

2007 Annual Report

Dear Citizens of Broward County:

It is my pleasure to present the 2007 Annual Report HERE INSTEAD On behalf of the **Safe Water Instruction Means Safety (S.W.I.M.S.) Foundation.**

We are very pleased to have made significant progress during the past year to address the root cause of deaths caused by drowning, yet a sizeable segment of our community continues to lack the water safety skills so essential. Despite our efforts, drowning continues to reign as the number one killer of children under the age of five in South Florida. In addition, for every child who drowns, four others are hospitalized for near drowning, and as many as three of those suffer from some form of brain damage, often irreversible.

The 2006-2007 year was a milestone for our organization: we reached over one million water safety education lessons since inception, obtained more than \$100,000 in grant funds to provide scholarships for underprivileged at-risk children ages 3-14 through the SWIM Central program. This enabled SWIM Central to extend instructional services to 130 elementary schools and four middle schools in and out of Broward County, for a total of 134 schools, thereby educating over 26,000 children. Many of these children come from low and very low-income families and attend schools whose enrollment includes 50% or more students receiving free or reduced school lunches. In addition, the S.W.I.M.S. Foundation provided monies last year to transport more than 23,000 children to SWIM Central programming throughout Broward County.

The S.W.I.M.S. Foundation was created in 1998 to tackle these very problems. S.W.I.M.S. provides water safety instruction for children in South Florida and helps raise scholarship funds for SWIM CENTRAL and other organizations that provide safe water instruction programs.

The mission of The S.W.I.M.S. Foundation, a community-based 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization COMMA is to provide to all children in South Florida and ultimately the United States, safe water instruction and the basic elements of water safety and to prevent drowning deaths and near drowning incidents. Our Program's main objective is to teach children to understand the danger if they fall into a body of water, and to know how to stay afloat long enough or how to swim to the side of the pool.

On behalf of the S.W.I.M.S. Foundation, I would like to sincerely thank the Batchelor Foundation, City of Pompano Beach, Community Foundation of Broward, the Dauer Family Foundation, Finish Line Foundation, Leo Goodwin Foundation, Publix Supermarkets Charities, The Sun Sentinel Diversity Venture Fund, Ronald McDonald Charities and the Vista Foundation, for their continued grant support that enables us to sponsor these worthy and effective educational and instructional programs.

It is through the financial support raised by the S.W.I.M.S. Foundation, that we were able to provide significant program operational assistance to Broward County's SWIM Central program during the 2006-2007 program year. Operated as a collaborative effort between Broward County, the School Board of Broward County, and not-for-profit agencies (including the YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, American Red Cross, North Broward Hospital District, and the S.W.I.M.S. Foundation), and every city in Broward County, Florida, the overall purpose of SWIM Central is to improve the quality of life for our children by teaching them proper water safety skills. Through this valuable resource, water safety lessons are offered at 45 municipal, 8 private and 7 social service agency pools located throughout Broward County, Florida. In 2006, SWIM Central served more than

26,000 children (ages 1-17) and 2,500 adults, and provided Water Safety Instructor and Lifeguard Training to 30,000 individuals. Together with SWIM Central, to date we have sent over 128,000 children swimming and taught over one million water safety education lessons.

Through 2004-2006, S.W.I.M.S. provided additional training and educational water safety lessons to more than 5,000 underprivileged at-risk youth in Palm Beach County and in Miami-Dade counties.

The SWIM Central program included: water safety instruction and education for children; transportation; Water Safety Instructor training and certification; and related water safety training expenses. Our goals are:

- To educate and develop awareness of the dangers of drowning to all age groups;
- To provide safe water instruction and educate children and their families;
- To improve our children's quality of life by teaching them how to swim to safety;
- To raise parental awareness of the importance of teaching basic water safety skills to children;
- To further expand access to public and private swimming facilities for at-risk children;
- To provide scholarships for the water safety educational lessons for children who do not have access, are underprivileged or cannot afford water safety educational lessons.

It is the goal of the S.W.I.M.S. Foundation during the 2007-2008 program year to help fund a 12% or more increase in SWIM Central's scholarship program for water safety educational lessons of enrolled children receiving free or reduced school lunches through Broward's 145 elementary and 10 middle schools SWIM Central will target 5,000 at-risk children, ages birth to five with the goal of:

- (1) Providing every child in Broward County with the opportunity to have at least two weeks of basic water safety education to reduce or eliminate deaths by drowning;
- (2) Educating more parents about the importance of water safety, water safety skills and how the danger of drowning can be eliminated; and
- (3) Providing Water Safety Instructor and Lifeguard training within the Tri-County region.

By providing educational opportunities for children ages six months to 17 years, the SWIM Central program serves a key role in helping to decrease drowning deaths in Broward, as reported by the Broward County Medical Examiner's Office. Our programs also promote good health practices for participants, and encourage children to learn, develop and grow as individuals. We believe that the overall impact of program services is immeasurable, as we help our children to become more self-confident, more self-aware both in and out of the water and also save children's lives.

S.W.I.M.S. saves lives and you can help!

**Barry Shaw, President
S.W.I.M.S Foundation, Inc.**