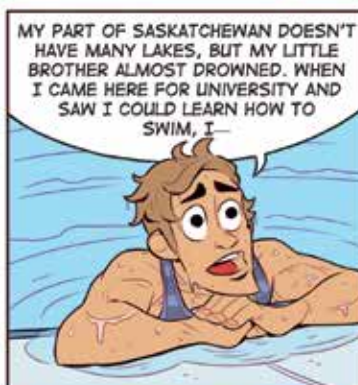


Saving Strokes

ILLUSTRATED BY ALEX DIOCHON
WRITTEN BY NANCY PAYNE













IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE THAT FOR CENTURIES, WHEN PEOPLE JUMPED IN A LAKE OR RIVER OR OCEAN, THEY SPLASHED AROUND WITHOUT REALLY KNOWING HOW TO SWIM. THERE WERE NO LIFEGUARDS AND NO SAFETY GEAR NEARBY. DEATH BY DROWNING WAS A TERRIBLE BUT UNSURPRISING PART OF LIFE. WE INVENTED WILL AND BARBARA, BUT GEORGE CORSAN WAS REAL. HE PIONEERED THE IDEA OF GROUP SWIMMING LESSONS WITH PRACTICE ON LAND. HE TAUGHT IN TORONTO AND THE UNITED STATES, WHERE THE YMCA STARTED DOING THINGS HIS WAY. HERE IN CANADA, THE RED CROSS WORKED WITH THE LIFESAVING SOCIETY TO START A NATIONAL PROGRAM OF SWIMMING LESSONS IN 1946. THAT FIRST YEAR, 8,000 KIDS IN ONTARIO AND 2,000 IN P.E.I. TOOK PART. TODAY, THE RED CROSS SAYS, A MILLION CANADIANS ENROL IN ITS PROGRAMS EVERY YEAR, AND THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO DROWN IN OUR COUNTRY HAS DROPPED BY TWO-THIRDS.

