

Los Angeles County Youth Scuba Program

By: Jay Canfield NAUI 47335

This July marks the second annual Summer Youth Scuba Program for inner-city kids in Los Angeles County. This program is being sponsored by The Los Angeles County Probation Department, Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department, along with support from the Los Angeles County Underwater Association.

The program is being organized and taught by NAUI Instructors Jay Burkem NAUI 47423, Jay Canfield, NAUI 47335, and Course Director Bill Lidloff Jr., NAUI 9390, along with help from NAUI Divemasters, Linda Canfield, Aaron Verbeck, and Merlyn Carlson.

The program runs all summer long and gives youth from the inner-city areas of Los Angeles County the opportunity and experience to participate in a scuba training program that includes trips to Catalina Island for the open water portion of the course. The program is designed to develop teamwork skills with the kids and give them positive alternatives to other pressures they face inside their local communities.

Last year was the pilot program and it was a complete success. Over 15 youths ranging in ages from 12 to 17 participated in the program, and they walked away with many fond memories and new experiences. Some of the students had never been to the ocean before, even though they had lived their entire lives less than 15 miles away from the beach. The program ended with a formal

awards and recognition ceremony dinner held at the Los Angeles Athletic Club.

This year's program looks to be bigger and better with nearly double the attendance from last year. The program runs all summer long on Saturdays in East Los Angeles for the classroom

and pool sessions. Two trips to Catalina Island are scheduled for the open water training, and a commencement celebration is being planned again at the end of the course.

Look for a feature article on this year's program in a future issue of *Sources*.



Students at Catalina Island ready for their skin dive.



Divemaster Linda Canfield helps student with gear at Catalina Island.



Summer Youth 2007 pool session, students with course staff.

Front row, 2nd from left: NAUI Instructor Jay Canfield 47335. Front row, far right: NAUI Instructor Jay Burke 47423. Center row, far left: NAUI Divemaster Linda Canfield. Center row, 3rd from left: NAUI Divemaster Aaron Verbeck. Back row, far left: NAUI Instructor Dan Stoeckle. Not Pictured: Course Director Bill Lidloff. NAUI Divemaster Merlyn Carlson.