

## Camp's pool means children swim without jellyfish

By Jonnelle Marte, Boston Globe Correspondent | June 22, 2008

Some of the children at **Camp Harbor View** thought twice before diving into the ocean on sweltering summer days last year. The open water, they thought, was intimidating. To some, it was just plain icky.

"The ocean is salt water. It's nasty. It's dirty," camp counselor Nayquan Robinson, recalled his campers saying. "The kids really didn't like the jellyfish being in the ocean, either."

But this summer, children at the city-run camp on Long Island in Boston Harbor will have the oasis from the heat they have been asking for: a new pool funded through a \$1 million donation from the Highland Street Foundation.

"I think [swimming lessons] will be more secure because the pool is different than the actual ocean," said Victoria Jennings, 13, who is returning to the camp this summer. She said she was looking forward to the "cleanliness" of the pool.

The day camp, the brainchild of Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Jack Connors, the longtime advertising executive and powerbroker, started last year. About 600 children from urban areas ages 11 through 14 will attend this summer. Until now, the facilities lacked a pool, forcing children to take swimming lessons in the ocean.

"Most of [our campers] have not been exposed to swimming. Most kids were too afraid to learn in the ocean, but a pool is less intimidating," said Cara Gould, director of the camp, which will start in July. "You can see the bottom, and you can go in gradually."

Children who were afraid of the open water stayed on dry land during lessons, playing board games, and taking nature walks.

Ocean swimming lessons were also sometimes cut off for sanitary reasons, a problem camp leaders don't expect to have with the pool.

"Sometimes the water tested too high with bacteria, and the kids couldn't get in," camp lifeguard Tatiana Rodriguez, 18, said. "At least we can clean the pool."

The 75-by-45-foot pool, made possible by a grant from the Highland Street Foundation, will be dedicated tomorrow. Some camp officials said it will make them more confident about campers' safety. ■