

Keeping a therapy pool afloat



Photo by Hannah Davey

Easter Seals client Juliette Zavala enjoys her water therapy at Easter Seals' Ventura pool, thanks to a grant from the VCCF SUN Fund.

A new California law could have left the pool at Easter Seals Tri-Counties high and dry, and its clients with no place to swim.

The Easter Seals Aquatic Center in Ventura serves over 300 people of all ages with disabilities and special needs. It offers them a pool heated to 94 degrees — the ideal temperature for physical therapy, rehabilitation and swim lessons. A hydraulic chair lift and a water wheelchair provide accessibility for people living with handicaps.

In 2010, though, public health officials told the charity it would have to upgrade the pool to meet the new state standards or close.

The cost: \$3,866. Easter Seals simply did not have it.

Fortunately, the nonprofit's staff applied for and received an emergency grant through the Special and Urgent Needs (SUN) Fund at the Ventura County Community Foundation. With the money in hand, Easter Seals brought its pool up to code by the deadline.

"Because of the Ventura County Community Foundation, we're able to provide these services," aquatics director Cecilio Murillo said.

"Here," he said, "you see people's lives change."



vccf.org

THE SPECIAL & URGENT NEEDS (SUN) FUND AT VCCF

A VCCF initiative started in 1999, the SUN Fund provides grants up to \$5,000 for Ventura County nonprofits that need a rapid response to an urgent or emergency need. Each year, the SUN Fund awards tens of thousands of dollars in aid to qualifying organizations so they can keep their doors open by giving them the funds to do such things as comply with government codes, replace essential appliances, repair fire or flood damage or even restore computer equipment hit by a virus.

Philanthropic Stewards for Ventura County.

