

## The Adaptive Sports Class for Individuals with Special Needs at the LJCC

By Lauren Abeles

The Adaptive Sports class for individuals with special needs at the LJCC is open to anyone over the age of six. It is a wonderful class that focuses on important skills such as eye/hand coordination, social interactions, teamwork, motor planning, agility, balance, cardio, and strength. These skills are reinforced through playing basketball, soccer, hockey, football, and many other team sport drills. Not only do the students learn the skills of each sport, they learn how to work with a partner and follow directions.

The participants are introduced to a new skill every week, and within each sport they work on the skills required for that sport. They start each class on the Expresso stationary bikes to get their bodies and brains warmed up. This helps the kids with their endurance and as a result allows them to participate in sports for a longer period of time.

Caren Gale's son Jonathan has participated in the Adaptive Sports class at the LJCC for the last five years. Caren says Jonathan loves coming to class. "What sets this program apart is that both Patty and Stephanie break down skills required for various sports and work on them in isolation. This approach fosters confidence in the kids and with this confidence comes enthusi-

asm. Rather than sitting on the sidelines watching other kids play they are truly 'in the game.' The other reason he loves coming to class is because of Stephanie and Patty. They make the class irresistible - their enthusiasm and natural skill with special needs kids is a wonderful sight to see. They just 'get it' and our kids feel it."

The goal of the Adaptive Sports class is to give students the confidence to participate in a non-competitive setting with peers, such as in a neighborhood playground.

"Jonathan feels more comfortable with his peers as a result of this class. What I've noticed is that when class first started, there wasn't as much interaction between the kids before class began. Now, in just a few weeks, the kids are talking and laughing before class even begins. During the class time there is now an ease and enjoyment to their interactions. Because my son has autism, the more pleasurable and fun experiences he has with his peers, the more he will seek those feelings out."

There is a lot of thought that goes into each class. A detailed background of every participant is

gathered so each individual need is met.

"With each success builds the children's confidence, and puts smiles on their faces. Not only are we proud, but they are proud of themselves." says Patty Torcellini, the Activities Specialist who helps teach the class.

The Adaptive Sports class at the LJCC currently meets on Thursdays from 3-3:30 PM. For more information, contact Stephanie Garner at 704-944-6743 or Patty Torcellini at 704-944-6836.

The 3rd Annual LJCC Kids Triathlon will be June 1, 2014, benefitting the rehabilitation programs at Levine Children's Hospital and the Adaptive Sports and Adventures Program. For more information about the LJCC Kids Triathlon go to [www.ljcckids.org](http://www.ljcckids.org). ☆



**"The body is the soul's house. Shouldn't we therefore take care of our house so that it doesn't fall into ruin?"**

– Philo, The Worse Attacks the Better

## Volunteers are the Heart of the Butterfly Project

During the 2013-14 school year, the Butterfly Project will present its 2-½ hour educational and artistic workshop to more than 4,000 students from more than 40 organizations throughout the Greater Charlotte area. This endeavor would not be possible without a strong group of dedicated and passionate volunteers. The Butterfly Project is fortunate to have many woman and men who roll up their sleeves on a weekly basis to help at the Butterfly Project workshops.

During the workshops, participants hear a Holocaust survivor's story from our wonderful speakers, Suly Chenkin and Irving Binestock. They participate in an educational discussion that uses the lessons of the Holocaust as a vehicle to teach what can happen when prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination are allowed to flourish. The participants each paint a ceramic butterfly in memory of a specific child who perished in the Holocaust and take home a certificate with that child's name on it, while learning the importance of names and identity. The conclusion to the workshop is a visit to the beautiful Margaret and Lou Schwartz Butterfly Garden and its Children's Holocaust Memorial Sculpture, during which participants are afforded the opportunity to write their reflections.

Volunteer opportunities are

plentiful – each important in helping to produce a lasting impact on the students who attend. Volunteers assist at workshops by setting up the room and supplies for the painting of ceramic butterflies, they lead the discussion of names and identity, they lead the discussion in the Butterfly Garden and they help wherever needed during a workshop. There are many behind-the-scenes opportunities, as well, such as preparing the painted butterflies for firing so that the ultimately can be applied to the sculpture.

As volunteer Lori Semel comments, "Volunteering at the Workshops is a great opportunity for me to have an impact on children regarding some very relevant issues – discrimination, prejudice, bullying – all on a level that they can use in their daily lives."

Would you like to learn more about volunteering at the Butterfly Project? If so, please join us at a Volunteer Informational Meeting, Tuesday, January 21, at 10 AM in Gorelick Hall. To R.S.V.P. or for questions, please contact Julie Rizzo at [julie.rizzo@charlottejcc.org](mailto:julie.rizzo@charlottejcc.org) or 704-944-6730. ☆



**ROSEWOOD**  
The Castle in Eatswold

The storybook setting of Rosewood at Providence and Sharon Amity is known by its generations-old rose garden, a Queen City landmark. Inside is a tale of treasured friendships, rich amenities and everyday elegance that adds up to a lifestyle worth more than gold. A limited number of condominium homes are available at Rosewood. Inquire today.

{ Concierge • Formal gardens • Luxurious pool • Tennis court • 24-hour security }  
Deluxe fitness center • Gourmet coffee bar • Generous parking

FROM THE \$400's

ROSEWOODCONDOS.COM | 704.366.7862 | FROM THE \$400's  
{ Model home open, call Missy Stewart or Kathy Landgraaf for an appointment }



2823 PROVIDENCE ROAD  
CHARLOTTE, NC 28211

