

Summer program offers those with disabilities a way to cool off and have fun



Wheelchair participants in Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare’s “Beat the Heat” adaptive sports and recreation camp play basketball on Wednesday, Aug. 21, 2024, in Glendora. (Photo by Anjali Sharif-Paul, The Sun/SCNG)

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UPDATED: August 22, 2024 at 5:14 p.m.

Originally Published: August 21, 2024 at 6:37 p.m.

For individuals with disabilities summer fun includes adaptive sports such as wheelchair basketball, hand-powered biking and indoor rugby.

Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare have partnered to create the “Beat the Heat” program, an adaptive sports and recreation camp that offers the chance to engage in various physical activities in a supportive environment. At the Crowther Teen & Family Center in Glendora on Wednesday, Aug. 21, the camp allowed participants to stay active and build a sense of community.

Ryan Chavarria, a volunteer from the Triumph Foundation and a member of the USA Wheelchair Football League, helped run the rugby games. Casa Colina Hospital, where Chavarria underwent rehabilitation after an accident 10 years ago, reached out to him to assist with the camp.

“When they called, I came because they’ve been there for all of us over the years. The foundation’s volunteers are like a family,” he said, shaking hands with others passing by. “People learn the culture as they go. We try to get them into sports, especially those who may have never tried it before. Many of them are first-timers, and they just go for it — you wouldn’t be able to tell, and I love it! This is what we do at Triumph — we triumph over our disabilities and injuries.”

The program aims to support participants in living fulfilling lives, particularly through sports, by providing the necessary equipment and fostering a strong sense of community. Thanks to organizations like Triumph, specialized wheelchairs designed for specific sports are made available. The rugby wheelchairs, for example, feature shielded spokes and built-in cages, designed to withstand the crashes and impacts required for the sport.

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