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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Sequoia Healthcare District Places 1<sup>st</sup> Automated External Defibrillator at Burgess Park Pools**

### *Menlo Swim and Sport Sets High Standard for Fitness Facilities*

**REDWOOD CITY, Calif. – September 5, 2006** - Sequoia Healthcare District placed its first automated external defibrillator (AED) unit at the new pools at Burgess Park, which are operated by Menlo Swim and Sport. This is the first placement for the District's HeartSafe program, which is designed to dramatically increase the survival rate for victims of sudden cardiac arrest.

The Burgess Park pools in Menlo Park has high traffic volume and exercise programs that cater to a broad range of ages, including older adults, and masters swimming, water aerobics and swim lessons

These brand new pools just opened this summer and we already average 500 swimmers each day," said Tim Sheeper, Director of Menlo Swim and Sport. "Our lifeguards had been CPR and AED trained and it is essential that we respond quickly to any medical emergency that may arise."

Sudden cardiac arrest is an electrical disturbance that causes the heart to spasm, without warning. The victim will collapse, stop breathing and not have a pulse. The

brain begins to die within minutes without oxygen. CPR will keep a victim minimally oxygenated until a lifesaving shock can be administered to defibrillate the heart and return it to its natural rhythm.

People are 20 percent more likely to experience sudden cardiac arrest during or immediately after exercise. Currently the survival rate for victims of sudden cardiac arrest is only 5 percent. Early defibrillation by witnesses who recognize the emergency and can respond quickly is the only effective treatment and key to survival.

“We came out to the pool and delivered a refresher to the lifeguards about recognizing sudden cardiac arrest and trained them to operate this easy-to-use device. It’s so simple and works by the press of a button,” said Pamela Kurtzman, HeartSafe Program Coordinator for Sequoia Healthcare District. “Menlo Swim and Sport just set a high standard for safety among fitness facilities.”

Recently a lifeguard in Pleasanton was credited with saving a man’s life by responding quickly with a defibrillator to revive an adult swimmer who collapsed immediately following his swimming race.

The HeartSafe Program is a local community response system designed to increase the survival rate from sudden cardiac arrest by raising awareness and providing access to early defibrillation. The District will be placing AED units in high-priority areas, coordinating training and supporting maintenance on those units.

***About Sequoia Healthcare District***

Headquartered in Redwood City, Sequoia Healthcare District identifies local healthcare needs and collaboratively develops solutions. District tax revenues are used to initiate and support innovative, cost-effective programs and activities designed to achieve health, wellness and disease prevention in southern San Mateo County. Communities in the District include Redwood City, San Carlos, Belmont, Menlo Park, Woodside, Atherton and Portola Valley.

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