

# Taking Adaptive programming to new heights

For individuals with disabilities, access to inclusive recreational opportunities can be a challenge. But thanks to Nelly Quiroz-Perez the Parks, Recreation & Libraries Therapeutic Recreation Program Leader, those challenges are turning into opportunities. With a vision for the future and her expertise as a Recreational Therapist, she is building the city's adaptive programs.

Nelly is excited about the opportunity to shape and expand adaptive programming. "We're still in the planning phase for many initiatives and one of our main concerns is making sure people are aware of them," Nelly says. "We want to make sure that when we launch programs, people are ready and excited to participate."

## What does a Recreational Therapist do?

According to Nelly, a Recreational Therapist uses recreation as a modality to improve one's quality of life and promote physical, mental and emotional well-being. Recreational Therapists can work in places such as hospitals, schools and community settings. They often provide individuals with activity modifications, educate them on adaptive equipment and assist with goal-setting.

"Recreation plays a crucial role in overall well-being," she explains. "It supports individuals in different areas such as enhancing social skills, promoting physical activity and developing self-determination. While we currently offer plenty of options for younger children. I want to offer programs that support individuals throughout all stages of life."



## Greater accessibility & inclusion

Looking ahead, one of the most exciting projects is Adaptive My First Camp, designed for children ages 3-6. "It's a camp experience where we work with parents to adapt to each child's specific needs and help them develop independence," Nelly explains. "We are also planning a variety of adaptive offerings for teens and adults such as sporting events, social gatherings and educational workshops."

Beyond new programs, Nelly will be providing inclusion trainings to staff. "I want to support existing programs by offering recommendations and adjustments," she says. One example includes sensory-friendly accommodations at large events like offering a quiet room for attendees who need a break."

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## A vision for the future

Community support is vital to growing adaptive recreation. Nelly plans to partner with Sac State students to bring in volunteers and encourages residents to share ideas and feedback. "The more people we engage, the stronger our programs will be."

"The sky is the limit right now," Nelly says. "I'm looking at what adaptive equipment we need and how we can expand. Sports promote physical activity and social interaction, but we also want to offer diverse activities to appeal to everyone."

Nelly also hopes to connect and learn from other experts in disability. "There is so much diversity when it comes to disability. I want to do everything I can to offer programs for as many people as possible."

For Nelly, the most rewarding part of this work is seeing people realize their potential. "I want to help people participate in activities they've been told they can't do and prove that they absolutely can," she says.

To learn more about PRL adaptive programming visit [roseville.ca.us/adaptive](http://roseville.ca.us/adaptive)