On December 10th the Challenge Center was invited by the Sycuan Tribal Council and Casino Management Team to attend their annual Holiday Gift Giving Ceremony. After a delicious buffet breakfast, presentations of checks totally $76,000 were made to over 30 charitable organizations.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Maureen Kerr of the Casino Management Team, because once again the Challenge Center was her charity of choice. Maureen has a personal connection to the Challenge Center when she brought her mother to our organization.

Thank you to Sycuan for your continued support of the Challenge Center and designating us as a Holiday Gift Giving recipient.

Meet Challenge Center's New Physical Therapist
Astghik Harutyunyan was born in Armenia but grew up in Los Angeles. She moved to San Diego just a little over 2 years ago and explains “I find myself very grateful to live in such a beautiful city and have the rewarding job I’ve always wanted.” Astghik graduated with her Bachelor’s degree from California State University Northridge. There she developed her passion for hiking and began to give back to the community through student participation at Cal State Northridge’s Center of Achievement. Astghik went on to earn her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at University of Southern California and moved to San Diego shortly after graduation.

She tells us. "I enjoy dancing, cycling, most beach related activities, babysitting, camping, being outdoors, trying new foods and learning new things. Teaching has always been a passion of mine and through my involvement with the Challenge Center I hope to teach our clients and their caregivers. This experience helps me to grow in my personal career."

We at Challenge Center are so happy to have Astghik as part of the Physical Therapist team. Make sure to say hello when you see her around the gym and help us welcome her to the Challenge Center family!

Challenge Center Clients
- in their words

PHOTO
Susan Rosenberg

My name is Susan Rosenberg, age 75, and I became acquainted with the Challenge Center over 10 years ago. In 2001 I developed arthritis in an injured knee and had my right knee replaced. Then in 2002 I had minor back surgery. After those surgeries, my in-home physical therapist was a wonderful young lady named Wendy Hileman. Wendy also ran the Challenge Center Aquatic Therapy program at the therapy pool at the Salvation Army’s Kroc Center. She suggested I join the program. I’ve been a client of the Challenge Center and have been exercising twice weekly in the pool ever since.

A few years ago, Karen M. Perzan started at the Challenge Center and has been leading the aquatics program ever since. Karen is a delight to be around, she’s perpetually good humored, has a great strong voice making it easy for us all to hear the directions, and has devised a wonderfully adaptive program of exercises that works for all our varied needs. In addition, she’s in the pool with us, not on the deck just yelling instructions. She shows us, helps us move parts we can’t move on our own, and is a true leader and excellent therapist.

With the loss of feeling in the nerves to my feet due to my many surgeries, I developed a walking and balance problem and have been using a cane now for many years. Walking
and other forms of exercise are difficult for me, but the pool frees me from the fear of falling and allows me to keep all my muscles toned and strengthened safely. Karen has devised an excellent routine of exercises, some with pool noodles and dumb-bells of various weights, to systematically work on our legs, body core, and arms. The warm (93 F. average) water relaxes our muscles and makes it so much easier to move around and is actually a very pleasant environment. In addition, there is much joking around and visiting with all the other clients who use the pool on either Wednesday or Friday mornings. This social aspect, makes the time go by quickly as we always keep moving our bodies during these hour and a half sessions.

The Challenge Center’s Aquatic Therapy program means a lot to me…it has kept me moving, toned, and has improved my balance. I’ve made so many friends in the group, and enjoy the social aspect of our joint exercising a lot. If I had a wish to be granted it would be for the Challenge Center to have their own warm water pool available every day so we could come to exercise as often as possible. In the meantime, I’ll keep coming to the Kroc Center pool as long as I’m able!

Challenge Center Programs

Poolside with Karen Perzan, CPT

As the in-house Aquatics Therapy Instructor and Health and Wellness Manager at Challenge Center, I have the opportunity to promote our Aquatics class to the outside community and to current Challenge Center clients as well. I am able to see the benefits the class provides to clients in the water but also the benefits that transfer to land based exercises and activities while at the gym. Seeing first hand how this class enhances the physical and psychological well being of the individuals is amazing!

Not only are many of our clients able to achieve a higher level of exercise in the water versus the land, due to the weightlessness of the water, the resistance of the water provides a strong workout and decreases the impact on ones body. It is an excellent workout for people with all ability and mobility conditions. The program has worked well for people with orthopedic problems in the shoulders, back, arms, and knees. In addition, we have had great progress for clients recovering from strokes, traumatic brain injuries, and chronic illnesses like ALS and MS.

For those clients who struggle with the day-to-day challenges of living with a disability and the land-based routines, a huge sense of independence and therapeutic success is gained in the water. Wheelchair bound clients can actually extend their bodies fully in the water and
achieve a vertical position. This is both physically and psychologically empowering for them.

Our aquatic classes provide an ideal environment in which to exercise. The benefits of an aquatics setting from a therapeutic standpoint are immeasurable. Our clients living with varieties of debilitating conditions often find water therapy their only means of exercise. It is a very special part of the services offered here at Challenge Center. Come join us!

Aquatics Therapy Classes

Wednesdays 10-11:30
Fridays 11-12:30

Held at the Joan Kroc Center and pre-enrollment is required prior to participation.

Please call us at (619) 667-8644 for more information

Consider the Challenge Center
in your Year End and Holiday Giving

For many organizations and individuals the busy holiday season also means tax planning for the coming New Year and acts of charitable giving before the end of the calendar year.
Please consider the Challenge Center, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, in your planning and gifting. With your monetary support we may continue to transform the quality of life and increase the independence of seniors, people of all ages with disabilities, and their families, through extended Physical Therapy and specialized Fitness and Wellness programs, while providing financial assistance to individuals with low income.

You can mail us at 5540 Lake Park Way, La Mesa, CA 91942.
For details, contact Dawn, our Development Director, dawn@challengecenter.org or 619-667-8644.

We thank you in advance for your contribution to Challenge Center!
Tax ID #33-0248878

Holiday Hours

The Challenge Center will be closed for the Holiday Season and New Year from Thursday, December 24th through Friday, January 1st. We will be back to the business of Restoring Health, Providing Hope and Transforming Lives on Monday January 4th at 9:00am.

On behalf of our Executive Director, Tiffany Piquilloud, and the entire staff at Challenge Center we would like to wish you all a happy Holiday Season and a very prosperous New Year.

Our Mission

To transform the quality of life and increase the independence of seniors, people of all ages with disabilities, and their families, through extended Physical Therapy and specialized Fitness and Wellness Programs, while providing financial assistance to individuals with low income.

Restoring Health, Providing Hope, Transforming Lives

Our Board of Directors

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You received this e-mail because you are part of the Challenge Center family. You have participated with a kind donation, your's or a loved one's Physical Therapy or Assistance Fitness experience with Challenge Center, Your attendance at our events, your expressed interest in our services, or by way of a professional partnership.

**Our mailing address is:**
Challenge Center
5540 Lake Park Way
La Mesa, CA 91942

[Add us to your address book](mailto:)

**Contact us at:**
Phone: (619) 667-8644  Fax: (619) 667-8647

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