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Media Alert/Photo & Video Opportunity

5,500 Families to Benefit from YMCA Water Safety Classes

WHAT: Next Monday, CEOs from five YMCA Associations will join Florida Blue Market President David Pizzo at the South Tampa Family YMCA pool to kick off a collaborative effort to expand the Y's "Safety Around Water" (SAW) awareness campaign. The drowning prevention program will expand at more than 30 YMCA locations in Tampa Bay.

A new \$155,000 grant from the Florida Blue Foundation will assist the Y in helping children, ages 3-12 years, learn basic swimming skills and practice safety habits while in and around the water at home, by the pool, on a boat or at the beach. During a SAW course, certified instructors teach two sets of skills designed to reduce the risk of drowning and boost participants' confidence in and around water.

Participating YMCA associations include the [Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA](#), YMCA of the Suncoast, YMCA of Greater St. Petersburg, Manatee YMCA and Sarasota YMCA. This FREE program is open to the community and a YMCA membership is not required; however, pre-registration is required due to limited space. Times vary based on location. For more information, contact your local Y.

WHEN: Monday, Aug. 20 at 3:00pm

WHERE: South Tampa Family YMCA, 4411 S. Himes Ave., Tampa, FL 33611

WHY: Statistics show drowning remains the leading cause of unintended, injury related death for children ages 1-5 and the second leading cause of accidental death for children under 14. Research shows participation in formal swimming lessons can reduce the risk of drowning by 88 percent among children aged 1 to 4, yet many kids do not receive formal swimming or water safety training.

The Y and the Florida Blue Foundation believe teaching children how to be safe around water is not a luxury; it is a necessity. The SAW program can help children, families and adults make sure they learn essential water safety skills, which can open up a world of possibilities for them to satisfy their curiosity safely.

"Drowning can happen nearly anywhere with standing water," says G. Scott Goyer, president and CEO, YMCA of the Suncoast. "As a parent or caregiver, you need to equip your children with the tools they need to be confident in and around water."

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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 129 years, through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the Association, 18 facilities engage nearly 160,000 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. www.tampaymca.org

About Florida Blue Foundation

Florida Blue Foundation enables healthy communities by making grants, building coalitions and rewarding best practices. More than three million people in Florida have received direct health services as a result of grants made to nonprofit organizations since its founding in 2001. Florida Blue Foundation is a trade name of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation, Inc., an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. For more information about the Foundation, please visit www.FloridaBlueFoundation.com. Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation are on Facebook and Twitter.