

FRIENDS OF + POOL, HENRY STREET SETTLEMENT, AND THE LOWER EAST SIDE EMPLOYMENT NETWORK JOIN TO OFFER FREE LIFEGUARD TRAINING, JOB SUPPORT

Lifeguard Shortage, Swimming Disparities are Target of New Partnership



New York, N.Y. - April 15, 2024: The organizations Friends of + POOL, Henry Street Settlement, and the Lower East Side Employment Network have launched a partnership to teach New Yorkers to swim and open the pipeline to summer lifeguarding jobs paying at least \$22/hour.

“While there are many lifeguard certification programs, + POOL’s program is uniquely focused on helping future lifeguards prepare for New York City’s rigorous evaluation, even if their confidence or skills need development,” said Nora Cronin, program director of Friends of + POOL. “The goal is for applicants of all levels to be fully prepared to pass the test. We’ll help trainees improve their swimming agility so they can obtain the well-paying, responsible, and fun job of being a professional rescuer through lifeguarding.”

Friends of + POOL is offering pre-certification lifeguard training classes, classroom instruction, and free lifeguard certification courses to New York City residents ages 15 and over. All participants will receive job placement counseling and support from Henry Street Settlement.

For more information and to apply, go to henrystreet.org/pluspool.

This initiative will create summer earning opportunities while helping families avoid dangerous conditions in which children do not know how to swim or are insufficiently supervised in the water. This collaboration is made possible with generous funding from Amazon.

SCHEDULE

Skills classes begin today, April 15, in Manhattan—downtown in the morning at Leman Prep, 1 Morris Street; and uptown in the afternoon at John Jay College, 524 West 59th Street. **Certification classes are held at John Jay College: April 27, May 4, May 11, and May 18.** Splash Fit Swim Club will be providing lifeguard training instructors to certify new guards and assist those who need additional training. Students must complete an online learning course prior to a full-day certification course to become Red Cross certified.

STEPS TO BECOME A LIFEGUARD

The road to lifeguard certification is rightfully strenuous, beginning with a pre-test requiring the candidate to demonstrate the ability to tread water for two minutes without the use of hands, dive with eyes open underwater to retrieve a brick, and swim 300 yards continuously. All these skills must be demonstrated before taking an American Red Cross Lifeguard Certification class, which is the standard certification accepted by many facilities nationwide.

To become a lifeguard for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, applicants must also take a New York City test, which involves timed swims that typically fewer than half of applicants pass each year. A goal of this program is to help students gain the swim skills needed to make those time standards.

FACTS

Merely one-third of 1,400 New York City beach and pool lifeguard positions were filled in 2023 in time for Memorial Day 2023. New York saw the results of this shortage in closed beaches, partial pool closings, and children swimming unsupervised. The shortage particularly affects lower-income New Yorkers, who do not have the resources to leave the city to go to the beach or to go to private clubs.

Seventy-nine percent of children in households with incomes less than \$50,000 have little to no swimming ability, and 69% of African-American children and 58% of Latino children do not know how to swim, compared to 42% of white children. Black children drown at almost triple the national rate.

“Lifeguarding is not only a great way to earn money in the summer; it also saves lives and confers lifelong skills that can be used along multiple career paths,” said

Matthew Phifer, executive vice president of employment and education for Henry Street Settlement.

“We are thrilled to partner together with all of these organizations to continue our mission of being a great neighbor,” said Carley Graham Garcia, Amazon head of community affairs, New York. “This is just one way we support New Yorkers through important programs like this one that will positively impact the community.”

Henry Street Settlement opens doors of opportunity for Lower East Side residents and other New Yorkers through social service, arts, and health care programs. Founded in 1893, the organization is distinguished by its commitment to listening to and learning from its neighbors—and then acting to meet the most pressing needs of our community. The Settlement offers more than 50 programs to people of all ages in the areas of Employment & Education, Transitional & Supportive Housing, Health & Wellness, Older Adult Services, and Visual & Performing Arts.

Friends of + 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, 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 support 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

The Lower East Side Employment Network is an innovative collaboration of experienced workforce development organizations whose main goal is to enrich the local economy by thoughtfully connecting responsible employers to a variety of talented, well-supported jobseekers. Learn more about our network and impact by visiting www.lesemploy.org.

Press Contacts

Friends of + POOL: Gabriel.Einsohn@gmail.com

Henry Street Settlement: Barbara Kancelbaum, (718) 744-5310