To: Dr. Erika Paterson

From: Eric Chang

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Subject: Proposal for solving staffing issues for the Richmond aquatics special need program

**Introduction**

The Richmond aquatics special needs program is a program that provides free swimming lessons to children with either physical or mental disabilities at Minoru Aquatic center. The objective of this program is to create a learning environment better catered towards children with disabilities, as children with disabilities often struggle in regular swimming classes.

Due to the nature of this program, a large amount of instructors are needed as children with disabilities often require an exceeding amount of attention from their instructors. This means the most optimal ratio between instructors to students is a one to one ratio or at most a one to two ratio. Unfortunately with the increase popularity of this program, the difference between the amount of instructors compared to students has only continued to widen and it is becoming blatantly obvious that the lack of instructors is becoming a major problem for the program.

**Statement of Problem**

The Richmond aquatics special needs program requires a large amount of swimming instructors due to both the increasing popularity of the class as well as the fact that children with disabilities require an immense amount of attention. Unfortunately the program has been struggling massively to attract and acquire instructors as the majority of the instructors for this program are actually volunteers. This lack of instructors then severely handicap the instructor’s ability to teach their students as well as limit the amount of children we can accept into the program.

**Proposed Solution**

One possible solution to this matter is to create an incentive for instructors to join the program. Currently the majority of the instructors for this program are student volunteers who are using this program to acquire teaching experience which will hopefully increase their chances of becoming a lifeguard when they apply. The wet portion of the lifeguard hiring process currently consists of both a teaching portion and physical testing portion. An incentive that the program can then provide is that volunteers who come instruct more than ten times at the Richmond aquatics special needs program get to bypass the teaching portion of wet hiring process and only have to pass the physical testing portion.

**Scope**

In order to determine the feasibility of acquiring additional instructors to the Richmond aquatics special needs program, I plan to pursue four areas of inquiry:

1. How large is the demand for a swimming program for special needs children ?
2. Will providing incentives for the swimming instructors in the program attract more instructors to join the program and what should those incentives be ?
3. Will Richmond aquatics be willing to provide more of their instructors for the program ?
4. Would increasing the promotion of the volunteer position increase the people interested in the position ?

**Methods**

My primary sources of data will include interviews with the three primary instructors, the student volunteer instructors, leader of aquatics, the participants, and any past staff members who were part of the program in the past.

I will also research publications on special needs swimming programs within Canada as well as use feedback provided by past participants of the program.

**My Qualifications**

My involvement with the Richmond aquatics special needs program began back in 2014 as a volunteer instructor. During that time I taught swimming to a handful of special needs children as well as work on creating a coherent curriculum with the other instructors. Then in 2017 after being hired as a lifeguard for Richmond aquatics, Brandon Kato and I became the two head instructors in charge of the program. During this time I worked with instructors on how to teach special needs children, worked with Brandon to create an effective teaching curriculum, and planned events for the volunteer instructors after teaching hours.

**Conclusion**

The lack of instructors at the Richmond aquatics special needs program has clearly become a glaring problem that cannot be avoided any longer. By addressing the four areas of inquiry I have mentioned earlier, I hope to determine the feasibility of attracting more instructors to the program. I look forward to receiving your feedback as well as potential approval on this problem that the Richmond aquatics program is currently facing.