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The Central Connecticut Coast YMCA Renews Longstanding Commitment to End Childhood Drowning with Safety Around Water Program

[New Haven CT, May 27, 2015] – The Central Connecticut Coast YMCA is launching a program, Safety Around Water, engage youth and educate parents about the importance of water safety skills.

According to data from the USA Swimming Foundation, 70 percent of African American and 60 percent of Hispanic children cannot swim, compared to just 40 percent of Caucasian children. While fatal drowning is a concern for all children – it's the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for children ages one to 14 years old – African American children ages 5 to 14 are three times more likely to drown than their white counterparts.

Through our Safety Around Water program, parents and caregivers will be encouraged to help their children learn fundamental water safety and swimming skills. During the free, community-wide, five-day course, children will learn how to respond if they find themselves in unexpected water situations -- from how to reach the water's surface if they submerge to safely reaching a pool's edge or exiting any body of water. The free course runs June 15-19, 2015. Program times and age groups vary by YMCA Branch. Preregistration is required.

"In many communities, staying safe around water means keeping kids away from water, but water safety and swimming are important life skills in the growth and development of all children," said Christian Engle, Vice President and COO, Central Connecticut Coast YMCA. "All children deserve access to water safety resources that not only could save their lives, but enrich them with an outlet for fun, healthy activity."

The Y introduced the concept of group swim lessons in 1909. Now, each year in 2,200 pools across the country, the Y teaches more than a million children from all backgrounds invaluable water safety and swim skills. In the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA service area, 8,408 children participated in Y swimming lessons and water safety education programs in 2014. Through Safety Around Water, the Y hopes to further bridge cultural and access gaps that can prevent some children from learning important water safety skills.

Families interested in learning more about Safety Around Water and how to enroll their child in local Y swimming and water safety classes should visit cccymca.org.

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The Central Connecticut Coast YMCA is a charitable, not-for-profit, community service organization dedicated to putting Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs

that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. The Y strengthens the foundations of communities and families through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility in twenty-four towns and cities in the Greater Bridgeport and New Haven areas. Additionally, programs and services are offered through YMCA Camp Hi-Rock located in Mount Washington, MA.