

SUPPORTERS & HELPERS OF ART, RECREATION AND PARKS (SHARP)

Parks and Recreation: An Essential Service

- ***Public parks and recreation programs provide our community with the opportunity to be physically active.*** The relationship between recreation, disease prevention and health promotion is substantiated by findings which recognize that light to moderate activity, typical of many recreation activities, can help prevent and manage many chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, cancer and high blood pressure (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services). Recreation activities foster an active, healthy lifestyle, which helps prevent obesity.
- ***Parks preserve critical wildlife habitat.*** As our nation develops and our rural, agricultural and forest landscape is being lost, open space and wildlife habitats are disappearing at an alarming rate. The connected network of local, regional, state and national parks across our country provide permanently protected wildlife habitat corridors for thousands of indigenous and migratory wildlife species.
- ***Community recreation services provide a refuge of safety for at-risk youth.*** Parents are rightfully concerned with the dangers of unstructured 'hanging-out' or unsupervised after-school activities. Public recreation programs provide children with a safe refuge and a place to play, which are important in reducing at-risk behavior such as drug use and gang involvement. Recreational programs led by trained leaders offer children healthy role models and give valuable life lessons to help steer youth to a future of promise and opportunity for success.
- ***Park and recreation agencies play a vital role in providing after-school programming, which can help improve a child's well-being.*** After-school programs offer an array of organized physical activities, help develop specific physical and/or mental skill sets, expose youth to varied cultural activities, provide academic enrichment opportunities, and emphasize the value of a nutritious diet. Recreation programs also serve as crime deterrents, teach youth positive values, and impart knowledge and skills to help youth establish lifelong healthy habits.

An investment in prevention assists our entire community. Your help is needed!

Santa Cruz County benefits from its excellent recreation and park services. The non-profit agency of Supporters and Helpers of Art, Recreation and Parks (SHARP) helps to further many of these services by linking community donors and the Santa Cruz County Parks and Recreation Department. These benefits are only available through your support. Remember, active and involved teens and youth become active and involved adults. Donations can be mailed to SHARP, 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062. For information, please contact Joe Schultz, Parks Director, at (831) 454-7901.

Youth Programs - Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is offered on a limited first-come, first-served basis for summer 2011 camps, classes, and swim lessons.

1. Please fill out the registration form on page 5. Attach a brief statement outlining your need for financial assistance. **This must be done prior to April 22 for consideration for summer 2011 programs.**
2. Submit all information for each child with a 50% co-payment for the chosen class, camp or swim lesson. Limit ONE scholarship per child.
3. Send your registration form, statement and co-payment to: Youth Programs Financial Assistance, 979 17th Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062.
4. If your application is approved, you will receive a registration confirmation receipt in the mail.
5. If funding is unavailable, or if the requested activity is full, you will be notified by telephone.