



# CREATING A NEW WAVE OF IMPACT

WATER SAFETY AWARENESS WEEKEND

You're invited to take part in our Florida Blue Water Safety Awareness Weekend of activities in support of drowning prevention and water safety education.

**July 27-29**

HOMESTEAD - SOUTH DADE

## Water Safety Awareness Weekend aims to reduce number of child drownings

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The Homestead YMCA will host a Water Safety Awareness Weekend Friday and Saturday to educate parents and their children what should be done when around water.

The free event at the Homestead Y, 1034 NE Eighth St, Homestead, begins 6 p.m. Friday with "Family Night at the Pool." During this event, the YMCA staff will pass out water safety information to everyone who takes part. Four lifeguards and five staff members will be stationed at the pool to keep watch over the children swimming.

On Saturday, the Homestead Y will host a "Community Luau and Water Safety Awareness Day." This event will run from 3 to 6 p.m. and is free to the public. The Homestead Y staff will pass out leis to the first 200 people who attend the Luau. During the Luau, children can participate in relay races, eat an assortment of fruits and bring out their creative sides with water-safety-themed arts and crafts.

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Annually in the United States, three children die by drowning every day. About 174 children drown between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Florida is the state where the most drowning-related deaths occur and children ages 1 to 4 are the most susceptible, Burriss said.

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“Drownings are preventable,” said Andrea Burriss, senior director of Association Aquatic at the Homestead YMCA. “The rate at which children drown in both Florida and nationwide is unacceptable. Unacceptable. Something needs to be done about this. It’s infuriating.”

To help spread awareness on water safety and drowning prevention, Florida Blue donated \$310,000 to South Florida YMCAs to educate parents and their children about what they should do around water. The check will be presented Thursday at the Weston YMCA.

Although the goal of Water Safety Awareness Weekend is to educate South Florida residents about the dangers of water, swim lessons will not be taught at the event. The Homestead YMCA offers swim classes, but will not conduct any during the weekend events. Guests who are not YMCA members will each receive a free five-day membership so they can explore everything the Y has to offer, Burriss said.

“Our main accomplishment is to save lives and prevent as many drownings as possible,” Burriss said. “The public needs to come up with a solution to this problem and educating them as much as possible is a good first step.”

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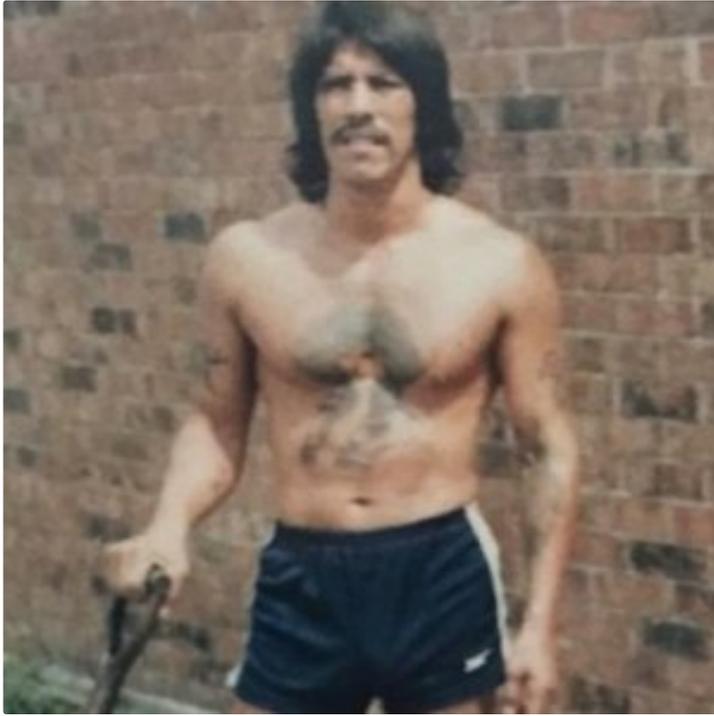
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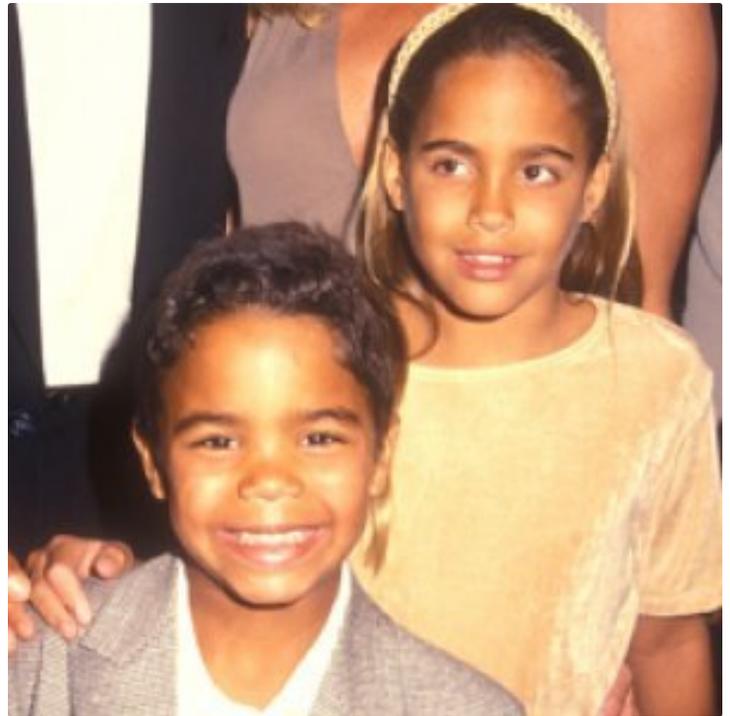
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