

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **The Pool & Hot Tub Foundation, Florida Swimming Pool Association and International Hall of Fame Join Forces to Combat Drowning and Promote Water Safety Initiatives in the Sunshine State**

**Alexandria, VA (October 12, 2021)** – Florida ranks fourth in the nation for unintentional drowning deaths<sup>1</sup> including swimming and boating-related incidents. On Friday, October 8, swimming and pool industry leaders from the Pool & Hot Tub Foundation (PHTF), the Florida Swimming Pool Association (FSPA) and the International Swimming Hall of Fame (ISHOF) announced a joint partnership to help combat drowning in the state. The one-year agreement between the three organizations marks a pivotal collaboration to further promote swimming education and share available resources providing free or reduced-cost swimming lessons in Florida communities.

As part of the collaboration, the organizations will work together to advance water safety and support each organization’s respective swim education initiatives—Step Into Swim™ (PHTF), Florida Swims Foundation (FSPA) and Every Child A Swimmer (ISHOF), which all strive to empower people around the water and decrease drowning, particularly with young children who are at an increased risk.

Olympian and three-time gold medalist, Rowdy Gaines, is leading the Step Into Swim initiative on behalf of PHTF. “Drowning is largely preventable and it pains me to see drowning rates increase in the U.S. and for my home state of Florida to be high on that list. This trifecta of support from leading organizations will give Floridian families and communities access to critical water safety skills,” said Gaines, Vice President of Partnerships and Development for PHTF. “By teaching our youth the lifesaving gift of learning to swim, we can make a real, lasting impact and instill confidence in people as they take to the water.”

“The partnership couldn’t come at a better time as the International Swimming Hall of Fame is building upon the momentum from Florida’s Every Child A Swimmer bill, which requires schools to inform parents on the importance of teaching their children how to swim,” said Bill Kent, Chairman of the International Swimming Hall of Fame. “The more we all advocate for safe water practices, the bigger impact we’ll continue to have.”

The joint partnership kicks off in October with a formal signing ceremony on Friday, October 8. As part of the agreement, the Florida Swimming Pool Association will become a founding member of the partnership established by PHTA’s Step Into Swim and ISHOF’s Every Child A Swimmer programs in the summer of 2021.

“We are proud to partner with the Pool & Hot Tub Foundation and International Swimming Hall of Fame to provide learn-to-swim programming to hundreds of thousands of children across the country,” said Maurice Bushroe, 2021 FSPA President. “The members of our 16 chapters across Florida will be providing support for critical water safety awareness that will continue to make a difference in the lives of children and their families.”

#### **About Pool & Hot Tub Foundation and Step Into Swim:**

The Pool & Hot Tub Foundation (PHTF) is a 501(c)(3) that is governed by the Pool & Hot Tub Association.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Drowning Data. <https://www.cdc.gov/drowning/data/index.html>

PHTF provides education to the pool and hot tub industry and is the fundraising and philanthropic arm for PHTA supported programs.

Step Into Swim™ is an initiative of the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance committed to safe swim education and drowning prevention. By investing in the next generation of swimmers through learn-to-swim programming, the Step Into Swim initiative instills confidence, empowers long-term participation in water activities, touts the positive benefits of water play, and advocates for safe practices. Since its inception in 2012, Step Into Swim has played a role in reducing drowning fatalities and has gifted swim lessons to more than 280,000 children with support from community organizations, partners, industry advocates, members and more. For more information, visit [www.stepintoswim.org](http://www.stepintoswim.org).

**About Florida Swimming Pool Association and Florida Swims Foundation:**

Florida Swimming Pool Association, (FSPA) is a 501(c)6 that serves as the coordinating organization for 16 local Florida chapters. It provides educational programs and government and legislative representation for the swimming pool industry in Florida. FSPA is the primary sponsor of the Florida Swims Foundation (FSF), a 501(c)3 that contributes to swimming safety programs and scholarships for FSPA members and families. For more information, visit [www.floridapoolpro.com](http://www.floridapoolpro.com).

**About International Swimming Hall of Fame and Every Child A Swimmer:**

The International Swimming Hall of Fame is an organization organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRC with a primary mission to collaborate with aquatic organizations worldwide to preserve, educate and celebrate the history of aquatic sports while promoting swimming instruction for children through its Every Child A Swimmer program. For more information, visit <https://ishof.org/>.

Every Child A Swimmer is a registered trademark of the ISHOF and represents the ISHOF founding fathers' spiritual mission: to prevent childhood drownings and further legislative action that would encourage parents to teach their kids how to swim before they enter kindergarten. For more information, visit [www.everychildaswimmer.org](http://www.everychildaswimmer.org).