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Carver Center pool continues to be valuable resource for P.C. community

By Marc Rod

Since the **Carver Center** pool opened to the public in 2007, it has been an invaluable resource for Port Chester residents of all ages who have enjoyed learning to swim, exercising or just having fun. It is the only public indoor pool in Port Chester and offers a wide variety of programs for residents who want to swim. Throughout the year, the pool hosts 24,000 swimmers, ranging in age from six months to 92 years.

The pool's primary programs are its open swim times, private and group swim lessons for adults and children ages six months and up and aquatic exercise classes, including aquabiking. "Carver Center's pool is valuable to the community because it is the only public pool available to anyone, with no membership or excessive fees to enter," said Jeff Cunningham, the **Carver Center's** Aquatics, Recreation and Fitness Consultant. **Carver's** programs are 50 to 70% cheaper than those of other local facilities and sports centers, according to Cunningham.

At **Carver Center**, a 30-minute group swim lesson costs \$10, unlimited daily drop-in access to the pool costs \$5 per adult and \$3 per child (ages 2 to 17), yearly aquatic membership costs \$365 for adults, \$150 for children, and \$275 for senior citizens. Various family discounts and combined fitness, group exercise, and aquatics memberships are also available. Additionally, the **Carver Center** offers free after school swimming lessons to more than 600 students. Full listings and pricing can be found on the **Carver Center's** website at carvercenter.org.

"My favorite thing to do in the pool is swim a few laps," said Port Chester resident David Rivera at the **Carver Center's** free pool party on Saturday, Aug. 22, sponsored by Aqua Wellness World. The **Carver Center** organized the party to offer discounted membership and lesson rates to attendees and raise money for the **Carver Center's** programs.

Carver is also one of the only organizations in New York that offers junior swim instructor and lifeguard training to children ages 11 to 17. "We are not currently aware of any other program that offers this in Westchester, NYC or Fairfield counties," said Cunningham.

The **Carver Center** pool is also home to a variety of camps, teams, and organizations. During the summer, **Carver**



Port Chester residents David Rivera, Jeremy Taylor, and Jonathan Bautista have fun in the Carver Center pool at the Free Pool Party on Saturday, Aug. 22.

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On Saturday, Aug. 22, the Carver Center hosted a Free Pool Party for the community to give residents an opportunity to escape the summer heat and receive discounted rates for fall swim lessons.

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Center's camp and the Port Chester and Rye Brook Recreation Day Camps use the pool.

Two years ago, the pool became home to the first Port Chester High School girls' varsity swim team which was funded that first year through a grant, and last year, the school's first boys' team made the **Carver Center** pool their home base as well when the swimming program expanded with district funding. The John Jay High School swim team and Boy Scout Troop 400 from Port Chester and Girl Scout Troop 19 from Mamaroneck, among others, also use the facility.

"No other program in Port Chester serves [as] wide [a] range of the population in a single facility [as the **Carver Center**]," Cunningham said.

The pool opened to the public in 2007 following extensive renovations which cost more than \$100,000 and took more than four months to complete. The pool first opened in 1955 as part of the Port Chester YMCA. The YMCA sold the building to the **Carver Center** in the late 1990s but continued to lease the pool facility until 2007.

Carver is currently running the Fill Our Pool campaign, soliciting donations from residents to fund the upkeep of the pool, as well as free and low cost programs. According to promotional materials for the pool, upkeep costs \$110,000 per year, or \$1 per gallon of water that the pool holds. Those who wish to donate can do so at carvercenter.org, by mail, or in person at the **Carver Center**, which is located at 400 Westchester Ave.

In September, the pool offers open swim from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday (but is restricted to adult lap swimming from 7 to 9 a.m.) and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends. Swim lessons run from 3 to 5:30 pm. weekdays and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekends. After school programs run from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. weekdays beginning Sept. 21 but will not be available on Sept. 25, Sept. 30, or Oct. 1. Aquabiking runs from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 8:45 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. on Tuesdays, and 10 to 11 a.m. on weekends. Additional weekday open swim times may be available and can be found on the complete pool schedule at carvercenter.org.