



BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CALIFORNIA SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT *because we are Catholic.*



“...if I can help at least one person to have a better life, that already justifies the offering of my life. It is a wonderful thing to be God’s faithful people. We achieve fulfilment when we break down walls and our heart is filled with faces and names!”

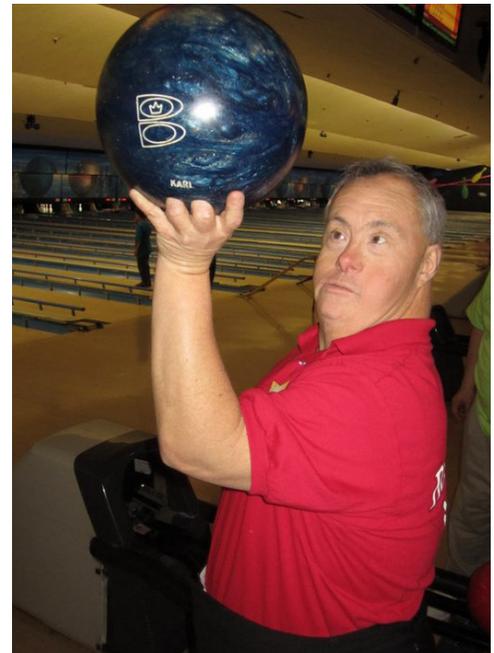
– Pope Francis

Benefits Multiply in Ministry for the Disabled

Saturdays at any bowling alley are a cacophony of talking, laughing and slow thunder as bowling balls roll down the lanes. But on this Saturday there seems to be extra joy in the air as Camp ReCreation sponsors Holy Bowling – one of its most popular activities for its handicapped and developmentally disabled clients.

Camp ReCreation is a non-profit organization founded in 1983 by Father Patrick Leslie and Sister Anne Lucey and is open to people ages 10 to 65+.

Activities like Holy Bowling take place year round but its main event is the program it offers every summer at Camp Ronald McDonald near Eagle Lake in Northern California. Campers are assigned their own counselor for the week, who accompany them to meals and activities, stay with them in their tent at night and see to their personal needs.



Karl at Holy Bowling

“This relieves a lot of the anxiety and homesickness the campers might otherwise feel, being away from their families,” says Kathi Barber, the program director in Sacramento. Originally there were two sessions in June, but demand was so great that a third was added.

“We hate to turn anyone away,” says Barber. “We still have a waiting list, but we try our best to accommodate everyone.”

Continued on next page



Katina at Holy Bowling

Benefits Multiply in Ministry for the Disabled (continued)



Week One of Camp ReCreation, operated by the Diocese of Orange

The Diocese of Orange also operates a Camp ReCreation – founded in 1978. Both camps operate in much the same way and are under the auspices of their local diocese. Each also relies on private donations, various grants and fundraising by the Knights of Columbus.

According to Kristan Schlichte, senior director of membership for Catholic Charities USA in Alexandria, Virginia, both camps are based on a model used by the Sisters of St. Francis in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who have been serving the developmentally disabled since 1904.

“They are viewed as leaders in special religious education,” Schlichte says, and explains that the program has a three-fold focus – respite care, recreation, and religious education.

Father Leslie emphasizes participation in the daily mass, with the campers acting as altar servers and extraordinary Eucharistic ministers. “Everyone wears a stole,” he says. “This is their Church, too.”

Carol Metz, a special education teacher for San Juan Unified school district, explains that under California state law, special-needs students can remain in the public school system until the age of 22 and then they are transitioned out.

“Camp ReCreation is a strong program, and is recommended by different social service agencies because they know the world gets smaller for many of these people when they transition out of school,” she explains.

“These programs provide social interaction, peer support, everything they need to live a full life. They like everything we do--music, camping, trips, cultural events. Everyone has a need to be around others, and to feel like they’re a part of things.”

And the benefits aren’t one-way. “People get into this,” she refers to the volunteers, “thinking that they’re doing something good for someone else. Then they realize they’re getting more out of it than they were giving.

“It’s a win-win for everyone.”

For more information, go to:

cacatholic.org

Camp ReCreation

Sacramento **<http://camprecreation.org>**

Orange **<http://recreationcampoc.com>**