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Safety Around Water Program Provides Free Swimming Lessons to Houston Area Children

HOUSTON – (August 9, 2019) – A drowning can happen quickly and quietly, anywhere to anyone. Water is a great way to beat the heat but summer is also when children are most likely to drown. With record-breaking temperatures, kids continue to frequent various bodies of water to make the most of the last weeks of the summer’s vacation. It’s important to remind Houstonians to both teach the kids necessary water skills and to be vigilant.

YMCA and Houston Apartment Association have partnered to offer Safe Around Water, a program providing apartment children with free swimming lessons and skills necessary to float and survive. In its twelfth year, the program has provided swimming lessons to more than 20,000 children who would otherwise not be able to afford them.

“Drowning is preventable, and we have seen a dramatic reduction in the number of apartment drownings in recent years, but we remain proactive,” said Starla Turnbo, Houston Apartment Association’s president. “With more than one million Houstonians living in apartments, HAA focuses on swimming lessons for children and educating parents about the importance of proper supervision. It only takes minutes to drown, so we urge the parents to be vigilant.”

Drowning can happen quickly and quietly. It only takes minutes for a child to drown when adults are not paying close attention. 69 children have already drowned in Texas in 2019, with 21 fatal drownings in the Greater Houston area (14 in the Harris County), with many more near drownings.

Drowning is the leading cause of accidental injury deaths among kids under the age of five and the second leading cause among children under 14. Many incidents affect toddlers and mostly happen in natural bodies of water and swimming pools, but some take place when children are left unattended in bathtubs, spas or even near buckets of water.

As summer is in full swing, with more hot temperatures on the horizon, remember the following water safety tips:

- Never leave children near water without adult supervision
- Do not allow children to swim alone
- Children should always be within an arm’s distance of a supervising adult in the water
- Assign an adult as “water watcher” – the person committed to supervising the pool area
- Paddling pools are just as dangerous - a single inch of water covering a child’s mouth and nose can cause drowning
- Enroll children in swim lessons
- Learn CPR

- Always secure access to swimming pools. All apartment pools have fences and self-closing and latching gates preventing children from entering the pool area unattended – notify management immediately if they are not in a working order
- Learn how to use the safety devices – all apartment pools are equipped devices intended to prevent death or injury. These items include drain covers, a shepherd’s hook and a reaching pole, a throwing rope, and a ring buoy. If any of these devices are missing or in disrepair, please notify management immediately.
- Be a good neighbor, if you see any unattended children at the community pool, urge them to leave the pool area and report the incident to the manager immediately.

About the Houston Apartment Association:

The Houston Apartment Association is a professional trade association that serves individuals and businesses involved in the ownership, construction, management, maintenance and operation of apartments and other rental dwellings in the Houston area. See www.haaonline.org for more information.

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