

All of us here at the Presidio Y are so excited about our Waves for Change program and we are so thankful for the support that we receive from the Pacific Swimming Diversity Outreach Committee. The grant that we received is helping us continue to collaborate with Downtown High School and the Get out and Learn Program at that school (<http://www.getoutandlearn.org/>) as we serve and develop about 25 youth that would not otherwise have the opportunity to learn to swim and hopefully grow a lifelong love for the water.

The fall semester was such a success and the grant we paved the way for that success in so many ways.

Here are some of the practical ways that this grant has supported the development of the children in this program:

- Swim lesson equipment for each student including: Teaching barbells, buoys, hand paddles.
- Providing shirts to each student as we celebrated the end of a great fall semester.
- Supplies to help run an end of the semester swim competition.
- Scholarships for youth to participate in the Presidio Y Swim Team.

One of the most powerful things we were able to incorporate into the program this year was a swim competition for the students to demonstrate the skills they had developed over the semester. Each student set a personal goal of swimming a certain number of laps over the course of 45 minutes. They shared these goals with their friends, family, and fellow students. During their last session in the pool before Winter Break we held this competition. The students came to the pool with great anticipation and excitement. A great surprise for them was that several of our staff members from throughout different departments at the Y came to the pool to support them in their swim and to help keep count of the laps they swam. This was such a fun event full of great energy and enthusiasm. Each student was celebrated as we announced that each of them met or even greatly exceeded their personal goal. This was a very fun celebration with all of the participants and several of our staff. We were so glad to be able to provide each of the students with shirts at the end of this event.

We are excited to be starting a new semester with Waves for Change and many of the same youth from Downtown High School along with some new faces. We are also excited to share that this program has served as a pilot of sorts as we have now forged a new partnership with Marina Middle School that is based on the same framework we have been able to create in this program thanks to the support from this grant.

We are looking forward to several different ways that this grant will support our Waves for Change Program during this spring semester. This includes:

- Goggles for each student
- Swim caps for each student

- Fins for the group to share
- An end of the semester challenge/celebration

Thank you again for this incredible gift you have given us. This support is amazing and allows deeply meaningful growth to happen in the lives of these kids all through the context of aquatics.

I also wanted to allow you to here some of the comments made directly by the students themselves along with their swim instructor, which I have included below.



I never thought I would swim farther than 3 feet but I always wanted to learn. I thank the YMCA and Get Out And Learn for this opportunity to participate in *Waves for Change*. I will be one of the first in my family to know how to swim. Everyone will be jealous. I still haven't learned to tread water but I look forward to learning it in the future. I want to thank Caitlin in particular for her patience and her dedication.

-Anthony Castillo



The *Waves for Change* program at the YMCA has taught me how to swim better. I like going to the YMCA to swim because I get to work out while having fun. I learned how to do the elementary backstroke, streamline, and free style. Caitlin is a good swimming instructor because she is patient with people. When she is teaching me she always gives

me tips. I prefer swimming to my academic class. I wish we could swim for more than just one hour per week. It was cool swimming across that big pool because now I know I can swim more than 25 meters. If I have a chance to do laps at a pool, I now know that I can do it.

-Benjamin Andrade



Waves for Change has shown me how to learn something new. I have been in this program for two semesters. When I first went to learn how to swim I was nervous and didn't feel comfortable being in the water. I wasn't trying because I thought I would mess up but my instructors helped me to go step by step. They showed me that no one is perfect their first time. I started going to swim class more and as days passed I saw that I was getting better. I got better at doing the free style and stream-line. My instructor Caitlin really helped a lot. Thanks to her, I was excited to get in the water this semester. Now I can try something new and not think so negatively. I feel strongly that this program has helped me get better with my swimming and with my attitude.

-Claudia Vasquez