



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: August 24, 2016

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: 2016 Free Learn to Swim Program

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receives a presentation regarding the 2016 Free Learn to Swim Program and recognizes the Friends of Los Baños del Mar Pool, Eye & Vision Care of Santa Barbara and Easy Lift Transportation for their on-going financial support.

DISCUSSION:

Beginning in 2012, the Parks and Recreation Department Aquatics Section approached the group the "Friends of Los Baños del Mar Pool" to discuss an opportunity to start a new free learn to swim program for youth at Los Baños pool.

The original proposal included providing one week of free swimming lessons for 80 youth. Each one-week lesson included a daily 5-minute safety topic followed by 40 minutes of in-water instruction. The lessons followed identical American Red Cross guidelines consistent with fee-based programs with the primary goal of teaching participants to be water safe, while improving stroke technique and efficiency.

The first program exceeded expectations, serving 128 participants. Since 2012, program participation has expanded 150% to serve 320 youth. The financial commitment to cover the participation growth was embraced by the Friends of Los Baños del Mar Pool who have increased their funding commitment by 194%, from \$1,360 to \$4,000, over the last four years.

Internal collaboration between the Youth Activities and Neighborhood Outreach Services Sections contributes to the program success. The Youth Activities Section incorporated swim lessons into the free Summer Fun program schedule, and the staff at the neighborhood centers worked with local families to promote, register and coordinate transportation to and from the pool. This collaboration provided support for parents and participants and the framework to increase participation.

At the conclusion of each swim lesson session, participants receive a certificate of completion. This year the Department provided each participant with a free Recreational Swim pass so that they can return to Los Baños Pool to practice their skills. At the completion of this summer's program, the swim instructors indicated that every child

made significant progress and comfortably moved along the continuum of swimming skills. Approximately 85% of the children met or exceeded the required skills for a Level 2 swim class, which indicates that although their swimming skills were not yet refined, they were water safe and could swim five body lengths, bob to safety and float.

It is with great gratitude that the Parks and Recreation Department recognizes the Friends of Los Baños del Mar Pool, Eye & Vision Care of Santa Barbara, and Easy Lift Transportation for their incredible support of important youth aquatic programming in the community.

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