

Saving Lives - Charlotte Aquatic Center Makes a Difference

By Sarah Cool

I think it is important to take time out of our busy lives and think about how fortunate we are to live in an area that, over the last 60 plus years has valued giving people an opportunity to learn to swim, to become lifesavers, and to enjoy water as a leisure time activity.

It is nice, and many times exciting, when someone learns to swim or becomes skilled enough to become a lifeguard. Learning to swim or becoming a certified lifeguard is a life saving event.

People that learn to swim and continue to develop their swimming skills are safer in and around the water. They have also learned water survival skills to help them in a water emergency.

Lifeguards are not only able to help people in a water emergency; they are also skilled in helping with other emergencies. A certified lifeguard is trained to: perform CPR, use an AED machine, help a person who is choking, and is certified in First Aid.

Lifeguard instructors at the Charlotte Aquatic Center have trained many people to become lifeguards. Presently we have 56 certified lifeguards living, working, and/or attending school in this area.

Prior to the opening of the Charlotte Aquatic Center in the spring of 2004, 46 High School Students and 31 adults received lifeguard training and became certified lifeguards. I know that two people from this group have each saved a person's life.

- One lifeguard was a guest at a hotel and recovered a teenager who was unconscious at the bottom of the pool. She performed CPR until EMS arrived. The teenager was in intensive care for several days, but made a full and complete recovery.

- Another lifeguard was vacationing with her church group and was able to use her skills to save an adult member of the group who did not know how to swim.

These are just two accounts. I know there are many other stories of people helping people, or helping themselves because they knew how to swim or were skilled in lifesaving.

The two points of this story are:

1. The Charlotte Aquatic Center makes a difference.
2. The Charlotte Aquatic Center saves lives.

It is important for all of us that we continue to value providing a place that teaches our sons and daughters, our grandchildren, AND our neighbor's kids how to swim and be safe around the water.

We need YOU to help us spread the word about what a valuable asset we have in our Charlotte Aquatic Center.