Parks and Recreation

Junior Lifeguard & Little Guard Programs

2012 Parents & Participant Handbook

Table of Contents

Program Overview
Dates & Times
Weekly Newsletter
Contact Us
Arrival & Departure
Late Fees
Attendance
Extended absence
Lifeguard Patrol
Lost Children
Age Requirements
Captain's Corps
Registration
Parent / Participant Orientation Meeting
Instruction & Supervision
Mandatory Aquatic Participation
Student Discipline for Minor Incidents
Daily Requirements
Uniforms
Wetsuits
Scholarships
Donations
Accommodation

SANTA CRUZ JUNIOR LIFEGUARDS: MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Santa Cruz Junior Lifeguard Program is to provide quality ocean safety education for participants ages 6-17.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Santa Cruz Junior Lifeguard program introduces young people to safe marine and aquatic recreational opportunities. Further, the program is designed to improve young people's physical conditioning, their understanding and respect for the environment, and their respect for themselves as well as others.

This mission is accomplished through activities including instruction and practice in open water swimming, paddle boarding, body surfing, surfboard riding, self rescue, beach games and competition. Respect for the environment is increased by the understanding gained with daily physical contact with the environment and through lecture and discussion of pertinent marine and aquatic topics. Increased respect for participants is gained through personal progress and accomplishments. Respect for others is increased by contact with helpful instructors and by working with other youths in a team building environment. The mission also includes exposing participants to many of the skills and techniques utilized in professional lifesaving organizations.

Additionally, the mission of the Junior Lifeguard program encourages opportunities for community involvement and partnerships with volunteer based organizations such as the JG Parent Booster Club and the Captains Corps, our volunteer program, which sponsored by the Santa Cruz County Regional Occupational Program (ROP).

PROGRAM DATES, TIMES & LOCATION

First Session: Wednesday, June 20 through Tuesday, July 17, 2012

Second Session: Monday, July 23 through Friday, August 17, 2012

Both sessions of Junior Guards and Little Guards meet at Cowell Beach on the Westside of the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf. The program is divided into morning and afternoon sessions which require prompt attendance from 9 a.m. to 12 noon or 1:00 p.m. to 4 p.m. Exceptions to normal program hours will be announced for competition days and other special events.

Some participants enroll in both morning and afternoon sessions. Parents should consider six hours of daily Junior Guard attendance is very demanding and that participation is required for all activities throughout the day. Please

explain these expectations to your child and have them wear maximum sun protection (rash guard, hat, etc) and reapply sunscreen!

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Staff will distribute a weekly newsletter each Friday to your child. This newsletter provides general information of that week's activities and important upcoming events or information parents need to be aware of. This newsletter is also posted on the Junior Lifeguard website e week.

CONTACT US

Please visit our website for all current information:

www.santacruzparksandrec.com (Go to Junior Lifeguards)

Or go direct: http://www.cityofsantacruz.com

All registration information:	420-5270
Junior Lifeguard direct phone line during program dates:	420-6248

PARTICIPANT ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE – SAFETY FIRST!!

It is the sole responsibility of each parent or guardian to ensure safe travel for their child to and from the designated fenced Junior Lifeguard Program area on the sand at Cowell Beach. Please discuss a designated plan in advance each day with your child so they understand where and when to meet.

The City of Santa Cruz and the Junior Lifeguard Program is not responsible for participants outside of scheduled program hours and activities. Parents are responsible for their children immediately prior to and immediately following scheduled program hours.

The Cowell Beach parking lot will be closed daily to reduce traffic congestion for children during pick up and drop off times. Drivers must park in a legal parking space on the wharf to allow their child to safely exit and walk to the program site. Parents should escort younger participants to and from the program site on Cowell's Beach. A **Local's Wharf Parking Pass** may be purchased for $20.00 (SC City residents)/$25.00 (non-residents) that is valid, M – F, from 8am – 5pm. The application and information regarding the Local's Wharf Parking Pass program is located at www.santacruzparksandrec.com on the Beaches page under Junior Guards, and click on Wharf Parking Pass.

Please do not drop off children in traffic while entering the wharf or on Beach Street. Law enforcement will strictly enforce all parking and vehicle code violations in this area during program hours.

LATE FEES

Parents are expected to be prompt at dropping-off and picking-up their Junior Lifeguards. Staff understands there may be some situations beyond a person's control which will cause them to arrive late to pick up their child. In these situations parents will be assessed **$10 per participant for every 15 minutes** they are late.

If a parent does not arrive to pick up their child after more than 45 minutes without communication from a parent or guardian, the Santa Cruz Police Department will be notified and your child will be taken into protective custody with this department or Child Protective Services.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is taken daily for all divisions in the Junior Guard and Little Guard programs. Regular attendance is encouraged and will allow students to fully benefit from the program. Please notify the Junior Lifeguard Lieutenant/Coordinator if your child will be absent for more than two days in a row. Jr. Guard phone line: (831) 420- 6248.

EXTENDED ABSENCE

Participants are instructed on important ocean skills and physical conditioning techniques that are introduced on a daily basis and build cumulatively throughout each four week program. Therefore an extended absence of greater than one week is strongly discouraged unless the absence occurs at the end of the program and your child will not be returning.

Each program session is closed for additional registration after the first week of program unless authorized by the JG Lieutenant.

Please refer to the current Parks and Recreation Activity Guide or online registration system for all Department policies regarding registration, refunds, credits, transfers, class fees and proof of residency requirements.

LIFEGUARD PATROL

An on duty uniformed Santa Cruz City lifeguard/instructor will patrol the wharf area and escort children from Lifeguard Headquarters to the program site on Cowell's Beach *five minutes before and from the program site to Lifeguard Headquarters five minutes after each session.* After five minutes, the

lifeguard/instructor will leave the area and will not be responsible for escorting additional children. This lifeguard/instructor is provided to increase a watchful eye over children arriving and leaving the program, but should not be used as a substitute for childcare.

LOST CHILDREN

We've found through years of experience that daily communication between parent and child is *essential* during pick up procedures at the end of each program. When parents and children discuss and adhere to a personal plan for pick up, many stressful situations with locating each other can be easily avoided.

All parents should advise their child, if they become lost or confused during pick up time, to contact and remain with an on duty lifeguard. Staff will attempt to contact parents through available phone numbers. If staff are unable to contact a parent or guardian Santa Cruz Police and or Child Protective Services will be called to safe guard your child.

It is imperative parents or assigned guardians pick up their children on time during a daily basis.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

Little Guards

Little Guards must be six **to eight years of age on or before the first day** of the enrolled session. Parents, when registering *first time* participants with the Little Guard program, must present a copy of the child's birth certificate to the registration office prior to registering. No registration will be allowed without verification of birth date.

Little Guards are grouped into three sections according to their age and participate in many activities as a whole.

Junior Guards

The age requirement for Junior Lifeguards is nine to seventeen years of age on the first day of instruction. *Parents must enroll their children in the correct age group which is listed as follows*:

C's	9-11 years old
B's	12-13 years old
A's	14-15 years old

AA's	16-17 years old (see information under Capt. Corps)
Captain's	15-17 years old (see information under Capt. Corps)

The above groups are primarily based on age; but size, strength, ability, and confidence are also considered.

Switching to an out of class age group for participants to be with their friends is prohibited and will not be considered.

CAPTAIN CORPS

The **Captain Corps** is a volunteer program for 15 -17-year-old boys and girls who have *at least* one season experience as a participant with the Santa Cruz Junior Lifeguard Program. **Captain Corps II** is restricted to returning Captain members who pass the physical try outs and interview. The Captain Corps II program is developed for 16 – 17 years old who want a more in-depth experience in public safety and USLA Beach Lifeguarding. The Captain Corps is a Regional Occupational Program (ROP), and participants are eligible for up to 6 High School elective credits. 35 hours = 1 credit.

Junior Guard Captains are volunteers who function as role models for the Junior Guard and Little Guard participants and assist program instructors with providing aquatic safety for all participants through participation, education and a positive learning environment. **Each Captain Corps member must commit to volunteering a minimum of 20 hours per week for one session, but are encouraged to volunteer for both sessions.** Participants in the Captain Corps I, must also pass an ocean swim test of 500 M in 10 minutes or less and will be selected through an interview process. New individuals participating in this challenging yet rewarding program will have the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge, experience and develop leadership skills which can be utilized for a future career in lifesaving. **The try out test is more stringent for Captain Corps II candidates: 1000-yd swim in 20 minutes or less and a 600-yd run-swim-run (200-200-200) in 10 minutes or less**.

All members of the Captain's Corps will be trained and certified in CPR for the Professional Rescuer. Two uniform T-shirts and a uniform hooded sweatshirt will be provided. Captain's will be reimbursed (accompanied by a receipt) for one black suit (board shorts for boys and one-piece competition or sport style two-piece suit for girls). Testing and interviews for the Captain Corps I will take place on Saturday, May 5 and Sunday, May 6 at **9:00 am,** meet Lifeguard Headquarters with a complete application packet. All candidates must have a complete application packet to tryout (includes swim waiver signed by parent or guardian).

Candidates must submit the following materials at the time of tryouts:

1) **At least one letter of recommendation from a non-family member who has knowledge of their capabilities and character.**
2) **A City Serve volunteer application packet.**
3) **A swim test waiver signed by a parent or guardian.**
4) **A valid state ID or DL card. Application materials are available at www.santacruzparksandrec.com (Marine Safety / employment) or at Parks and Recreation, 323 Church Street.**

JG Instructor/Captain training dates, times and location: TBA.

Boys and girls interested in the Captain's Corps I must register in their appropriate age group for Junior Guards (A's or AA's) and participate in tryouts. Successful candidates will receive a refund if selected as a Captain I.

RETURNING CAPTAINS

Returning Captain's must submit a "Captain Corps City Serve Jr. Volunteer" application packet in order to be readmitted to the program. Captain Corps I applicants must officially register in the Junior Guard Program each summer and successfully pass the ocean swim test as scheduled during Captain's tryouts. Interviews for returning Captain Corps I applicants are not required. Contact the City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Registration Office @ 420-5270 for specific details on how to register.

REGISTRATION

Enrollment in the Junior Lifeguard Program is "first come - first served." Due to the popularity of the program, enrollment is expected to fill to capacity quickly.

Participants are considered enrolled in the program when the Parks and Recreation Office receives a completed application, release of liability form, full payment of tuition fees and verification of age requirements by submitting a birth certificate for all *new* program participants ages 6-8.

Policies

Little Guard participants must be a minimum of 6 years old, know how to swim, willingly enter the ocean daily and participate in all beach activities and games. Each participant will be tested on their swimming ability and willingness to enter the ocean during the first five days of the program to receive their program patch. Swim lessons are strongly encouraged for preparation (Red Cross Swim Level 4 or above).

Please refer the current Parks and Recreation Activity Guide or online registration system for all Department policies regarding registration, refunds, credits, transfers, class fees and proof of residency requirements.

"JG KICK OFF" MEETING / SWEATSHIRT & SWEATPANT SALE!

A "JG Kick Off" meeting for all parents will be held at Cowell Beach on Saturday, June 2 at 9:00 am. The meeting is designed to give parents of new JG participants an understanding of the Junior Lifeguard and Little Lifeguard Programs**. The JG Parent Booster Club will sell official Junior Guard clothing (sweatshirts, sweatpants, rash guards, board shorts, etc.) from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm.**

The topics covered in the Parent Handbook will be discussed at the JG Kick Off meeting. This is a great opportunity to network with other parents, discuss individual car pool arrangements, get some answers to your questions, etc. **If you miss the parent meeting, please read this on-line parent handbook thoroughly.**

JG PARTICIPANT/PARENT PACKETS WILL BE MAILED IN MID MAY
Parents may turn in required forms and paperwork at the JG Kick Off meeting or return required paperwork to the Parks and Recreation Office, Attn: Jr. Guards, 323 Church St. Santa Cruz, CA 95060 before the first day of the program.

INSTRUCTION AND SUPERVISION

Little Guards and Junior Guards are instructed by qualified ocean lifeguards. All of the instructors have successfully completed an intensive United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) certified Open Water Lifeguarding training course and most have worked in the field as lifeguards for more than one year. Instructors are also certified in emergency first aid and CPR for the professional rescuer. Many of the instructors are graduates of the Junior Guard program and have teaching and interpretation experience with children. The program is held on Cowell Beach and Main Beach adjacent to the Municipal Wharf in one of the calmest areas of ocean in Santa Cruz. During the program, Junior Guards are also always under the watchful eye of on-duty beach lifeguards in addition to the supervision provided by the instructors.

MANDATORY AQUATIC PARTICIPATION

All program participants must be able to swim, enter the ocean readily and participate in beach and water activities daily. Parents should be aware that rigorous physical exercise and ocean swims are a daily part of the program. During the first week, all Junior Guards must pass a swim test in the ocean.

Swimming areas are subject to change due to tide, weather, environmental conditions, and water quality. The distance of the swim varies by age group with no swim shorter than 200 yards. Little Guards and Junior Guards will earn their program patch by passing the physical requirements the first five days of each session. Little Guards should be able to pass the Red Cross Swim Level 4 course and Junior Guards should be able to pass the Red Cross Swim Level 6 course to achieve their patch.

PARTICIPANT DISCIPLINE FOR MINOR INCIDENTS

For the Junior Lifeguard Program to be successful, participants must exhibit behavior that is respectful of staff, other participants, as well as our equipment and facilities. Group activities are vital to our program. A participant who is disruptive to group activities and disrespectful to instructors diminishes the enjoyment and education of the other participants.

The intent of discipline is to gain compliance while instructing the participant in acceptable behavior. Therefore, please familiarize your Junior Lifeguard or Little Guard with the following expected behaviors:

- **Respect of instructors and other staff.**
- **Respect of other participants; no shoving, hitting or insulting.**
- **Respect of the facilities, equipment and property of others.**
- **Cooperation with others and good sportsmanship.**
- **Following all safety rules and all instructions.**
- **Listening quietly to directions and announcements.**
- **Participation in regular program activities.**

The progressive steps of discipline are as follows:

1. When a minor discipline situation occurs, the participant will be counseled about the situation and given an explanation of what behavior change is expected.

2. If a subsequent incident occurs, the participant will be asked to take a "TIME OUT" or "TAKE A LAP." A "TIME OUT" is a period of five to ten minutes that the participant spends quietly reflecting on the incident. A "TAKE A LAP" is a

supervised swim or run of reasonable distance. After the "TIME OUT" or "TAKE A LAP", the participant is allowed to rejoin the group activity.

3. If a participant has a series of discipline situations in the same day or over several days, the Instructor will inform the Junior Lifeguard Lieutenant who will inform the participant's parent or guardian about the situation. The Recreation Supervisor shall also be advised by the Instructor or Lieutenant/Coordinator.

4. When a participant continually disregards the instructors or shows little or no improvement with steps 1 through 3, the participant will be suspended from the program for one day. The parent or guardian of the participant will be informed that the participant has been suspended. There will be no prorated refund of fees.

5. If, after suspension, the participant's behavior is still not acceptable, the parent or guardian of the participant will be informed the participant may no longer attend any of the program's activities. There will be no refund of fees.

Major first-time incidents may progress the participant directly to step 4 or step 5 of the above procedures. Major incidents would include:

- Truancy
- Insubordination
- Fighting or bullying another student or other person
- Unlawful or non-consensual touching of another person.
- Stealing
- Vandalism
- Possession or participation with alcohol, illegal drugs or any type of weapon.
- Other conduct which brings disrespect to the Junior Lifeguard Program or the City of Santa Cruz.

Any time a major behavior problem or incident occurs, the Recreation Supervisor shall be advised.

DAILY REQUIREMENTS

All Junior Lifeguards will report <u>in uniform</u> to the fenced program site on Cowell Beach at their enrolled time of either 9:00 am or 1:00 pm SHARP and will leave the beach at either 12:00 noon or 4:00 pm SHARP. Parents and guardians are responsible for their children after program hours.

All JGs are expected to participate in all activities, unless they have notes from their parents saying otherwise. Participants should be on time, in full uniform, and prepared for their session on the beach (i.e.: sand, sun, fog, cold weather, cold water, exercise, lectures, etc.).

JG's should bring the following items to the beach everyday:

*Be in full uniform	*JG t-shirt & red swimsuit	required
*Warm clothing/towel	*JG sweatshirt & navy blue or red sweat pants	highly recommended
*Wetsuit	*spring or full suit	optional
*Sun protection	*sunscreen, hat, rash guard, etc…	highly recommended
*Foot protection	*sandals, shoes, booties, etc…	highly recommended
*Lunch	*sack lunch and lots of drinking water	highly recommended
*Duffle bag/back pack	*to keep all your stuff together	highly recommended
*Boogie board, fins, etc	*hard surfboards are not permitted	optional
*Positive and enthusiastic attitude		required

UNIFORMS

We require students to wear a uniform for identification, safety and team camaraderie. **The uniforms allow the instructors to safely monitor the children and distinguish them from non-Junior Guard participants.**

- **Little Guard** and **Junior Guard** participants must wear **RED** swim shorts for boys or girls and one-piece or sports style two-piece swimsuits for girls.
- **Captain Corp** members must wear **BLACK** swim shorts for boys or girls and one-piece or sports style two-piece swimsuits for girls.

Shorts should be “board short” style and above the kneecap to allow for unimpaired running while wet. Girl’s swimsuits must be one piece competitive style or an athletic two piece style of suit. Two piece bikini swimsuits are not allowed (no exceptions). Girls may also wear boardshorts.

- An official Junior Guard T-shirt will be issued out the first week of each session.

For information on Junior Lifeguard, discount swimwear and equipment refer to the Junior Lifeguard website under “Clothing & Discounters”.

WETSUITS

Wetsuits are optional equipment for all Junior Guard and Little Guards. Although the ocean is cold in Monterey Bay, often times participants choose not to wear wetsuits during the summer JG program at Cowell's Beach. The ocean temperature at this location is often warmer than other beaches due to its' southerly exposure. Many activities are based on the need to have physical agility both in and out of the ocean (running, beach flags, etc). Participants often find that after acclimating to summer water temperatures in the mid 60s they can participate in a wide range of activities without the need for changing into a wetsuit before entering the ocean.

If participants feel the need to wear a wetsuit while participating in the program they may do so. Maintaining body warmth and reducing the possibility of hypothermia is essential so your child will enjoy ocean activities, and not be cold and uncomfortable.

When choosing a wetsuit for the program, parents and participants should select the minimum amount of neoprene to allow for quick changing into the suit and maximum range of motion. A long sleeve wetsuit top or spring suit (short sleeve and short legs) often provides sufficient thermal protection, range of motion for running and is able to be put on and taken off quickly. In addition, these items provide UV protection from the sun.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships for Little Guards and Junior Guards are available through Friends of Parks and Recreation (FOPAR). The scholarships are made possible by the **John R. Scott Memorial Fund** and the **James Yates Memorial Fund.**

FOPAR Scholarship applicants must provide proof of residency in the City of Santa Cruz. A brief (50 words or less) essay explaining why they want to be a Little/Junior Guard is required. Scholarship applications are available at 323 Church Street, Santa Cruz. **Deadline for applications is Monday, April 2 at 5 p.m.** Call 420-5270.

Junior Lifeguard Parent Booster 50% Scholarships are available for non-City residents. Scholarship applications are available at 323 Church Street, Santa Cruz. **Deadline for applications is Monday, April 2 at 5 p.m.**

DONATIONS

The City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department is happy to be able to provide you with the finest of Junior Lifeguard Programs. However, as our Junior Lifeguard Program grows and budget reductions continue to occur, support is very welcome for equipment and supplies. There are also many deserving youths

in our community who need tuition assistance via scholarships. If you or your business is interested in making a donation to our Junior Lifeguard Program we welcome your donation.

ACCOMODATION

Prospective students desiring special accommodations or services under the Americans with Disabilities Act must notify JG Staff at least sixty (60) days prior to the start of the program, or as soon as reasonably possible.