



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: November 20, 2013

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: 2013 Free Learn to Swim Program

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission:

- A. Receive a report on the 2013 Free Learn to Swim program conducted at Los Baños del Mar swimming pool; and
- B. Recognize the Friends of Los Baños del Mar Pool, Eye & Vision Care of Santa Barbara and Easy Lift Transportation for their funding and partnerships that made this program possible.

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 at Los Baños pool. A recent contractual change between the City and the Santa Barbara Swim Club (SBSC) returned one hour of previously utilized pool time by SBSC to the Aquatics Section for programming. Staff determined that this unique opportunity could allow Department staff the opportunity to implement a free Learn to Swim program which would complement existing and popular fee-based swim lesson programming.

Staff approached the Friends of Los Baños del Mar Pool with a proposal that would provide one week of free swimming lessons for 80 youth. Each one-week lesson would include a daily 5-minute safety topic followed by 40 minutes of in-water instruction. The lessons would follow identical American Red Cross guidelines consistent with fee-based programs with the primary goal of teaching participants to be watersafe, followed by improving stroke technique and efficiency.

The Friends of Los Baños del Mar Pool were excited to be a part of this opportunity and were eager to partner with the Aquatics Section to increase water safety awareness and swim abilities. The Friends of Los Baños del Mar Pool would cover the direct staffing costs and swim caps for each participant. The Aquatics Section provided the pool time and certifications to each participant to recognize their participation and skill completion.

Following a successful first year of implementation and positive feedback, the Aquatics Section once again approached the Friends of Los Baños Del Mar Pool for increased funding to conduct the 2013 Free Learn to Swim Program. Staff had evaluated the

2012 swim lesson model and determined that with increased funding the program could serve up to 192 participants. Staff also recommended that each participant, in addition to the swim cap, receive one free pass to recreation swim and a pair of goggles, which would significantly improve their comfort in the water and their progression in swim lessons.

The increase in participants and equipment would require additional partners. The Friends of Los Baños del Mar Pool partnered with Eye and Vision Care to fund their \$2,340 contribution for the direct staffing costs. Staff worked with our free Summer Fun program sites and the Neighborhood Centers to promote and ensure that the new target of 192 participants would be achievable. The final challenge involved transporting participants to and from their respective Summer Fun school sites or Neighborhood Center; however, with an opportunistic partnership with Easy Lift Transportation, they were able to provide this critical component.

The success of the 2013 Free Learn to Swim Program is represented by the 183 unduplicated participants that were served. This was an increase of 140% compared to 2012 and only 5% short of the maximum capacity. At the completion of the 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.

SUBMITTED BY: Rich Hanna, Senior Recreation Supervisor

APPROVED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director