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**FLORIDA PANTHERS FOUNDATION & YMCA PARTNER TO MAKE KIDS SAFER DURING WATER SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH**  
*Press Conference Calls for Safe Memorial Day Holiday Weekend*

[HOLLYWOOD, FL, May 24, 2019] – The YMCA of South Florida and the Florida Panthers Foundation held a press conference to deliver a call to action to the community to be water safe during the Memorial Day holiday weekend, which kicks-off summer water activities in South Florida.

Fatal drowning is the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for children ages 1 to 14 years old. Broward and Miami-Dade counties lead the nation in drowning deaths among small children.

“Last year, Florida had 88 people die by drowning and 75 were children under the age of 4,” said Sheryl A. Woods, CEO & President, YMCA of South Florida. “Since 2010, more than 100 children have died in South Florida due to drowning, two young children recently. As a community, we’ve got to come together to put a stop to this! We owe it to our kids.”

In support of the YMCA’s water safety and drowning prevention efforts, the Florida Panthers Foundation awarded the YMCA of South Florida a Community Champions Grant for \$25,000 on Saturday, Feb. 23, during the 2018-19 season. This Community Champions Grant supported the YMCA of South Florida’s Swim for Jenny drowning prevention program. The 2019 Swim for Jenny Week provided more than 2,500 free swimming and water safety lessons, and drowning prevention information to children and adults at YMCA locations during Spring Break.

The Press Conference also included a Free Swimsuit Giveaway to kids and families in need. The YMCA understands that there are many reasons kids do not learn to swim. Not all families are able to provide proper attire, so earlier this year, the YMCA held a swimsuit drive to help families in need. More than 150 donated swimsuits were distributed.

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**About Community Champions Grant Program:**

The Community Champions Grant Program allows charitable organizations throughout South Florida to request financial support for their programs and initiatives. Through this grant program, Panthers ownership has committed \$5 million over 5 years to the local community. At each of the 41 home games throughout the season, the Foundation will

recognize and award one grant for up to \$25,000 to a local organization. To learn more or apply for a grant, please visit [FloridaPanthers.com/GrantApplication](https://FloridaPanthers.com/GrantApplication).

**About the YMCA of South Florida**

The Y is a leading nonprofit committed to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Every day, the Y works hard to build healthy, confident, connected and secure children, adults, families and communities through over 200 afterschool, preschool, special needs, sports, camp and youth programs, family centers, and senior health outreach sites. To learn more, visit [www.ymcaofsouthflorida.org](http://www.ymcaofsouthflorida.org), connect on Facebook or Twitter, or call a Y near you.