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Water safety fair set in Perris Aug. 10

The tragic stories are reported far too often: an infant wanders too close to a swimming pool and slips or falls into the water, silently dropping to the bottom.

A tiny life is lost. A family endures an unspeakable tragedy.

Riverside County officials are trying to avoid such stories by offering swimming lessons for small children and are kicking off the program Wednesday (Aug. 10) with a free, two-hour water safety fair in Perris. The “Pay Attention...Drowning Prevention” fair begins at 2 p.m. at the Drop Zone, 2165 Trumble Road.

The event will include a water safety presentation, informational booths, sidewalk CPR, crafts and prizes. There will also be a demonstration of the swimming lessons for infants and toddlers.

“By teaching small children to help themselves if they fall into the water, we can save lives,” said Sarah Mack, director of the Riverside University Health System-Public Health, one of the sponsors of the event. “The swim lessons are just one tool that we can use to teach water safety in and around pools.”

The lessons, paid for through a \$198,000 grant from First 5 Riverside, were the brainchild of Riverside County Supervisor Chuck Washington, who wanted to focus water safety efforts to helping small children. The first swimming classes started recently. Other swimming lessons for older children are being taught by Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District.

“We live in a region where swimming pools and water sports are a way of life,” said Washington. “As such, we need to be vigilant around water, refresh our water safety knowledge regularly and know what to do in an emergency. I'm a pool owner and as a father and grandfather, I encourage families to learn more about drowning prevention and basic CPR whether you are a pool owner or take your family to the local community pool.”

For more information about water safety, go to www.RivCoWaterSafety.org

For information about the water safety fair, call 951.358.7171