



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City of San Diego Highlights Drowning Prevention During Water Safety Month

MAYOR GLORIA AND COUNCIL PRESIDENT ELO-RIVERA PRESENTED PROCLAMATION DURING COMMUNITY EVENT AT CITY HEIGHTS POOL

SAN DIEGO – Drowning is the single leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 4, and the City of San Diego has teamed up with the Prevent Drowning Foundation of San Diego (PDFSD) to send the message that everyone can make a difference in drowning prevention. To raise awareness about this crucial issue, this morning Mayor Todd Gloria and Council President Sean Elo-Rivera presented a proclamation declaring the month of May to be Drowning Prevention and Water Awareness Safety Month in the City.

"Drowning Prevention and Water Awareness Safety Month shows our commitment to ensuring San Diegans, especially our children, know how to stay safe around water," said Mayor Todd Gloria. "By increasing awareness and access to swim education, we're taking essential steps to prevent tragedies and empower our community."

Several community members gathered at the City Heights Swim Complex for the special presentation, which included remarks by community and aquatics leaders, information booths, and a lifejacket demonstration by children from Chollas Meade Elementary School. Today is also "Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day" and many participants donned life jackets during the event.

Council President Sean Elo-Rivera spoke about the importance of ensuring that all San Diegans not only have access to our public pools and beaches, but that they also have the tools to be safe in and around the water.

"There is nothing more important than the safety of our young people. Swim classes and water safety education coupled with access to public swimming pools are critical to prevent drowning," said San Diego City Council President Sean Elo-Rivera. "With so much access to beaches, rivers, lakes and pools in San Diego, we must continue to support these programs at our public pools to protect the lives of San Diego residents."

During the month of May, PDFSD is also encouraging the community to support the [2024 Water Safety Family Book Pool Project](#) by showcasing and reading water safety books and promoting the American

Red Cross Longfellow's [WHALE Tales program](#). PDFSD has compiled a list of 50 children's books that can be part of the lifelong family discussion of water and water safety and is working to get these books into libraries throughout the region.

Many of these books and other resources are available at the San Diego Public Library, giving community members the opportunity to learn about water safety not only at the pool, but also out of the water.

"The San Diego Public Library is happy to bring the life-saving message of water safety and drowning prevention to our patrons," said Library Director Misty Jones. "Residents can visit their local library for water safety storytimes, books on pool safety and other water safety resources."

The City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department and PDFSD are also proud to partner with the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) in an effort to prevent drowning and provide access for students and families to participate in aquatic activities. Many students do not know how to swim, and through programs like Schools to Pools -- which has over 20 SDUSD schools participating -- thousands of students are able to receive free swimming lessons and dry land water safety education. Students from Rosa Parks, Cherokee Point, Fay, Horace Mann and Crawford schools are currently participating.

Students participating in the program receive free passes to City of San Diego aquatics facilities to encourage them and their families to visit the pool on their own time and be safe around the water.

"As we approach summer vacation, promoting water safety and access to swimming lessons to our youth and families is both a safety issue and an equity issue. San Diego is well known for its beautiful beaches and warm weather, and it every child in this city should be educated on water safety," said San Diego Unified School District Board of Education Trustee Richard Barrera.

Also participating in the event was Miss California's Teen 2023, Marlie Wright, a freshman at the University of San Diego and graduate of El Camino High School in Oceanside. Wright, who is a pool lifeguard herself, has committed to water safety through her platform and works to ensure access and equity in aquatics.

The City's Parks and Recreation Department manages more than 40,000 acres of park assets, including more than 400 parks, 26 miles of shoreline, 60 recreation centers, 15 pools, seven skate parks and three golf courses. For additional information regarding the City's park system, visit sandiego.gov/parks-and-recreation.

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