



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: October 30, 2013 REPORT NO: 13-090
ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
SUBJECT: San Diego Fire-Rescue, Lifeguard Division Informational Report:
'Waterproofing San Diego' and the San Diego Junior Lifeguards
Program
REFERENCE: None

REQUESTED ACTION:

Accept the report.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Accept the report.

SUMMARY:

The San Diego Junior Lifeguards Program (JG) is a team of lifeguard professionals who provide aquatic education to San Diego youth while developing confidence, maintaining mental and physical fitness, and fostering respect for one another and the coastal environment.

The program's motto is "**Skills for Life**", and offers San Diego youth an opportunity to learn and train with professional City of San Diego Lifeguards. The program's educational and physical activities include; ocean awareness, how to enjoy the ocean safely, water rescue techniques, familiarity with local beaches, environmental awareness, healthy habits, first aid skills, open water swimming, surfing, paddling, snorkeling, and other skills necessary to prepare them for life.

The San Diego Junior Lifeguard Foundation (SDJGF) was created over three years ago to fund outreach efforts and allow qualified youth the opportunity to participate in JGs. The outreach effort, called 'Waterproofing San Diego' is a comprehensive three-phase program focused on San Diego's underserved youth, and is staffed and funded by the San Diego Junior Lifeguard Foundation. The three-phases of aquatic outreach include; aquatic education lectures, swim lessons, and aquatic experiences at the ocean or local pool.

These outreach efforts create the opportunity for underserved youth to increase their knowledge of aquatic environments, improve swimming skills, and pass the required swim test for acceptance to the San Diego Junior Lifeguard program.

'Waterproofing San Diego' also teaches survivability skills in the water, helps creates qualified JG Interns (paid 16-17 year olds who assist JG Instructors), and qualified Lifeguards.

Highlights of the San Diego Junior Lifeguard Program and 'Waterproofing San Diego' include:

1. Exceeded previous year's enrollment and scholarship numbers. A total of 1,370 youth (age 7 to 17) participated in the program, and 97 JGs were provided scholarships. Approximately 30 JGs participated in the four-week long Ocean Science Education Program (OSE) conducted by the San Diego Junior Lifeguard Foundation. The OSE program was created to provide a full day of ocean activities and education for the youth.
2. Conducted two JGrommet Programs. These classes are one-week introductions to ocean awareness for 7-8 year olds, and a total of 197 youth participated.
3. Made advances with aquatic education and drowning prevention through the "Waterproofing San Diego" initiative. The San Diego Junior Lifeguard Program impacted the lives of 3,000+ youth through its aquatic outreach, education, and drowning prevention efforts during the year. This was made possible through collaboration with our strategic partners:
 - Ocean Discovery Institute (every other year)
 - The San Diego Junior Lifeguard Foundation
 - City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department
 - City of San Diego Police Department
 - City of San Diego Unified School District
 - US Navy Seals
 - San Diego County YMCA's (specifically the Jackie Robinson YMCA)
 - The King Chavez Academy
 - Albert Einstein Academy
 - The Monarch School
 - Saint Vincent de Paul (via the Windnsea Surf Club)
 - The Memorial Blue Swim Team
 - SDG&E
 - Outdoor Outreach
 - Fellow San Diego County Junior Lifeguard Programs
4. Lifeguards conducted the second annual Water Safety Awareness Night in partnership with the San Diego Padres. Water Safety Awareness Night provided publicity for our aquatic outreach, education and drowning prevention efforts, and over 100 JGs were invited to stand on the field at Petco Park and be recognized.
5. Partnership with the San Diego Police Department and Jackie Robinson YMCA for the Community and Aquatic Awareness Safety Team (CASAT) one-week class for youth.
6. Development of an aquatic education program for San Diego City Unified Schools. This effort is directed towards working with the city's 16 physical education departments at the 9th and 10th grade levels.

7. Produced an aquatic safety video (What About Fred) which can be distributed with a lesson plan to 5th grade classes.
8. Partnership between SDG&E, Jackie Robinson YMCA, SDJGF and the Monarch School for seven weeks of free swim lessons for students.
9. Conducted "Bridge to Beach" (day at the beach) activities for Hage Elementary, King Chavez, and the Outdoor Outreach Organization.
10. The San Diego Lifeguard Division and the JG Program finalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the SDJGF.

Due to popularity and growth, the JG Program has reached maximum capacity under the current structure. Issues preventing future growth include; inadequate facilities for employees, insufficient storage for equipment, and significant traffic congestion.

The JG Program is conducted at the Santa Clara Recreation Center in a 700 square foot room. Due to facility restraints, a large portion of the 50 employees report to work outside the facility. Activities conducted in this room include; program management, training, meetings, storage, employee lockers, and changing areas. The remaining staff includes 20 paid interns, and interns make use of mobile-mini storage containers for locker space, portable shade tents, and public restroom facilities. During South Mission Beach operations, the program is limited to portable shade tents, one mobile-mini and public bathrooms. Due to limited facility space, the program has limited enrollment, so that staffing remains at approximately 50 employees.

The program relies on a high inventory of equipment which includes; kayaks, standup paddle boards, and surfboards. In order to store this equipment, the program rents five mobile-mini storage containers at three different locations. The program recently acquired storage at Rose Canyon, but because of the distance of the location, additional storage is still required at Santa Clara and South Mission Beach.

Due to the programs proximity to the beach, the aquatic activities that occur at Santa Clara Point, and the fact that the location has one entry/exit point for vehicle traffic, the traffic and parking at Santa Clara is congested. The JG program assisted in mitigating traffic by reducing operations on Mondays, increasing operations at South Mission Beach, and conducting Graduation Day at Lifeguard Headquarters.

Conclusion

Although solutions have been implemented to resolve challenges, long term success for the program depends on the acquisition of a larger facility. Representatives from the Lifeguard Division, JG Program, and SDJGF are researching possible designs and locations in the Mission Beach area for a facility that will support the program's growth and the 'Waterproofing San Diego' efforts. This privately funded effort will be spearheaded by the San Diego Junior Lifeguard Foundation. Other uses of the new facility will include Lifeguard training, a SDPD storefront and the possibility of a community center.

The 'Waterproofing San Diego' initiative would be strengthened by teaming up with the SD Unified School District and SD County YMCA and providing support for 'Pools for Schools'. The 'Pools for Schools' effort is a joint collaboration to build additional swimming pools for local SD unified schools. Currently, only one of the 16 high schools in San Diego Unified has a pool on campus. The results will be a healthy environment for students, reduction in childhood obesity through fitness, expanded water safety instruction and a reduction in drowning - the leading cause of accidental death among children.

You can assist the San Diego Junior Lifeguards Program by supporting our effort to build a new Junior Lifeguard Facility and Aquatic Safety Education Center, and accept our open invitation to visit the JG Program next summer.

REQUESTED ACTION:

This is an informational item only. No action is required by the Committee or the City Council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

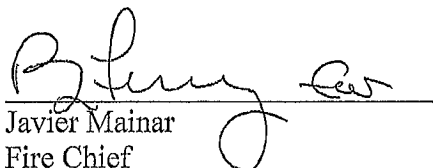
Accept the Report.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTIONS: N/A

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS: Ongoing

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS: Community and Citizens



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Fire Chief