



For Immediate Release  
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## **World's Largest Swimming Lesson™ Set For Thursday, June 23rd Host Location Registration Now Open**

[Overland Park, KS] – Registration for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual World's Largest Swimming Lesson™ is officially open. Aquatic facilities of all types can sign up to be a drowning prevention champion in their community by joining TEAM WLSL™ as an official Host for this impactful and fun lifesaving event. The 30-minute swim lesson can take place any time of day during the 24-hour event on Thursday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Locations with regular lessons taking place are encouraged to host throughout the day.

With the support of thousands of locations around the globe, TEAM WLSL™ has helped raise awareness and provided crucial education about water safety and water competency since the program launched in 2010. According to research conducted by the American Red Cross, water competency skills have increased significantly since 2014, jumping from 46% to 56% of people possessing key, lifesaving water competency skills in 2020. Overall, drowning deaths worldwide and in the U.S. have decreased over the past two decades. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, the rate of unintentional drowning deaths among children ages 0-17 declined 38%, from 1.6 per 100,000 in 1999 to 1.0 in 2019.

But, there is a long way to go. Research released by the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2021 shows drowning has become the leading cause of unintended death for children ages 1-4, ahead of car accidents, birth defects and cancer. And, drowning remains the second leading cause of unintended death for kids 4-14 and the third for adolescents ages 15-17. The issue is truly a matter of life and death for kids and families in every community around the world.

Local WLSL Host Locations make a difference by providing kids, parents and caregivers exposure to lifesaving water safety skills while building buzz and awareness about the importance of teaching children to swim and providing undistracted adult supervision to help prevent drowning.

Visit [https://www.wsl.org/WLSL/host\\_an\\_event.aspx](https://www.wsl.org/WLSL/host_an_event.aspx) to register as a Host Location.

### **About The World's Largest Swimming Lesson™**

Since its inception, more than 332,000 children and adults have participated in lifesaving WLSL lessons, generating more than two billion media impressions about the vital importance of learning to swim. Learn more about this phenomenal program by visiting [www.WLSL.org](http://www.WLSL.org).

## BACKGROUND

- **The problem is real:** According to the CDC, every year (from 2010-2019) in the United States there are an estimated 3,960 fatal unintentional drownings, including boating-related drowning—that is an average of 11 drowning deaths per day. Drowning is an even greater threat in other countries around the world. According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 236,000 people died from drowning in 2019, making drowning a major public health problem worldwide.
- **Swimming lessons make a difference:** Participation in formal swimming lessons can reduce the risk of drowning among children age 1-4 by up to 88%.
- **Many lack basic swimming skills:** According to a 2020 research study by the American Red Cross, more than half (54%) of kids ages 4-17 cannot perform the basic water safety skills they need to save their life.
- **Parental supervision is key:** According to a 2016 Safe Kids Worldwide report, despite the fact that lack of supervision played a role in the majority of drowning deaths, less than half of parents (49 percent) indicate they remain within arms' reach of their child in the water.
- **Males and people of color are at the most risk:** According to the CDC, nearly 80% of people who die from drowning are male. In addition, drowning death rates for Black people are 1.5 times higher than the rates for White people. Disparities are highest among Black children ages 5-9 (rates 2.6 times higher) and ages 10-14 (rates 3.6 times higher).