

Amy Eck: Hawaii

MAKING LIFE BEACHY AGAIN

Imagine living in Hawaii but being unable to visit those glorious beaches. Erik and Amy Eck have a neighbor who has been in a wheelchair since she suffered a stroke and a brain aneurism when she was only 30.

Because of a local non profit, the Ecks were able to take that neighbor to the ocean for the first time in 35 years and get her into the water, surrounded by others who were helped to finally float free of their handicaps.

“What a blessing!” Amy said.

Her husband has long been active with the AccessSurf program, and Amy always enjoyed helping out on its monthly access days on White Plains Beach at Barbers Point. But they wanted to do more.

“AccessSurf is a great organization that makes water fitness available to everyone, despite any disability you may have,” Amy explained.

Mark Marble, the organization’s founder and president said its mission involves more than a dip in the water for the disabled. AccessSurf has helped more than 400 people with a wide range of physical and mental disabilities to discover their own level of abilities in the ocean, he said. And the benefits continue long after the day at the beach is over, with many clients experiencing improved communications and social skills, better self esteem, reduced behavioral problems and a new energy to try mainstream recreational activities.

The logistics are daunting, with several hours on each side of an AccessSurf outing devoted to hauling surfboards, floats and other water gear, before they can help those in wheelchairs cross the sand.

So when the Ecks got their Pay-it-Forward check, they knew exactly how they could help.

The money went towards buying a trailer that can be loaded with gear and backed right into a shed by the beach, eliminating hours of hand hauling, and allowing the volunteers to spend that time with

special needs clients. The money will help the organization expand its programs throughout the state and to establish a permanent location on Oahu to offer beach access and adaptive aquatic recreation on a consistent basis, Marble said.

“Your donation has a direct connection to the number of lives we impact, and we appreciate you assisting us with this.”



AccessSurf give all a chance to enjoy sea



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