



Spotlight on DTSC

**DTSC HELPS PAVE WAY FOR RETURN OF WHEELCHAIR ATHLETES TO GYM**

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Wheelchair athletes will finally be returning to their favorite gymnasium after city officials in Chatsworth and the [California Department of Toxic Substances Control](#) worked together to clean up, renovate and reopen the building.

The 10,000-square-foot gymnasium and the rest of the 80-acre Chatsworth Park South were closed in 2008 after lead and other contaminants were discovered – most likely the remnants of a skeet shooting range - in portions of the park. As a result, the U.S. Quad Rugby Association, which had used the gymnasium for games and practices for 30 years, was forced to move to a gym in Pacoima, nearly 20 miles away.

DTSC Project Manager, Chand Sultana, said low levels of lead dust were removed from the gymnasium, and much of the building and air conditioning system were vacuumed. However, vandals ripped apart vending machines, ruined the floor and otherwise damaged the building, so the city had to spend about \$50,000 renovating it.

Finally on Valentine’s Day – five years to the date after the park was closed – City Councilmember Mitchell Englander held a press conference announcing the reopening of the gym, which is heavily used. “This is truly a great valentine for the Chatsworth community,” he said in this [Los Angeles Daily News video](#) on his web site.

“(It) is a major milestone in getting [Chatsworth Park South](#) cleaned up, safe and open,” said Englander. “I am so proud and grateful for all the staff and community members who worked so hard to make it possible for the wheelchair rugby teams, other sports teams and children of the community to come back and play here.”



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Allowing the community back into the gym is the first step toward eventually reopening the entire 80 acres to public use. The contamination covers about 12 acres, and the plan is to reopen the rest of the park when the 12 acres is cleaned up, Sultana said. The contamination is from lead shots and clay pigeons from the skeet shooting range that operated in the park in the 1960s. Actor [Roy Rogers](#) owned the gun club that operated the range, according to [this story](#) in the Daily News.

The city bought the park in 1978, and entered into a voluntary cleanup with DTSC. It was important to get the gymnasium reopened. “It’s one of the largest and most popular parks in the Valley,” Sultana said. “The community wants access.”

Sultana said she hopes the park will open in 2015. More information on the cleanup can be found at the DTSC [Envirostor web site](#).

(Photos courtesy of City Councilman Mitchell Englander)



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