

MEET JAMAL HILL



Age: 27 Country of Origin:
United States of America

What would the title of your
biography be?

"Every Last Drop" would be the working title for Jamal's biography. When asked why, Jamal explained that it represents the way he lives his life. He wants people to remember him as a person "who squeezed every last drop out of his life" by living a life to the fullest. Secondly, the title relates to his strong relationship with water as a professional swimmer and founder of "Swim Up Hill Foundation" where he teaches children how to swim.

How would you use a
time machine?

If Jamal could go back in time, he would go to a time where he could see Jesus perform some miracles. Coming from a Christian faith background, he would revel in the opportunity to see God's work and the power of faith in history.



Jamal teaching a young Afro-Colombian girl how to float at a Swim Up Hill Foundation learn-to-swim event hosted in Medellin, Colombia.



Swim Up Hill Foundation Logo.

How has your migration experience influenced your work?

While Jamal himself has not migrated to another nation, he comes from a family of generations of the African diaspora who were forced to go to the U.S. during the transatlantic slave trade. In his experience, he has seen the familiar difference between generations of migrants and the progression that takes place. For example, his mother was the one to put Jamal in swimming lessons, but she herself did not know how to swim until Jamal taught her. Jamal has been able to take back the stereotypical narrative of his ancestry and use his ability to swim and teach others.



Jamal shaking hands with an a young sled hockey paralympic hopeful at the 2022 Challenged Athletes Foundation Marathon in San Diego, CA.

What do you hope to accomplish by 2030?

Jamal would really like to be able to see the impact of the movement and teaching he has started to grow on a worldwide scale. He wants to help as many people as possible, and one day he aspires to be in the conversation of winning a Nobel Peace Prize.



Underprivileged children from all across the Medellin basin at their first swim lesson with paralympic Medalist Jamal Hill (Colombia).

If you had a superpower what would it be and why?

If Jamal could have a superpower, it would be to be Superman. It would give him super strength, the ability to fly, and x-ray vision. He explains that this is linked to his competitive nature, and to the fact that Superman is known as one of the best heroes there is, as he is unbeatable to most.



Jamal Hill pictured with his Paralympic Bronze Medal alongside the Tokyo 2020 Olympic logo.

Why did you choose swimming among other sports?

What drove Jamal to swimming was his mother's defiance of cultural stereotypes regarding African diaspora. The notion that "African Americans do not swim" motivated his mother to put him in swimming classes at ten months old. He continued to swim for the greater portion of his life and even was a member of the 2020 USA Paralympic team in Tokyo.



President Jamal Hill seated in the lobby of the Swim Up Hill Foundation, Pasadena office.

How do you connect with your diaspora community and support it?

The ability to swim or learn to swim should not be limited based on access to money, coaching or access to a body of water. Jamal and his organization work to overcome these obstacles. He hopes to "invite people into their own history" through swimming. He connects to the African diaspora in the U.S. by meeting people where they are and providing these individuals with an example of what is possible and what African diaspora can achieve. To connect with his international diaspora, he attempts to learn more languages in order to better communicate.

Which Sustainable Development Goal is most relevant for your work?

While Jamal's mission lends itself to be relevant to more than one SDG, the area which is most applicable to his work is SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being). Specifically, SDG 3.2 which outlines the goal to end the preventable death of newborns and children under the age of 5. In connection to his work, he explains that the leading cause of death for this demographic is drowning. This connects directly to his mission of teaching both children and adults how to swim.



What would you tell other young people who want to make an impact in their communities of origin and residence?

According to Jamal, one of his favorite quotes is by Steve Jobs which states: "those people who are crazy enough think they can change the world are the ones who do." This is his piece of advice to youth leaders.

Jamal framed as a spokesperson for the Crown Act Coalition sponsored by DOVE.