

# Big Splash For Local Group

## Pool of Dreams Sponsors Top \$600,000 in Pledges

by Mary Bryant

A decade-old dream became reality in February, as fundraising coordinators for the soon-to-be built Live Oak Swim Center announced they had reached their \$600,000 mark in pledges. While most of the projected \$6 million facility cost will be paid for through county funding, the two-year fundraising drive has provided the needed capital to expand the originally proposed 25-yard pool to 50-meters in length. The 50-meter pool is necessary for competitive swimming competition.

With a grant from the state of \$150,000 to start the campaign, Pool of Dreams volunteers have petitioned for local private and business donations, gaining support for the 50-meter pool plan from all ages of swim enthusiasts. And, while the majority of the pledges were received from larger contributors, small donations were also raised at events.

However, Pool of Dreams

coordinators Edie Rittenhouse and Brigid Simpkins said that they weren't done with their fundraising efforts. With sufficient pledges now raised to cover construction costs, the two Mid-County pool backers say they still need to raise money to buy equipment for swim competition.

"Even though we are over the top, continuing donations will help us make some necessary equipment available," Rittenhouse said.

Rittenhouse reported that pool equipment was costly, and not currently in the project's budget. She said that "non-essential" apparatus like starting blocks were priced at about \$1,000 each, and floating lines separating lanes were projected to cost around \$10,000 for the pool. Additionally, Pool of Dreams supporters are attempting to find funding for floating water polo goalie cages and bleachers for tournament spectators.

Rittenhouse said she believed with the generous support the grassroots effort had already received that the added goal was possible. Rittenhouse

also said that three out of 26 lanes remained unnamed. Lanes have been "sold" to larger contributors for donations ranging between \$5,000 and \$10,000. Plaques honoring the donors will be placed near the lanes after the pool is constructed.

First District Supervisor Jan Beautz, who was pivotal in gaining agreement from county supervisors to reduce the original fundraising requirement from \$850,000 to \$600,000, said she was very pleased the group had successfully completed their first drive. Beautz especially praised the work of fundraising directors Simpkins and Rittenhouse.

"It's great news that the group broke their goal," Beautz said. "I really appreciate all the hard work the Pool of Dreams volunteers have done, especially Edie and Brigid. ... Their perseverance paid off for all of us." □

*[Editor's Note: Contributions to the Pool of Dreams may be made sent to P.O. Box 8, Santa Cruz, CA 95063.]*