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The Y Helps South Palm Beach County Children Learn to be Safe Around Water

YMCA SOUTH PALM BEACH COUNTY increases availability of water safety and swim lessons in underserved communities

South Palm Beach County, January 29, 2021 – As part of the Y’s commitment to reduce drowning rates and keep kids safe in and around the water, the YMCA South Palm Beach County will provide scholarships for swim instruction and water safety to children from underserved communities in YMCA South Palm Beach County.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fatal drowning is the second-leading cause of death for children ages one to 14 years old. In ethnically diverse communities, the youth drowning rate is two to three times higher than the national average, according to a USA Swimming study. Additionally 64 percent of African-American children, 45 percent of Latino children, and 40 percent of Caucasian children have no or low swimming ability.

“Educating children how to be safe around water is just as important as teaching them to look both ways before they cross the street,” said Libby Moon, Drowning Prevention Coordinator, YMCA South Palm Beach County. “The Y’s teaches children of all ages and backgrounds that water should be fun, not feared, and this practice not only saves lives it builds confidence.”

The Y believes this is especially true following 2020’s COVID-19 shutdowns. The number of YMCA of South Palm Beach County swim program participants decreased approximately 60% in 2020. “We know there are children in our community who are now more at risk due to the need to maintain social distancing in 2020 and we want to make every effort we can to reach those kids this year. In order to maintain a safe and healthy environment while COVID-19 is still present, class sizes are smaller, instructors wear facemasks or shields to protect both the student and staff, and Y staff disinfects high traffic areas regularly.

The Y introduced the country to the concept of group swim lessons more than 100 years ago. The YMCA of South Palm Beach County continues to help youth and adults experience the joy and benefits of swimming, so they can be healthy, confident and secure in the water. There are a variety of programs to choose from, including family swim, competitive swim teams, and water safety education programs which teach life-saving skills to underserved communities who are most at-risk.

In addition to learning life-saving water safety skills, children can increase their physical activity by swimming. Swimming also motivates children to strive for self-improvement, teaches goal orientation and cultivates a positive mental attitude and high self-esteem. It also teaches life lessons of sport and sportsmanship, so that children can learn how to work well with teammates and coaches and how to deal with winning and losing—skills that last a lifetime.

To learn how to qualify for financial assistance, please contact the Peter Blum Family YMCA in Boca Raton at 561-395-9622 or the DeVos-Blum Family YMCA in Boynton Beach at 561-738-9622.

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About the YMCA

Driven by its founding mission, the YMCA has served as a leading nonprofit organization committed to strengthening community for more than 175 years. The Y empowers everyone, no matter who they are or where they are from, by ensuring access to resources, relationships and opportunities for all to learn, grow and thrive. The YMCA of South Palm Beach County serves as a community anchor in Palm Beach County by enriching lives and strengthening community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The YMCA of South Palm Beach County is comprised of The Peter Blum Family YMCA of Boca Raton, The DeVos-Blum Family YMCA of Boynton Beach, THE LAB: YMCA Leadership Academy, and the YMCA@901 NCCI. For more information, please visit YMCASPBC.org.