



CARD
Chico Area Recreation & Park District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Forest Ranch Charter School Students Choose Community Over Competition, Donate Penny War Proceeds to CARD Aquatics Center



4th and 5th Grade Class Demonstrates Spirit of Civic Engagement with Generous Contribution to Local Aquatic Facility

CHICO, CA – In a heartwarming display of community spirit, students at Forest Ranch Charter School presented a donation to the future Chico Area Recreation & Park District (CARD) Aquatics & Recreation Center on Friday morning, choosing to invest their hard-earned penny war proceeds in a facility that will serve generations of local families.

The school-wide penny war fundraiser, organized to support a local nonprofit, culminated with Ms. Lisa Sellu's 4th and 5th grade class emerging victorious. As winners, the students earned the privilege of selecting where the funds would be donated, and their choice was the new aquatics center being constructed in Chico.

"When my students chose the aquatics center, I saw something beautiful happen," said Lisa Sellu, the class teacher. "They weren't thinking about themselves. They were thinking about their younger siblings learning to swim, their grandparents staying healthy, and kids they'll never meet who will benefit from this facility decades from now. That's the kind of thinking we need more of in the world."

During an all-school assembly Friday morning, students presented an oversized ceremonial check to CARD, who accepted the donation on behalf of the project and shared updates on the center's progress since the groundbreaking ceremony in August.

"These students are investing in something that will serve our community for generations," said CARD general manager Annabel Grimm. "Their generosity reminds us why we're building this center – not just as a place to swim, but as a space where our community can come together, stay healthy, and create lasting memories. We're honored by their choice and inspired by their civic mindedness."

The CARD Aquatics & Recreation Center, which broke ground in August 2025, is designed to provide a 50-meter lap pool, a warmup pool, a lazy river, a water slide complex, swimming lessons, and more. The facility is expected to open in fall 2026.

Forest Ranch Charter School's contribution represents more than just financial support – it exemplifies the next generation's commitment to building stronger, healthier communities. The students' decision to prioritize a shared community resource over other worthy causes demonstrates an understanding of collective investment and long-term thinking that extends far beyond their years.

"What these young people have done is planted a seed," added Holli Drobny, administrative director at CARD. "They've shown that even small actions, when directed toward something meaningful, can make a real difference. We can't wait to welcome them – and all of Chico – when the doors open."

Forest Ranch Charter School will receive a plaque of recognition that will be displayed at the aquatics center in thanks for their contribution.

For more information about the CARD Aquatics & Recreation Center, visit www.chicorec.gov/aquatics-recreation-center. If you'd like to give to the CARD Foundation or the future CARD Aquatics & Recreation Center, visit www.chicorec.gov/donate. Stay connected with CARD on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) @chicorec for updates.

About Chico Area Recreation & Park District

Established in 1948, the Chico Area Recreation & Park District (CARD) is a California Special District dedicated to enriching the community through diverse recreational opportunities. CARD brings friends and families together to create joyful experiences and lasting memories. It oversees 17 community and neighborhood parks, four community centers, a swimming pool, the Chico Creek Nature Center, and more. CARD offers a wide variety of sports, classes, camps, and special events designed for all ages. Discover more about CARD at chicorec.gov.

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