

Special athletes enjoy fun on the water

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Many days this summer the Rim Special Athletes (RSA) have been holding their summer program for their members at Peninsula Park on Lake Arrowhead. Fun is the focus as the



Rim Special Athletes out in the fire boat on Lake Arrowhead.

“kids of RSA” range in age from 10 to adults. Each family brings their own lunches, as many of them have specialized diets.

Every Thursday, students in the Mountain of Promise program have been a part of the RSA program. They leave their campus at Leisure Shores in Crestline and arrive by bus at the Arrowhead Lake Association docks at the dam and are transported by ALA’s pontoon boat to Peninsula Park for a day on the lake, including lunch. Since most RSA members are unable walk the quarter-mile into the park from the street, ALA has offered the pontoon boat access. This has been working very well this summer; last summer their bus was able to drive onto the beach.

RSA has many opportunities for its members to enjoy the lake.

They have a floating lily pad to lay or sun on and, for those more independent members, aqua cycles to pedal around the bay, plus kayaks and stand-up paddle boards and pedal boats to use on the lake. The beach at Peninsula Park also gives them and their families the opportunity to swim and sunbathe. RSA, of course, supplies everyone with a life vest as safety is their number one concern while they have fun in the water.

However, the water squirters seem to be one of the most popular water toys on hot days as everyone enjoys squirting each other – in fun of course. They play in the water, have lunch and socialize with their RSA friends.

On Thursday, July 16, all members of RSA were invited to take a fireboat ride on the lake and get the opportunity to get to shoot the water cannon, if they wished. The San Bernardino County Fire Department with the crew out of Station 92 brought the county fireboat to Peninsula Park, as they have done in previous years, to give the “kids” the



RSA President Jack Cooperman showing off the kayaks and other RSA lake equipment. (Photos by Rhea-Frances Tetley)

opportunity to ride fast across the lake and to shoot the high-pressure water monitor.



The special athletes participate in a variety of water activities at Lake Arrowhead.

The monitor is basically a firehose pulling water from the lake with a nozzle attached to the boat to shoot the water long distances. The fireboat is a significant firefighting tool that San Bernardino County Fire has purchased for use in Lake Arrowhead. It is designed to fight boat, dock and lakefront house fires, so the water stream can be quite strong and is pressurized so that it shoots quite far. Even the firefighters do not get many opportunities to use the water monitor just for fun and enjoyed watching the adults and kids have fun with the monitor.

This activity for RSA is always a highlight of the summer water activity season.

During the Jamboree Days parade on July 4 in Crestline, the Rim Special Athletes rode in a truck supplied by County Fire, having a great time getting to wave to their friends and the approximately 10,000 visitors who lined the parade route. Afterwards RSA offered a pizza luncheon to their participants, as they often do for socialization during their activities.

Rim Special Athletes is a program designed to give children and adults who have special needs an opportunity to engage in individual sporting activities at no cost to the family. For more information, see their website, www.rimspecialathletes.org, or their Facebook page. RSA offers adaptive sports and recreational experiences for individuals with various disabilities, including visual and hearing impairments, amputations, spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, PTSD, Down Syndrome and autism. The foundation aims to create a safe and positive environment where adaptive athletes can learn new skills, have fun and develop self-confidence.



Teaching an RSA member about kayaking.