

Sand Point

INFO@TMIAQUATICS.COM | WWW.TMIAQUATICS.COM | 1-800-818-8266

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Sand Point is a treasure nestled in the heart of the Alaska Peninsula, and one of six communities within the Aleutians East Borough. The community of 1,000 rests on the northwest corner of Popof Island, one of the Shumagin Islands. Sand Point was originally a cod-fishing station and trading post, founded in 1898 - a collective of the surrounding Aleuts and many Scandinavian fishermen that plied their trade in the area. Nearly all the Aleutian Islands are protected as part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge and the Aleutian Islands Wilderness.



We sat down to chat with DJ Emmanuelson, Principal of the Sand Point School, one of 4 schools in the Aleutian East Borough School District (AEBSD). Sand Point has been a TMI customer for over **22 years**, having installed their first TMI Salt Pure® System in 1999. This 95,000-gallon pool was built back in the 80's to serve this tiny community and is still central to community life. Being an island and a fishing community, it is vital that all children learn how to swim and how to wear survival suits while out fishing. The Sand Point school pool allows this community the comfort that all their kids know how to swim by the time they graduate.



DJ has been on the job for 2 years now and has no knowledge of what motivated Sand Point to install salt systems back in the day. He surmises that it probably had something to do with the cost of getting chlorine to the island and the safety factor as carrying a highly volatile product in a small plane is kind of dangerous. Salt is really easy to come by as it is used in fish processing and they get theirs from Trident, the local fish processing plant.

*"I can't answer for the school's decision, but I can tell you that I prefer it, it has lots of advantages. I get up at 4:30 every day and swim 20 laps. **I had never been in a salt pool before and I can feel the difference, it just feels smoother.** Swimming in a salt water pool just feels more natural to me... and, at the risk of sounding too 'New Age-y' somehow I feel more connected to the natural world in salt water."*

DJ tells us that he had zero pool operating experience when he was faced with a 100% staff turnover recently and had to take over operations of a pool that was completely non-operational after it was shut down due to COVID.



About DJ Emanuelson

I have been a public-school teacher and administrator for 26 years. I spent one year as a private school administrator in Beijing China. Most of my career has been in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as an elementary principal. I spent 13 years with one district in Pittsburgh as a K-1 principal. I am currently the K-12 principal at Sand Point School in Sand Point, Alaska.

"I have never in my career been responsible for managing a pool. The pool here in Sand Point is the centerpiece of the community. Sand Point is a town of a few hundred people in the remote Shumagin island group along the Alaskan Archipelago. We have the only indoor pool in hundreds of miles. If you want to find another pool you would have to charter a flight or spend days on a boat. It's a big deal. My experience with TMI has been nothing but 100% positive. As needed, you guys came up and reset everything to get the pool going again. We set up a testing area and you helped us simplify the entire pool operation. We stay in touch and always have someone to reach out to when we have questions. I don't know how I could have done this without TMI."

"And the ZGEN Hypochlorous Acid that you guys sold us is fantastic. We now make our own disinfection products at a fraction of the cost and use it for our locker rooms, school buses and everything in between. It allows our community to feel safe and protected and it is so simple to use. The School Board loves it because of how much money we save, it's a win/win!"