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Sea Serpents Make a Splash

By Rosie Chester and Makenna Millham



Sea Serpent Lily Grenning smiles at the EBSS Laney College Meet. Photo Deanna Wentzel

compromise," she said.

Miramonte senior Patrick Kirbach has made huge strides in advancing his swimming career. Kirbach has swum with Sea Serpents since he was 6 years old and has moved his way over from the shallow pool-where more developmental skills are practiced-to the deeper pool, where stronger swimmers have a workout-style practice. When asked about his favorite aspect of Sea Serpents Kirbach said, "I like being able to be in the water and kick my legs. My favorite strokes are breaststroke and backstroke."

The program benefits athletes as well as parents. Anna Tague, mother of long-term swimmer Nicole Tague, has seen her daughter improve over the years due to volunteers and the positive vibe of the program. "To have a team of students and adult volunteers donating their precious weekend time to support children with special needs is a gift to our community," Tague said. "The relationships built between the Sea Serpent athletes and families with the youth coaches are inspiring and I think benefit every person involved."

Not only is Sea Serpents a good workout and learning experience, it's a fun way to spend time with a variety of swimmers and coaches. Veteran coach and Miramonte junior Matthew Coleman has been instructing for two years. "The best part is seeing everyone progress, because everyone really does get better," he said.

East Bay Sea Serpents was founded in March 2001 by Joleen Silverfoote. Since 2010, the director has been Brian Wentzel, who has been offering his time and expertise since 2010 with the help of his wife, Deanna, who takes photos of the athletes and volunteers. "I would say that there are two aspects of Sea Serpents that stand out for me," Wentzel said. "First, of course seeing the athletes learn, grow and expand their aquatic skills is amazing. Secondly, I love the aspect of working with our community's youth as volunteers for the program."

More information about Sea Serpents may be found at <http://www.eastbayseaserpents.org/>.

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Everyone has a different definition for what qualifies as victory. For some coaches and athletes, victory comes every Sunday at the Campolindo Soda Aquatic Center. They participate in East Bay Sea Serpents, a nonprofit swim team affiliated with Special Olympics of Northern California. EBSS caters to children and adults with disabilities and serves as an outlet to have fun, while also providing aquatic fitness and skill.

For some Miramonte students, these victories have been witnessed first-hand. Many Lamorindians participate in Sea Serpents as volunteer coaches or athletes, helping children and adults with disabilities that includes Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders and cerebral palsy.

For Miramonte junior Charlotte Curran, Sea Serpents has been a very rewarding experience. "The biggest takeaway has definitely been learning how to work with people with different abilities and figuring out how to articulate instructions or

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