

**SOLEDAD MISSION  
RECREATION DISTRICT**

**BUILDING A FUTURE  
OF WELLBEING FOR  
FAMILIES IN THE  
SALINAS VALLEY**



*Frances Bengtson,  
Executive Director*



**CASE  
STATEMENT**

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# Founding Vision

In 1962, our very first visionary founding members established the recreation district. Prior to the Soledad-Mission Recreation District's formation, recreation services for the community were provided through the school district. Recognizing the need for expansion as the community grew, the founding board members envisioned establishing a district that would **provide quality recreation programming, inclusive of swimming**. These visionary leaders included *Ed Laughton, Alfred Bassetti, Al DeCarli, Frank Ledesma* and *John Domigues*. Their dream came to fruition and in 1974, the first and only indoor pool in the Salinas Valley was built. This new pool provided the residents of Soledad and surrounding communities with the opportunity to access a covered swimming pool to protect from the notorious valley winds.

Sixty years later, the district continues to focus on quality services and to this day is **the only covered swimming pool in the Salinas Valley**. Over these six decades, the district has withstood many challenges yet despite them, the focus continues to be centered in providing quality service to children, youth, adults, and families of our community. Through this vision, the Soledad-Mission Recreation District, now known as "The Rec", is making a strong investment in the wellbeing of the current and future residents of our community. We recognize that quality and affordable recreation opportunities go hand in hand with obtaining community wellness. The Rec is consistently striving to provide all people with an equitable opportunity to access quality recreation to optimize their wellness.

# Community Impact

**Below are some of the results from the thousands of lives The Rec impacts in our community:**

- Over 11,000 swimming pool daily uses are recorded on a yearly basis
- 1,700 residents of our community participate in swimming lessons annually
- 15,000 community members access the recreation services of the district annually.
- 150 individuals who live outside of the district boundaries participate in district services, signaling the quality of programming The Rec offers.



# Current Challenges

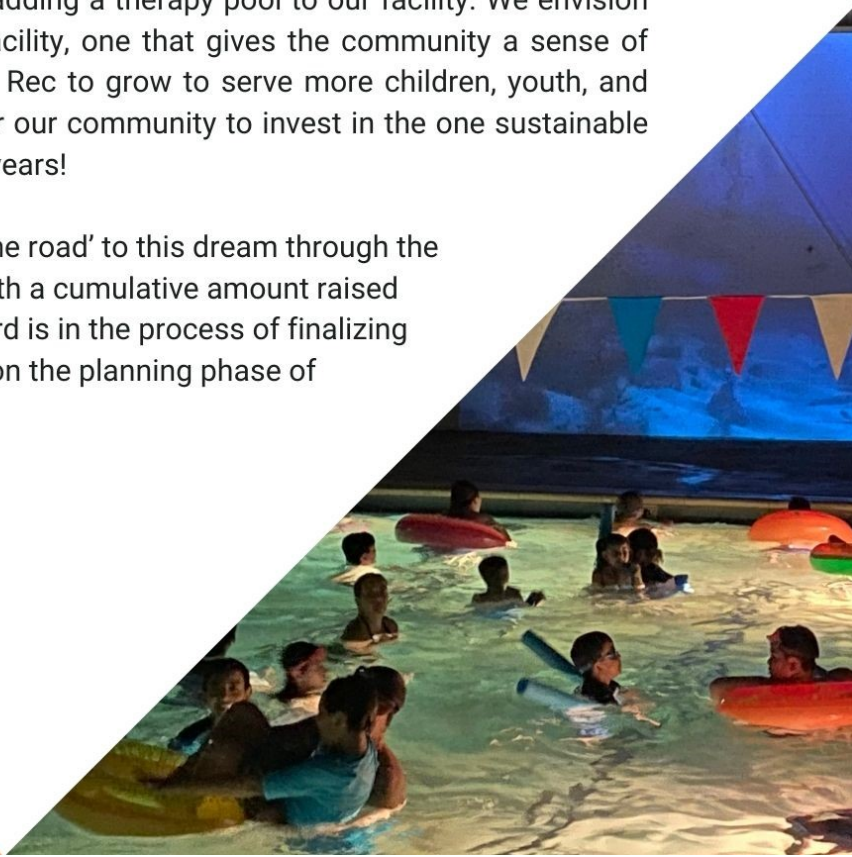
In 2008, through the support of community members, state and agency funding, The Rec was able to make minor modifications to the pool facility but was unable to modernize the operating systems that now span 40 years of use. Locker rooms were also untouched, making it challenging to provide community members with a weatherized facility to brave the elements throughout the year. While the current Board of Directors has made strides to keep the pool open year-round, our facilities need desperate repair and upgrades, and the community believes this to be the case as well.

During the pandemic, the Board of Directors launched a series of strategic planning sessions and organized a Community Advisory Task Force comprised of residents and community leaders of diverse skillsets. Through that process, the task force identified the need to focus on rehabilitated and expanding the facilities. With over 46 years of use, the operational systems coupled with the need for more recreational space need rehabilitation. What was once a facility that served a community of less than 8,000 is now serving the needs of a community of 20,000 people and growing. With our growing community, The Rec is committed to accommodating the growing needs of the community to best support their health and wellbeing. The alternative could mean longer closures and decreased access to this public space.

## A New Dream

The vision adopted by the Board through the strategic planning process and the community input received has been to seek public and private investment in rebuilding key areas of our facility, most notably the locker rooms, the pool's operating system, increase of activity and meeting space and assess the feasibility of adding a therapy pool to our facility. We envision the modernized space to be a welcoming facility, one that gives the community a sense of belonging. A fresh space that will allow The Rec to grow to serve more children, youth, and adults for years to come. It is simply time for our community to invest in the one sustainable Recreation agency that has been here for 60 years!

The exciting news is that we are already 'on the road' to this dream through the contribution of private and public sources! With a cumulative amount raised in just a few weeks of over \$250,000, the Board is in the process of finalizing its selection of an architectural firm to work on the planning phase of this vision.





# How We Will Accomplish Our Vision

The estimated cost of this significant modernization and expansion is well over \$5 million. We will be looking to our public leaders and private community members to contribute towards this community effort. The Soledad-Mission Recreation Board of Directors recognizes that this facility belongs to the people and therefore will be engaging the community in these efforts. We know that to fulfill this vision will take the generous and dedicated involvement of community leaders, concerned individuals, corporations, foundations, and our agency leadership. Together, we can work to provide the community with a dependable and state of the art facility, complete with the only covered pool in the Salinas Valley to give everyone an equal opportunity for maximizing wellness.

Please stay connected with us as we work with you and others to realize our dream. We welcome your participation! Please visit our website at [www.soledadrec.org](http://www.soledadrec.org) for up-to-date information or stay connected through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

**Thank you for believing in maximizing the health and wellbeing of our community!**

