

P.A. to LG. PROGRAM

AQUATICS INTERNATIONAL Best of Aquatics: Programming Award Winner

Join our Award-Winning Pool Attendant to Lifeguard Transition Program

- 1. Get Hired as a Pool Attendant**
 - 2. *Get Paid* to Learn to Swim**
 - 3. *Get Paid* to Take a Lifeguard Class**
 - 4. Transition to a Lifeguard Position**
- Get a Raise**



More Info: www.roundrocktexas.gov/lifeguards

Contact Us: aquatics@roundrocktexas.gov or 512-218-5540

Best of Aquatics:

Texas' City of Round Rock Parks and Recreation Earns Their 2nd Best of Aquatics Nod for Targeted Programming



Aquatics Managers for The City of Round Rock (Texas) noticed a strange thing.

Few of their entry-level pool attendants were moving up the food chain to become lifeguards. Clearly they liked being part of the team. They seemed to enjoy being close to the water and working with the patrons, as they managed the gate, controlled crowds and supported the lifeguards.

The teens seemed perfectly placed to nurture an aquatics career. In the spirit of retention, the city even offers lifeguard training classes for free to the pool attendants. So why didn't more than one in 100 pool attendants take the next step each year?

Through investigation and deduction, they came to a conclusion: The attendants didn't feel confident in their swimming and water skills. Managers noticed that PAs would regularly begin to take the lifeguard training class, but would either exit after the first session or be forced out when they couldn't meet the skills requirements.

"You have these kids excited to be lifeguards," says Aquatics Management. "They come and try, to get into the Lifeguard Training class, but they have trouble with some of the swimming skills. Which makes them lose all their spirit about it. We wanted to take their initial energy and excitement and harness it."

But the PAs didn't want to take a standard swimming class alongside small children. "We saw there was a gap in service for our teenage population for learn-to-swim and swim technique improvement classes - so that's where this training program was born," Management says.



Tailored solution

The Round Rock team of lifeguard instructors developed a program where pool attendants could build the skills necessary to pass the prerequisites in the lifeguard training class. The month-long swim coaching led up to the week-long lifeguard training class.

PAs could share the experiences and frustrations of learning the skills at their age, bonding them closer together and creating a true sense of accomplishment. "Making the class ... a social activity where enrollees can experience the process with team mates their own age has been one of the keys to the program's success."

They're also easily integrated into the lifeguard staff. From the time they're hired, pool attendants are attend in-service trainings with the lifeguards team. For those that progress into the transition program, they are able to try out the lifeguard skills at their own pace. To keep things digestible for these novices, PAs are start by jumping in during segments that address simpler skills, so they aren't overwhelmed by higher-level skills until they are ready.

Once they become certified lifeguards, they earn another \$1 per hour — \$2 per hour if they work at a waterpark. They also become the most enthusiastic advocates of an aquatics division that invested in them.

"We've gotten our investment back tenfold. These program participants have become some of our best team members yet!"