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For Immediate Release

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Tampa YMCA Providing Free Water Safety Lessons to Underserved Students

Tampa, FL (Apr. 11, 2017) —As part of the Y's commitment to reduce drowning rates and keep kids safe in and around the water, the [Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA](#) will provide free water safety and swim lessons for students from two local Title I schools.

As a part of its [Safety Around Water](#) program, the YMCA of the USA recently awarded the Tampa Y with a \$6,000 grant to provide free water safety lessons to children from Mort Elementary School in New Tampa and Lacochee Elementary School in Pasco County. Most of the students who attend these schools come from low-income families.

Data shows children from low-income families are four times more likely to drown. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 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, nearly six out of 10 African American and Hispanic/Latino children are unable to swim, nearly twice as many as their Caucasian counterparts.

The Y's Safety Around Water program teaches children of all ages and backgrounds that water should be fun, not feared, if you know how to stay safe in and around water. Additionally, Safety Around Water educates parents about the importance of water safety lessons. "Educating children how to be safe around water is just as important as teaching them to look both ways before they cross the street," says Association Aquatics Experience Executive Amanda Walker.

In addition to providing swim scholarships to those in need, the Tampa Y reaches more vulnerable populations with a Head Start collaboration with Hillsborough County and the Go for Green program, which offers free swim lessons to Y summer campers unable to pass the swim test. Go for Green is made possible thanks to the Tampa Bay Rays.

Likewise, [Y Swim Lessons](#) continue to evolve to better meet community needs. The latest evolution accommodates students of varying abilities to help foster a sense of achievement. Through this approach, advanced swimmers flow more easily to higher levels while swimmers who need more instruction can learn at their own pace. The results are more confident swimmers who stick with lessons and develop a lifelong love for swimming.

In all Y swim programs, people of all ages can enjoy water sports, enhance or learn new techniques, meet new friends and develop confidence, while also learning safety skills that save lives. To learn how to qualify for financial assistance, [please contact your local Y](#).

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About the Tampa Y

The Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA is a cause-driven [4-star charity](#), strengthening Hillsborough and East Pasco communities for 128 years, through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the Association, 18 facilities engage more than 150,000 men, women and children — regardless of age, income or background — to nurture the potential of children and

teens, improve our community's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. The Tampa Y has long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change.

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