



Carolina Aquatics Swim School is a Local Partner with **Make a Splash**, a USA Swimming Foundation initiative. Launched in 2007, **Make a Splash** is a national water safety program focused on educating the public on the importance of learning how to swim. It aligns with the top Learn-to-Swim programs across the nation in order to offset the cost of swimming lessons and educate parents through a national awareness campaign in an effort to save lives.

Make a Splash also has an asset in that 2008 Olympic Gold Medalist, Cullen Jones, is a spokesperson for the initiative. After nearly drowning at the age of five, Cullen Jones overcame his fear of water to win a gold medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. He was also the first African-American male to hold a world record in swimming. He tours the U.S. spreading the message of the importance of water safety and learning how to swim.

Drowning rates, especially among minorities, are astounding. According to USA Swimming, the nation's governing swim organization, drowning is the 2nd leading cause of childhood accidental death. Nine people drown each day in the U.S. and children from non-swimming households are eight times more likely to be at-risk of drowning. When you look at the statistics for minorities, seven out of ten African-American children and six out of ten Hispanic children cannot swim contrasted with 42% of Caucasian children who cannot swim.

When you consider the numerous bodies of water within the greater Columbia area, there is a large risk to our children. Three rivers run through the center of the capitol city while 50,000 acre Lake Murray lies just to the west as well as numerous smaller lakes, ponds and creeks throughout South Carolina. This puts our children who do not learn the life saving skill of swimming in harm's way of drowning.

Carolina Aquatics Swim School and **Make a Splash** are on a mission to change those statistics. Children who are taught to swim will gain a skill that can protect them around water, and they also will learn to enjoy an extremely fun activity. Children benefit from swimming physically, mentally and emotionally:

- Swimming is both aerobic and strength building.
- Swimming uses muscles throughout the body equally with less friction than other activities such as running.
- Swimmers build muscle and develop a strong cardiovascular system keeping them healthy.
- Healthy children tend to have higher test scores and problem-solving skills translating into alertness and excellence in school.
- Swimmers also tend to be more self-disciplined, possess strong time management skills, and possess self-confidence which is carried over into adulthood.
- Swimming is an activity that can be enjoyed with friends in conjunction with diving, fishing, and boating well into the senior years.