likely to be her last hurrah on the big stage.

"I definitely think there's an advantage," she said.

Meanwhile, she'll try to keep her nerves in check.

"When you go to the Paralympics, everything is just on a grand scale," Angelelli said. "You're swimming in front of 20,000 people. I don't know if it's (as much) nervousness as it is anxiousness."

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