Diversity in Aquatics Expands Water Safety Initiatives to the Caribbean, Transforms Lives Across the Diaspora

Groundbreaking Program Reaches 150+ Youths as Organization Expands Life-Saving Mission from US to Caribbean

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, June 20, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a powerful demonstration of community-driven impact, Diversity in Aquatics (DIA) successfully launched its most enterprising international water safety initiative to date, imprinting water safety education on over 150 local children on the island of Grenada, while addressing the critical global crisis of drowning disparities affecting communities of color.

The historic World Oceans Day-timed program at Grand Anse Beach represented more than a single day of programming—it marked a pivotal moment in DIA's expanding mission to eliminate racial and socioeconomic disparities in water safety education in the United States and across the African Diaspora.

"This is about more than sun and surf—it's about empowering Grenadian youth with skills that save lives and build community," said Dr.

Diversity in Aquatics' World Oceans Day event on Grand Anse Beach in Grenada.

A young swimmer at the World Oceans Day event by Diversity in Aquatics in Grenada.

Miriam Lynch, Executive Director of Diversity In Aquatics. "Though having a close proximity to water, what we have realized is a lot of communities have a disconnect. In Grenada, a significant

percentage of the island's population does not know how to swim. For us, it was really important to bridge that gap to support the mission of teaching water safety while making a connection to the opportunities in aquatics with no borders."

The comprehensive event featured ocean swim lessons, the island's largest youth swim meet of the year, water safety workshops, CPR training, snorkeling and sailing coaching.

The organization's latest initiative comes at a critical moment for water safety advocacy. Each year, approximately 4,000 people in the U.S. die from unintentional drowning, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—with Black, Indigenous, and low-income communities disproportionately affected. After decades of decline, drowning rates began rising again following the onset of the COVID–19 pandemic, widening racial and ethnic disparities nationally.

Globally, the crisis is just as alarming. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 300,000 people drown annually, with children among the most at risk.

The urgency to address this issue has only increased following the Trump administration's recent decision to disband the CDC's drowning prevention team, leaving a gap in federal research and support. Community-based organizations like DIA have become critical to filling that gap. Its culturally grounded approach offers a proven, community-centered model for change.

"We're not just teaching swimming skills—we're rebuilding generational relationships with water," said Dr. Lynch.

INNOVATIVE, TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH SETS NEW STANDARD
What distinguishes DIA's work is its recognition of the historical trauma surrounding water in communities of color. The Grenada event featured a powerful session led by Dr. Fran Jackson of Spelman College, exploring the lasting impact of the transatlantic slave trade. The discussion touched on cultural disconnection, shifts in family dynamics, and the deep trauma connected to water, especially comparing experiences in the U.S. and the Caribbean.

Following that, Thaddeus Gamory, founder of BlueMindfulness, took participants through a trauma-informed session of breathwork and ocean-based healing exercises inspired by ancestral water traditions. Designed for BIPOC communities, the session aimed to help people reconnect with water and begin releasing generational fears tied to that legacy.

This trauma-informed methodology, combined with practical CPR training, swim instruction and community engagement, created what local partners described as "a reclaiming of our relationship with the ocean."

"There is so much potential for long-term impact and a seismic change in aquatics," said Gamory. "Everything starts with learning to swim and being safe in the water. We're already contributing

to it and the potential for it to grow is substantial - as a matter of fact, it's already in motion."

SCALING IMPACT THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS
Diversity in Aquatics has partnered with several organizations to raise awareness and expand equitable access to aquatics, working to eliminate disparities in drowning. In collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Olympic gold medalist Cullen Jones, the organization advances water safety education in historically underserved communities, breaking down systemic barriers and creating pathways for lifelong aquatic engagement.

DIA's recent success in Grenada builds on a robust network of institutional partnerships that are reshaping aquatic education across the United States and beyond. HBCUs, too, are driving nationwide change in the water safety arena with national partnership launches including:
-$1 million, 10-year USA Swimming partnership funding programs at Cheyney University, Norfolk State, Texas Southern and other HBCUs, reaching over 2,000 students
-Howard University water polo team relaunch in 2024, supported by DIA and USA Water Polo
-Historic American Red Cross partnership establishing the first Instructor Trainer Academy at an HBCU (Bowie State University), expanding certified -instructor pipelines in underserved communities
-Annual HBCU Water Safety Festival convening students, alumni and experts for workshops and community engagement

MEASURABLE IMPACT AND FUTURE EXPANSION
The organization's data-driven approach demonstrates tangible results:
-Over 2,000 HBCU students reached through swimming programs
-150+ youth served in 4-hour, single-day Grenada event
-Expanding Caribbean presence through local partnerships

"The most rewarding part is community and collaboration," said Dr. Lynch. "To see people and organizations come together to give back to the youth, seeing the happy faces and proud parents has been the most rewarding for all of us."

LOOKING AHEAD: A MOVEMENT BEYOND BORDERS
As DIA expands its reach across the Caribbean and strengthens its U.S. institutional partnerships, the organization is positioning itself as a global leader in culturally-responsive water safety education. Its success in Grenada serves as a blueprint for future international expansion while deepening impact in historically underserved communities. The organization's holistic approach—combining practical skills training, trauma-informed healing, community partnerships, and institutional change—offers a replicable model for addressing water safety disparities worldwide.

"The tides are turning," Dr. Lynch concluded. "Through education, community, and culturally rooted care, we're ensuring that water isn't a barrier—it's a bridge to empowerment, health, and generational healing."

About Diversity in Aquatics:

Diversity in Aquatics is a U.S.-based nonprofit organization committed to promoting equitable access, education, and leadership in aquatic spaces. From grassroots swim lessons to institutional partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and national organizations, DIA works to eliminate racial and socioeconomic disparities in water safety, ensuring that all communities can safely and confidently experience the power of water.

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This press release can be viewed online at: https://www.einpresswire.com/article/823809353