

Carlsbad California State Junior Guards

By Stacy Begin

Program History

The Carlsbad Junior Lifeguard Program began in 1972 and was held at South Carlsbad State Beach. Carlsbad State Lifeguards Mike Bray and Dennis Garrahy were responsible for organizing and instructing the first program. Since both were certified school teachers as well as outstanding lifeguards, the Carlsbad Program was very successful from the beginning.

Description of Junior Lifeguard Program

The Carlsbad junior lifeguard program is an ocean safety and educational youth program for boys and girls ages nine through sixteen years of age. The program is conducted each year in two four week sessions during the summer months at South Carlsbad State Beach. Sessions operate Monday through Friday from 9am to 2PM. The program is taught and administered by professional California State Lifeguards.



Battle of the Sexes – Two Junior Lifeguards strive to become the top “D” (9-yr old) flagger on the beach.

The Junior Lifeguard program combines education with recreation to teach children a variety of information about ocean environment. Participants learn about the ocean, beaches, waves, tides, currents, rip currents, and marine life. Instruction also includes lifesaving methods, first aid, oceans and beach hazards, environmental awareness and beach manners. Activities include exercise, swimming, running, bodyboarding, snorkeling, bodysurfing, playing team games and Junior Lifeguard competitions.

The overall goal of the Junior Lifeguard Program is the education of participating children in ocean and beach safety. As a result of their Junior Lifeguard experience, some participants have become lifeguards.

Currently, we have ten Lifeguards that are junior guard instructors and over 300 students participating in the program. The students also benefit from field trips to places like La Jolla Cove Reserve and from having guest speakers: Tim Castenelli, Body Surfing Champion and BZ Pro bodyboard riders come down and share their knowledge and love for the ocean with our students. Another benefit from being part of the state park system is drawing from the wealth of information from the State Park Rangers and Permanent Lifeguards who come down to the beach and share with our Junior guards information about their positions and duties.

Another exciting event in the Junior Lifeguard Program is the annual competition with

Oceanside City Junior Guards. This year it was held on July 8th and turned out to be another fun-filled day of competition and camaraderie. Junior Guards from both programs competed in events ranging from distance run, paddles, beach flags, relays, and run-swim-run. The Carlsbad Junior Lifeguards are fortunate to have many community sponsors that have supported our program over the years. BZ Bodyboards, Witts Pipeline Surf shop, Surf Ride, Breezeflow Wetsuits, and Offshore Surf shop have provided gift certificates for award ceremonies and equipment to support our program. We are very grateful for their generous contributions that have helped make Carlsbad State Junior Guards such a successful program.



Carlsbad and Oceanside JGs Compete. Photo by Eric Wayman