

For Immediate Release

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FREE SWIMMING LESSONS FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS OFFERED BY + POOL THIS DECEMBER

Students from P.S. 130 attend classes to learn life-saving skills.

NEW YORK, N.Y. – December 4, 2023 – Swimming might not be the first thing on most New Yorkers' minds in December, but + POOL is gifting the life-saving skill of swimming to some very special children this holiday season through a one-week intensive program, called Bluefish, at Village East Swim Club in the East Village. The nonprofit organization hopes that teaching students now will leave them with a leg-or fin-up when it comes to being water-safe in warmer months.

"With the cost of private swim instruction out of reach for many community members, we remain committed to free learn-to-swim programs as we prepare all New Yorkers for free and safe access to the rivers," says + POOL's Program Director, Nora Cronin.

Students in + POOL's Bluefish Program, which has been serving New Yorkers since 2016, benefit from small class sizes with five students to every instructor. Lessons include instruction on how to safely enter

the water, how to blow bubbles and feel comfortable putting one's head underwater, and basic arm and leg movement appropriate for each student's speed of development. Program participants also receive water safety instruction out of the pool, including take-home resources and safety tips they can share with friends and family members.

Students placed in the program have limited to no prior swimming lessons. This December session of Bluefish includes students from PS 130 Hernando DeSoto School in Lower Manhattan, where many students are residing in temporary housing for recent arrivals.

"For some of these new students, their journey to the United States included dangerous crossings where certain points involved areas of waters where they struggled to stay afloat," says Maggie Wong, a graduate student working with PS 130.

"Having traumatic experiences such as this associated with water can create additional challenges in learning to swim," says Cronin. "Our instructors are taking extra care and caution for these students."

+ POOL also worked with PS 130 staff to translate registration materials for students and families without English language skills.

All Bluefish participants receive program enrollment free of charge, and students are provided with a bathing suit, goggles, and a swim cap to ensure they have no barriers to participating.

Since 2016, + POOL's Bluefish program has taught over 1000 children how to swim. While the program has primarily been offered in the summer, in 2023 + POOL expanded the program to include sessions over NYC public school's Spring Break and now in December. + POOL's programming also includes adult learn-to-swim programming, based on feedback received from Bluefish parents who expressed interest in learning to swim themselves.

Press visits to the Bluefish Program can be scheduled December 6, 7 & 8. To arrange a visit, please contact: nora@pluspool.org

About + POOL

+ POOL is a nonprofit organization that is reclaiming the water that surrounds us. It is the driver of + POOL, a self-filtering, floating swimming pool that filters river water through the walls of the pool, cleaning more than 1,000,000 gallons daily while providing a public, recreational space for New Yorkers to enjoy. It also produces free public and educational programs to celebrate safe access to the river, promote water stewardship; and educate the public on the issues affecting our water quality. More info at www.pluspool.org